ST IVES INFANT SCHOOL

INTIMATE CARE POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Intimate care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure (such as cleaning up a pupil after they have soiled themselves) to intimate personal areas. In most cases care will involve cleaning for hygiene purposes as part of a staff member's duty of care. In the case of a specific procedure only a person suitably trained and assessed as competent should undertake the procedure.

The issue of intimate care is a sensitive one and will require staff to be respectful of the child's needs. The child's dignity should always be preserved with a high level of privacy, choice and control. There shall be a high awareness of child protection issues. Staff behaviour must be open to scrutiny and staff must work in partnership with parents/carers to provide continuity of care to children wherever possible.

The school is committed to ensuring that all staff responsible for the intimate care of children will undertake their duties in a professional manner at all times. The school recognises that there is a need to treat all children with respect when intimate care is given. No child should be attended to in a way that causes distress or pain.

BEST PRACTICE (Please also see Appendix 1 Nursery Procedures)

The management of all children with intimate care needs will be carefully planned. The child who requires intimate care is treated with respect at all times; the child's welfare and dignity is of paramount importance.

Staff who provide intimate care are trained to do so (including Child Protection and Health and Safety training in lifting and moving if appropriate) and are fully aware of best practice. Apparatus will be provided to assist with children who need special arrangements following assessment from physiotherapist/occupational therapist as required. Staff will be supported to adapt their practice in relation to the needs of individual children taking into account developmental changes.

The child will be supported to achieve the highest level of autonomy that is possible given their age and abilities. Staff will encourage each child to do as much for him/herself as he/she can. This may mean, for example, giving the child responsibility for washing themselves. Individual intimate care plans will be drawn up for particular children as appropriate to suit the circumstances of the child.

Each child's right to privacy will be respected. Careful consideration will be given to each child's situation to determine how many carers might need to be present when a child is toileted. Where possible, one child will be catered for by one adult unless there is a sound reason for having more adults present. If this is the case, the reasons should be clearly documented.

Wherever possible the same child will not be cared for by the same adult on a regular basis; ideally there will be a rota of carers known to the child who will take turns in providing care. This will ensure, as far as possible, that over-familiar relationships are discouraged from developing whilst at the same time guarding against the care being carried out by a succession of completely different carers.

Intimate care arrangements will be discussed with parents/carers on a regular basis and recorded on the child's care plan. The needs and wishes of children and parents will be taken into account wherever possible within the constraints of staffing and equal opportunities legislation.

THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

Education Child Protection Procedures and Inter-Agency Child Protection procedures will be adhered to.

If a member of staff has any concerns about physical changes in a child's presentation, eg marks, bruises, soreness etc she/he will immediately report concerns to the appropriate designated person for child protection.

If a child becomes distressed or unhappy about being cared for by a particular member of staff, the matter will be looked into and outcomes recorded. Parents/carers will be contacted at the earliest opportunity as part of this process in order to reach a resolution. Staffing schedules will be altered until the issue(s) are resolved so that the child's needs remain paramount. Further advice will be taken from outside agencies if necessary.

If a child makes an allegation against a member of staff, all necessary procedures will be followed.

ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE

PHYSICAL CONTACT

All staff engaged in the care and education of children and young people need to exercise caution in the use of physical contact.

When physical contact is made with pupils this will be in response to the pupil's needs at the time, will be of limited duration and will be appropriate given their age, stage of development and background.

Staff should be aware that even well intentioned physical contact could be misconstrued directly by the child, an observer or by anyone the action is described to. Staff must therefore always be prepared to justify actions and accept that all physical contact could be open to scrutiny.

Physical contact which is repeated with an individual child or young person is likely to raise questions unless the justification for this is formally agreed by the child, the organisation and those with parental responsibility.

Children will special needs may require more physical contact to assist their everyday learning. The arrangements must be understood and agreed by all concerned, justified in terms of the child's needs, consistently applied and open to scrutiny. Wherever possible, consultation with colleagues should take place where any deviation from the arrangements is anticipated. Any deviation and the justification for it should be documented and reported.

Extra caution may be required where a child has suffered previous abuse or neglect. In the child's view, physical contact might be associated with such experiences and lead to staff being vulnerable to allegations of abuse. Additionally, many such children are extremely needy and seek out inappropriate physical contact. In such circumstances staff should deter the child without causing

them a negative experience. Ensuring that a witness is present will help to protect staff from such allegations.

RESTRAINT

There may be occasions where it is necessary for staff to restrain children physically to prevent them from inflicting damage on either themselves, others or property.

In such cases only the minimum force necessary should be used for the minimum length of time required for the child to regain self-control.

In all cases of restraint the incident must be documented and reported. Staff must be aware of the school's Positive Handling Policy.

Under no circumstances would it be permissible to use physical force as a form of punishment, to modify behaviour, or to make a pupil comply with an instruction. Physical force of this nature can, and is likely to, constitute and offence.

PUPILS IN DISTRESS

There may be occasions when a distressed pupil needs comfort and reassurance that may include physical touch such as a caring parent would give. Staff must remain self-aware at all times to ensure that their contact is not threatening or intrusive and not subject to misinterpretation.

Staff will need to take account of the circumstances of a pupil's distress, their age and the extent and cause of the distress. Unless the child needs and immediate response, staff should consider whether they are the most appropriate person to respond. It may be more suitable to involve a child's relative or another member of staff.

CHANGING FACILITIES

The classroom toilets will be used to change a child. If contact of a more intimate nature is required (eg assisting with toileting or the removal of wet/soiled clothing), another member of staff should be in the vicinity and should be made aware of the task being undertaken.

Children who have long-term incontinence will require specially adapted facilities.

A note book will be used to record who changes a child, how often this task is carried out and the time they left/returned to the classroom following this task.

EQUIPMENT PROVISION

Parents should provide nappies, disposal bags and wipes. Parents should be made aware of this responsibility. Schools are responsible for providing gloves, plastic aprons, a bin and liners to dispose of any waste.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Staff should always wear an apron and gloves when dealing with a child who is bleeding or soiled, or when changing a soiled nappy. Any soiled waste should be placed in a polythene waste disposal bag,

which can be sealed. This bag should then be placed in a bin (complete with a liner) which is specifically designated for t disposal of such waste. The bin should be emptied on a weekly basis and can be included as part of the usual refuse collection service as this waste is not classes as clinical waste. Staff should be aware of the school's Health and Safety Policy.

SPECIAL NEEDS

Children with special needs have the same rights to safety and privacy when receiving intimate care. Additional vulnerabilities that may arise from a physical disability or learning difficulty must be considered with regard to individual teaching and care plans for each child. As with all arrangements for intimate care needs, agreements between the child, those with parental responsibility and the school should be easily understood and recorded.

Regardless of age and ability, the views and/or emotional responses of children with special needs should be actively sought (with advocacy arrangements made for those with communication difficulties) in regular reviews of these arrangements.

Particular care must be taken in instances which involve the same pupil over a period of time. Where a member of staff has a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance they should seek further advice, from the headteacher or other appropriate person.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND OTHER SKILLS COACHING

Some staff are likely to come into physical contact with pupils from time to time in the course of their duties when participating in games, demonstrating an exercise or the use of equipment.

Staff should be aware of the limits within which such contact should properly take place and of the possibility of misinterpretation.

Where it is anticipated that a pupil might be prone to misinterpret any such contact, alternatives should be considered, perhaps involving another member of staff or a less vulnerable pupil in the demonstration.

CHANGING CLOTHES

Young people are entitled to respect and privacy when changing clothes. Given the vulnerabilities of the situation, it is strongly recommended that when supervising children in a state of undress, another adult is present. Adults must not change in the same place as children.

OUT OF SCHOOL TRIPS, CLUBS ETC

Employees and other adults should take particular care when supervising pupils in the less formal atmosphere of after-school activity or extra-curricular activity. Although more informal relationships in such circumstances tend to be usual, the standard of behaviour expected of staff and other adults working with the children will be no different from the behaviour expected within school. All adults involved in such activities should be familiar with the school's policy regarding out of school activities.

To ensure pupils' safety, increased vigilance may be required when monitoring their behaviour on trips. It is important to exercise caution so that a pupil is not compromised and the member of staff does not attract allegations of overly intrusive or abusive behaviour.

Meetings with pupils away from the school premises where a chaperone will not be present are not permitted unless specific approval is obtained from the headteacher or other senior colleague with delegated authority. Staff should not place themselves in a position where they are in a vehicle, house or other venue alone with a child.

PHOTOGRAPHY, VIDEOS AND SIMILAR CREATIVE ARTS

Staff should be aware of the potential for such media to be used for the wrong purposes. Any concerns should be reported to the Headteacher, or if necessary refer to the Whistle Blowing Policy.

Our school obtains consent for photographs to be taken and published from the parents when the child starts school. It is the responsibility of the parents to inform the school if there are any changes.

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Appendix 1

Nursery Procedures

Intimate care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out invasive procedure to intimate personal areas. In the nursery it is part of our duty to maintain best practice when dealing with children who need care. For example:

When a child has soiled themselves

When a child has wet themselves

A child may need changing after getting wet in the water

A child may need changing after getting muddy in the garden

A child may be hurt and need further investigation

Approach to best practice

- Whenever possible use the child's own clothing.
- Reassure them: 'It's fine to have an accident and I am going to help you to change'.
- Leave the toilet door open.
- Check that there is another adult nearby.
- Use protective gloves.
- Try to sit on a chair when helping the child - protect your back.
- Encourage the child to wipe intimate areas, only give help if they are struggling.
- Keep talking to the child, smile at them.
- Bag up soiled clothes to go home.
- Place wipes and heavy soiled pants to place in the bin in the staff toilet.
- Make sure the child washes their hands thoroughly.
- Make sure you wash your hands thoroughly.
- Make a note to inform parents when the child is picked up.
- Take the parent to the side and then inform them.
- If necessary do clean the toilet and mop the floor.

- Try not to change the same child but ask another adult to take over.
- If you think the child is very heavily soiled ring the parent for support.
- Please use a cause for concern form if necessary.
- Respect the child's privacy and don't let other children watch.

Pupils in distress

There are many occasions in the nursery when a distressed child needs comfort and reassurance. Staff may need to hold the child or carry the child in from the garden please remain aware at all times that you are not alone. Calm the child and then place them on the carpet or on a chair and remain close by. Talk to them and reassure them. Inform the parent when they come to pick the child up and explain what happened. If in doubt ask the nursery teacher for help or guidance.