

# Letchmore Infants' And Nursery School

## Intimate Care Policy



**January 2025**

**Review Date - January 2027**

## **Introduction**

All children at Letchmore Infants' and Nursery School have the right to be treated with dignity, respect and privacy at all times so as to enable them to access all aspects of learning.

Intimate care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure (such as cleaning a pupil after they have soiled themselves) to intimate personal areas. In most cases such care will involve cleaning for hygiene purposes as part of a staff member's duty of care.

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 whenever possible.

Letchmore Infants' and Nursery 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. We recognise 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.

This policy sets out clear principles and guidelines on supporting intimate care. It should be considered in line with our Child Protection, Safeguarding and Health & Safety policies. These can be found on our website (<https://www.letchmore.herts.sch.uk/page/?title=Policies&pid=29>)

## **Our Approach to Best Practice**

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 appropriately trained and fully aware of best practice. Where necessary, 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. 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.

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.
- All children will be taught personal safety skills carefully matched to their level of development and understanding.
- If a member of staff has any concerns about physical changes in a child's presentation, e.g. marks, bruises, soreness etc. she/he will immediately report concerns to the appropriate manager/ 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.

This policy supports the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 2012 and Disability Discrimination Act 2005.

Staff will ensure that:

- No child's physical, mental or sensory impairment will have an adverse effect on their ability to take part in day-to-day activities;
- No child with a named condition that affects personal development will be discriminated against

- No child who is delayed in achieving continence will be refused admission
- No child will be sent home or have to wait for their parent/carer due to incontinence unless an agreement has been made with the parents/carers where they, may be called to change a child;
- Adjustments will be made for any child who has delayed incontinence.

### **Children Wearing Nappies Where There Are Safeguarding Concerns**

Letchmore Infants' and Nursey School will work together with families to support children who are still in nappies. Schools may have concerns regarding child protection issues when they are asked by parents to admit a child who is still wearing nappies. Child protection need not present an issue. It is good practice to provide information for parents of the policy and practice in the school. Such information should include a simple agreement form for parents to sign, outlining who will be responsible within the school for changing the child and when and where this will be carried out. This agreement allows the school and the parent to be aware of all the issues surrounding this task right from the outset.

### **Changing Facilities**

It is important to identify a suitable place where a child can be changed. Children who have long-term incontinence will require specially adapted facilities.

When children need to be changed in school the dignity and privacy of the child should be of paramount concern.

Letchmore's nursery toilet area is designed with additional space to cater for a changing mat, which will be used on the floor when a child is to be changed. This is the recommended method of changing a child, as it avoids an adult having to lift a child and cause possible back injury. The changing area or mat will be used with a clean towel over the mat. All staff supporting will wear a new set of disposable gloves and apron. When using the wipes, the child will be cleaned from front to back and discarded into a nappy sack. All waste will be double wrapped in nappy sacks and placed into domestic waste bins. The changing mat will be cleaned using anti-bacterial spray and a disposable paper towel. Hot water and liquid soap will be used to wash hands as soon as the task is completed, and hands will be dried using either paper towels or a hand drier.

When intimate care is given, the member of staff explains fully each task that is carried out, and the reason for it, to the child. Staff encourage children to do as much for themselves as they can with lots of praise and encouragement when they achieve.

All staff supporting intimate care in school will have a DBS check.

## **Equipment Provision**

Parents/Carers have a role to play when their child is still wearing nappies.

Parents/Carers are asked to supply the following:

- Bag to keep items in
- Spare nappies
- Wipes
- Nappy sacks
- Spare clothes
- Spare underwear

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 double wrapped in nappy sacks. This should then be placed in a domestic waste bin which is emptied daily. Staff should be aware of the school's Health and Safety policy.

Any soiled or wet clothes are double wrapped in bin liners and stored in the toilet area. The clothes are then sent home with the child at the end of the session.

## **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, the school and those with parental responsibility 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.

## **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.

The expectation is that staff will work in 'limited touch' cultures and that 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 might 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 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 school and those with parental responsibility.

Children with special needs may require more physical contact to assist their everyday learning. The general culture of 'limited touch' will be adapted where appropriate to the individual requirements of each child. The arrangements must be understood, agreed and recorded 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 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 an unnecessary negative experience. Ensuring that a witness is present will help protect staff from such allegations.

## **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.

Judgement will need to take account of the circumstances of a pupil's distress, their age, the extent and cause of the distress. Unless the child needs an immediate response, staff should consider whether they are the most appropriate person to respond. It may be more suitable to involve the child's parent, carer or older brother/sister. 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 their line manager or other appropriate person.

### **First Aid and Intimate Care**

Staff who administer first aid should ensure wherever possible that another adult or other children are present. The pupil's dignity must always be considered and where contact of a more intimate nature is required (e.g. assisting with toileting or the removal of wet/soiled clothing), another member of staff should be made aware of the task being undertaken.

Regular requirements of an intimate nature should be planned for. Agreements between the school, those with parental responsibility and the child concerned should be documented and easily understood. The necessity for such requirements should be reviewed regularly.

### **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. However, there must be the required level of supervision to safeguard young people with regard to health and safety considerations and to ensure that bullying or teasing does not occur. Adults must avoid any physical contact when children are in a state of undress and avoid any visually intrusive behaviour.

Given the vulnerabilities of the situation, it is recommended that when supervising children in a state of undress, another member of staff should be made aware of the task being undertaken. However, this may not always be possible and therefore staff need to be vigilant about their own conduct, (e.g. adults must not change in the same place as children or leave themselves vulnerable by being alone in the changing room with a single child).

### **Out of School Trips, Clubs etc.**

Employees should take particular care when supervising pupils in the less formal atmosphere of a school trip or an out of hours activity. Although more informal relationships in such circumstances tend to be usual, the standard of behaviour expected of staff will be no different from the behaviour expected within school.

To ensure pupils' safety, increased vigilance may be required when monitoring their behaviour on field 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 Co-Headteachers 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.

If staff come into contact with pupils whilst off duty, they must behave as though in their professional role and not give conflicting messages regarding their own conduct.