

St Martin's Church of England School



Intimate Care Policy

Autumn 2025

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 such 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, (e.g. the administration of rectal diazepam.) Staff training will be provided where it is deemed necessary/appropriate eg. administration of prick test for diabetics.

The issue of intimate care is a sensitive one and requires that all staff are respectful of the child's needs. The child's dignity should always be preserved with a high level of privacy, choice and control. All staff should have 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/young people wherever possible.

St Martin's 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 recognize 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.

Our approach to best practice

The management of all children with intimate care needs is 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. The school will work closely with parents with regards to meeting the child's needs sensitively and with respect. Intimate care needs are discussed with parents at the new parents meeting before the child starts school.

Staff who provide intimate care are 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 adapt their practice in relation to the needs of individual children taking into account developmental changes such as the onset of puberty and menstruation. Wherever possible staff who are involved in the intimate care of children will not usually be involved with the delivery of sex education to the children in their care as an additional safeguard to both staff and children involved.

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 and shared with the parents.

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. Wherever possible staff will care intimately for an individual of the same sex though as the majority of staff are female this may not always be possible. 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. they must immediately report concerns to the Designated Lead responsible for child protection (Executive Headteacher) or in her absence the Deputy Designated Lead for Child protection (Head of School)

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 may be altered until the issues 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.

Guidance re aspects of intimate care

Introduction

The following advice/strategies are some suggestions as possible ways to actively promote inclusion and the welfare of pupils.

Children wearing nappies

All children are admitted to school, regardless of whether they are still wearing nappies. Child protection is not an issue as we follow the recommended procedures.

Where a child is using nappies there will be a signed agreement with the parents outlining who will usually be responsible for changing the child and when and where this will be carried out.

This agreement allows us and the parents to be aware of all the issues surrounding this task right from the outset. A record will usually be kept of when changing took place and who carried it out.

Changing facilities

At all times the dignity and privacy of the child will be of paramount concern.

- An area, made private by the use of a screen, is acceptable
- Consideration must be considered for health and safety issues
- The area must not be situated in a thoroughfare
- St Martin's have a changing bed that is used for all children who need personal care. This is sterilised after each use.
- The shower room in Dolphins Class maybe be used to change children
- It may be appropriate to clean children up in the toilet area of the unit. No other children will be present.
- Sensitivity to where a children is changed/cleaned and safety of the member of staff must be considered.

Equipment Provision

Parents are expected to provide nappies if their child is still wearing them. The parent should provide nappies, disposal bags, wipes, etc. and 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. St Martin's have a

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 the disposal of such waste.
- The bin should be emptied on a weekly basis and it can be collected as part of the usual refuse collection service as this waste is not classed as clinical waste.
- Bins are available at the bin area or in the children's centre
- 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 organisation 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 who can't) in regular reviews of these arrangements.

Guidance to safeguard children and education staff with regard to situations which may lend themselves to allegations of abuse (Physical contact, first aid, showers/ changing clothes, out of school activities, and photography)

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.

Staff at St Martin's work in a 'limited touch' culture so 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. This limited touch will also be very visible through careful choice of location and body position. **Hands must always be visible.**

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 organisation 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. All 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 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.

Highly recommended Tips:

- Hands always very visible
- In cases of injury or similar talk the child through what you are doing eg. I am going to put my hands under you legs so I can lift you.
- Always check that what you are going to do is acceptable to the child and they know why you are doing it.
- Use children to accompany you with a child so you can explain to them what you are doing and why.
- Keep children to your side at all times
- When a child sits on your lap keep legs to the side
- Tell someone where you are going and why
- Keep doors open and talk to people outside
- Make sure someone knows you are in a room alone with a child or call another adult to be with you.

Restraint

There may be very rare occasions where it is necessary for staff to restrain children physically to prevent them from inflicting damage on either themselves, others or property. Restraint should be used only as a last resort to ensure the safety of the child. All other options should be explored first.

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 in the Restraint Log, in the Headteacher's Office.

Under no circumstances is it ever 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 a criminal offence. This is not accepted or tolerated in our school.

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.

Judgements 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.

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 class teacher or head teacher.

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 in the vicinity and should be made aware of the task being undertaken.

Regular requirements of an intimate nature should be planned for. Agreements between the school/organisation, those with parental responsibility and the child concerned should be documented and easily understood. The necessity for such requirements should be reviewed regularly. The child's views must also be actively sought and, in particular, any discomfort with the arrangements addressed.

Where a child wets or soils themselves and there is no written agreement the school will inform the parents of the actions taken, the child's comfort must be paramount. The school will provide clean underwear/clothes and send home the soiled/wet clothing. The above guidelines for changing a child must be followed.

Physical Education and other skills coaching

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.

Currently our children change together in the classroom. The adults in the room supervise and keep an overall check on the children as they change. There should be no contact unless a child requests help.

Toilets should be avoided as there then become supervision issues.

Should staff see any bruising or scars during changing the guidelines in the child protection policy should be followed.

Showers (residential trips/swimming)/changing clothes

Young people are entitled to respect and privacy when changing clothes or taking a shower. 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. This means that adults should announce their intention of entering changing rooms, avoid remaining in changing rooms unless pupil needs require it, 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 strongly recommended that when supervising children in a state of undress, another member of staff is present. 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 shower with children.

Out of school trips, clubs etc.

Employees should take particular care when supervising pupils in the less formal atmosphere of a residential setting or after-school 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. Staff involved in such activities should also be familiar with their school's/establishment's policy and all LA Guidance regarding out of school activities.

To ensure pupils' safety, increased vigilance may be required when monitoring their behaviour on field trips, holidays etc. 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.

On occasions (field trips/days out, etc.) some pupils might be short of funds and would embarrassed or singled out if this were known. It would be acceptable for a member of staff to subsidise a child, provided that this was disclosed to colleagues.

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 head teacher 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.

Photography, videos and similar creative arts

Staff should be aware of the potential for such mediums of teaching to be used for the wrong purposes. Additionally, children who have been previously abused in this way may feel threatened by the legitimate use of photography, filming etc. The potential for founded and unfounded allegations of abuse requires that careful consideration be given to the organisation of these activities.

Protocols for the taking and use of images and of photographic equipment;

- The purpose of the activity should be made clear.
- No one to one situations
- Appropriate privacy if changing clothes is involved
- Clear arrangements for the access and storage of the images. – All images should be stored on the school server and not kept off the school premises. If pictures are taken during day or residential trips, they should be transferred to the school server as soon as possible.
- All material produced should be checked by another member of staff for suitability.
- All staff should check the permission list before taking any photos of children (main list available in office)

Before any public performance in school an announcement must be made to the audience regarding the taking of photos or videos which must be for personal use only with in the family and images must not be sent over the internet.

Autumn 2025

This Policy will be reviewed Autumn 2026

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Permission Form for Nappy Changing

I give permission for my child

To have their nappy changed by school staff, while at school or on school trips. I agree to ensure that the school is supplied with sufficient nappies and wipes to meet my child's needs and requirements. I also agree to ensure that a spare set of trousers/dress/skirt and pants will be provided for my child to change into if an accident occurs. I agree that my child can be showered if they soil themselves and need to be cleaned.

Signed:
Date:
(Parent/Carer)

Record of personal care

Child's Name..... Class.....

