LITTLE WALTHAM
C.E.V.A. Primary School

Aspiring to inspire others towards excellence, developing as individuals together in a distinctively Christian environment.

1 Corinthians 12:14 "For the body is not one member, but many".

Intimate Care Policy

Governing Body approval:	Autumn 2026
Next review:	Autumn 2028

Review cycle: every two years

Document control

Policy	Intimate Care Policy
School	Little Waltham C.E.V.A. Primary School
Approved by	Governing Body
Review cycle	Every two years
Status	School policy - approval and review dates to be completed on ratification

Introduction

Intimate care may be defined as an activity required to meet the personal care needs of each individual child in partnership with the parent/carer and the child. In school this may occur on a regular basis or during a one-off incident.

Little Waltham C.E.V.A. Primary School is committed to ensuring that all staff responsible for the intimate care of children undertake their duties in a professional manner at all times. We recognise the need to treat every child with respect when intimate care is given. No child should be attended to in a way that causes distress or pain, and adults must be sensitive to each child's individual needs.

Intimate care is any care which involves one of the following:

- Assisting a child to change their clothes.
- Changing or washing a child who has soiled themselves.
- Assisting with toileting issues.
- Supervising a child involved in intimate self-care.
- Providing first aid.
- Providing comfort to an upset or distressed child.
- Feeding a child.
- Providing oral care to a child.
- Assisting a child who requires a specific medical procedure and who is not able to carry this out unaided.*

** In the case of a specific procedure, only a person who is suitably trained and assessed as competent should undertake the procedure. Parents/carers have responsibility for advising the school of any known intimate care needs relating to their child.*

All intimate care undertaken must be recorded on the appropriate record sheet and stored in accordance with the school's agreed record-keeping arrangements.

Principles of Intimate Care

The following are the fundamental principles of intimate care upon which this policy is based:

- Every child has a right to be safe.
- Every child has the right to personal privacy.
- Every child has the right to be valued as an individual.
- Every child has the right to be treated with dignity and respect.
- All children have the right to be involved and consulted in their own intimate care to the best of their abilities.
- All children have the right to express their views on their own intimate care and to have their views taken into account.
- Every child has the right to receive levels of intimate care that are appropriate and consistent.

Assisting a child to change their clothes

On occasion, an individual child may require some assistance with changing if, for example, they have an accident at the toilet, get wet outside, or have vomit on their clothes.

Staff will always encourage children to attempt undressing and dressing unaided. However, if assistance is required, this will be given.

Staff will try to ensure that a colleague is in attendance when supporting dressing or undressing and will always give the child the opportunity to change in private, unless the child is in such distress that this is not possible. If staff are concerned in any way, parents/carers may be contacted and asked to attend to support their child, and will be informed if the child becomes distressed.

Changing a child who has soiled themselves

If a child soils themselves in school, a professional judgement must be made about whether it is appropriate to change the child in school or request that a parent/carer attends or collects the child for changing. In either circumstance, the child's needs are paramount and they should be comforted and reassured throughout. The following guidelines outline our procedures, while allowing for an age-appropriate response.

- The child will be given the opportunity to change their underwear in private and to carry out this process themselves wherever possible.
- The school will have a supply of wipes, clean underwear and spare uniform available for this purpose.
- If a child is not able to complete this task unaided, school staff will decide whether to provide appropriate support or contact parents/carers to inform them of the situation.
- If a parent/carer is able to come to school within an appropriate time frame, the child will be accompanied and supported by a member of staff until they arrive. This avoids further distress and preserves dignity.
- If none of the child's contacts can be reached, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) must be consulted and a decision taken on the basis of in loco parentis and the school's duty of care to meet the needs of the child.

Child Protection / Safeguarding Guidelines

Staff should consider whether an additional adult is required, including the following factors:

  - Is it unsafe to carry out the care with one person because of the child's physical or behavioural needs?
  - Is the pupil known to make allegations about adults?
  - Does the location place the adult in a vulnerable position?
- If care is to be carried out by one adult, they must ensure that another member of staff knows they are doing so and knows the location. If the adult undertaking the care has not completed the task within the expected amount of time, another member of staff must check that the adult and child are safe and well.
- Ensure that the action being taken is necessary and obtain the child's verbal agreement to proceed, where they are able to give it.

CARE – CONCERN – COMMUNICATE

Intimate care must be necessary, proportionate and communicated appropriately. Any concern about a child or an adult's practice must be reported in line with safeguarding procedures.

Pastoral Care Procedures

- Ensure the child is happy with the person supporting or changing them.
- Be responsive to any distress shown.

Basic hygiene routines

- Always wear protective disposable gloves.
- Seal any soiled clothing in a plastic bag for return to parents/carers.

Providing comfort, support or first aid to a child

There are situations and circumstances where children seek physical comfort from staff, particularly children in the Early Years. Where this happens, staff need to be aware that physical contact must be kept to a minimum. When comforting a child or giving reassurance, staff must ensure that at no time can the act be considered intimate. If physical contact is deemed to be appropriate, staff must provide care which is professionally appropriate to the age of the child and the context.

If a child touches a member of staff in a way that makes the member of staff feel uncomfortable, this can be gently but firmly discouraged in a way which communicates that the touch, rather than the child, is unacceptable. Such incidents should be discussed in confidence with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Assisting a child who requires a specific medical procedure and who is not able to carry this out unaided

The school's First Aid and Medications Policy outlines arrangements for the management of the majority of medications in school.

Parental permission must be given before any medication is dispensed in school.

A small number of children will have significant medical needs and, in addition to the arrangements included in the First Aid and Medications Policy, will have an individual Care Plan. This Care Plan will be formulated with the relevant medical professionals. Where required, school staff will receive appropriate training.

Swimming

Where pupils participate in swimming lessons, children are entitled to respect and privacy when changing their clothes. However, there must be the required level of supervision to safeguard children with regard to health and safety considerations and to ensure that bullying, teasing or other unacceptable behaviour does not occur.

Where a child needs additional support for changing, parental permission will be sought and a personal care plan will be drawn up so as to maintain dignity while increasing independence.

Residential Trips

Residential educational visits are an important part of the school experience. Particular care is required when supervising pupils in this less formal setting.

As with extra-curricular activities, although more informal relationships in such circumstances may be usual, staff are still guided by the school's Child Protection procedures, Pastoral Care and Behaviour policies. Specific intimate care issues may arise in a residential context.

Showering

Children are entitled to respect and privacy when changing their clothes or taking a shower. However, there must be the required level of supervision to safeguard children with regard to health and safety considerations and to ensure that bullying, teasing or other unacceptable behaviour does not occur.

Staff should announce their intention of entering changing rooms, avoid remaining in changing rooms unless pupil needs require it, avoid physical contact when children are in a state of undress and avoid any visually intrusive behaviour.

Given the vulnerabilities of the situation, it is strongly recommended that when supervising children in a state of undress another member of staff is present. However, this may not always be possible. Staff must therefore be vigilant about their own conduct; for example, adults must not change in the same place as children or shower with children.

It is best practice that when an incident has taken place which has necessitated a member of staff being present when children are changing, an incident report is made.

Night Time Routines

Children's bedrooms are private spaces and anyone else wishing to enter should knock and announce their intention to enter.

At bedtime, children are given a set amount of time to change and prepare for bed and will be told when supervising staff will visit the rooms to check that all is well and switch off the lights. A reciprocal arrangement is in place in the mornings.

There are occasions when incidents take place during the night and the need arises to:

- Assist a child to change their clothes.
- Change a child who has soiled themselves.
- Provide comfort to an upset or distressed child.
- Assist a child who requires a specific medical procedure and who is not able to carry this out unaided.

In these circumstances, the guidance above will be followed with the support of an additional member of staff in attendance wherever practicable.

School Responsibilities

All members of staff working with children are subject to appropriate vetting and safer recruitment checks in line with national and local authority guidance. This includes students on work placement and volunteers where applicable.

Only members of staff who are familiar with this Intimate Care Policy and the school's other relevant pastoral and safeguarding policies are involved in the intimate care of children.

Where anticipated, intimate care arrangements are agreed between the school and parents/carers and, where appropriate and possible, with the child. Consent forms are signed by the parent/carer and stored in the child's file. Only in an emergency would staff undertake an aspect of intimate care that has not been agreed by parents/carers and the school. Parents/carers would then be contacted as soon as possible.

The views of all relevant parties should be sought and considered to inform future arrangements.

If a member of staff has concerns about a colleague's intimate care practice, they must report this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Guidelines For Good Practice

All children have the right to be safe and to be treated with dignity and respect. These guidelines are designed to safeguard children and staff. They apply to every member of staff involved with the intimate care of children.

Young children and children with special educational needs can be especially vulnerable. Staff involved with their intimate care need to be particularly sensitive to their individual needs.

Members of staff also need to be aware that some adults may use intimate care as an opportunity to abuse children. It is important to bear in mind that some forms of assistance can be open to misinterpretation. Adhering to the following guidelines of good practice should safeguard both children and staff.

1. **Involve the child in the intimate care.** Try to encourage a child's independence as far as possible in their intimate care. Where a situation renders a child fully dependent, talk about what is going to be done and, where possible, give choices. Check practice by asking the child or parent/carer about preferences while carrying out intimate care.
2. **Treat every child with dignity and respect and ensure privacy appropriate to the child's age and situation.** Care should not routinely be carried out by a member of staff working alone with a child where additional support is required or indicated by the safeguarding guidance above.
3. **Make sure practice in intimate care is consistent.** As a child may have multiple carers, a consistent approach to care is essential. Effective communication between all parties helps to ensure that practice is consistent.
4. **Be aware of your own limitations.** Only carry out activities you understand and feel competent to perform. If in doubt, ask. Some procedures must only be carried out by members of staff who have been formally trained and assessed.
5. **Promote positive self-esteem and body image.** Confident, self-assured children who feel their bodies belong to them are less vulnerable to sexual abuse. The approach taken to intimate care can convey important messages to a child about the worth of their body. Keeping in mind the child's age, routine care can be both efficient and relaxed.

6. **If you have any concerns, you must report them.** If you observe any unusual markings, discolouration or swelling, report this immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

If a child is accidentally hurt during intimate care or misunderstands or misinterprets something, reassure the child, ensure their safety and report the incident immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or other designated safeguarding member of staff. Report and record any unusual emotional or behavioural response by the child. A written record of concerns must be made and handled in accordance with the school's safeguarding and record-keeping procedures.

Working with Children of the Opposite Sex

There is positive value in both male and female staff being involved with children. Ideally, every child should have a choice regarding intimate care, but staffing arrangements may mean that assistance is sometimes provided by a member of staff of the opposite sex. The intimate care of boys and girls can be carried out by a member of staff of the opposite sex with the following provisions:

- When intimate care is being carried out, all children have the right to dignity and privacy; for example, they should be appropriately covered, with the door closed or screens/curtains used as appropriate.
- If the child appears distressed or uncomfortable when personal tasks are being carried out, the care should stop immediately. Staff should try to ascertain why the child is distressed and provide reassurance.
- Any concerns must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and a written record made.
- Parents/carers must be informed about any concerns in accordance with safeguarding procedures.

Communication With Children

It is the responsibility of all staff caring for a child to ensure that they are aware of the child's method and level of communication. Depending on their maturity and levels of stress, children may communicate using different methods - words, signs, symbols, body movements, eye pointing and other forms of communication. To ensure effective communication:

- Make eye contact at the child's level, where appropriate to the child.
- Use simple language and repeat if necessary.
- Wait for a response.
- Continue to explain to the child what is happening even if there is no response.
- Treat the child as an individual with dignity and respect.

Children with SEND

If a child needs frequent or daily intimate care due to a known SEND or medical need, or there is a significant developmental need, parental agreement will be sought to allow staff to deliver this intimate care in a safe and professional manner.

By following this policy, children, parents/carers and staff should feel safe, respected and confident that the child's needs are being met and supported.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's relevant safeguarding, physical contact/safe touch, first aid and medications, SEND, educational visits and staff conduct policies and procedures.

This policy will be reviewed every two years by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Governing Body.

Appendix 1 - Parental Permission for Intimate Care

Child's name: .....

Reason for intimate care (please tick):

Not toilet trained	☐
SEND need	☐
Medical need	☐
Developmental need	☐
Other (please state below)	☐

When providing intimate care, adults should consider the following information. Please state below any specific strategies, movements or other matters that staff should be aware of or avoid.

I give permission for my child to receive intimate care in line with the school's Intimate Care Policy.

I understand that staff will endeavour to encourage my child to be independent.

I understand that it is not always possible to have two members of staff deliver intimate care to my child.

Signed: ..... (parent / carer)

Date: .....

Appendix 2 - Record of Intimate Care

Use this record for each occasion on which intimate care is provided. Records should be stored securely in accordance with school procedures.

Name of child	Date	Time	Comments	Staff involved	Signature