

Safeguarding guidance for intimate care

January 2021

1. What is intimate care?

Intimate care encompasses areas of personal care, such as nappy/pads changing, wiping, washing and dressing.

2. Our approach to best practice

Support for children/young people with intimate care needs will be carefully planned and the setting will ensure that:

- Staff who provide intimate care are trained to meet the needs of individual children.
- All staff adhere to the setting's safeguarding and child protection policy.
- The setting will consider the appropriateness of any areas of the setting which may place staff or children in vulnerable situations and alternative areas will be strongly considered. This include situations where staff carry out intimate care procedures in an unsupervised and/or isolated areas.
- Mobile phones, cameras and technological devices are not used by children or staff in areas where intimate care is carried out.
- Staff carrying out intimate care are appropriately supported.
- Staff should be aware of their own limitations, only carrying out procedures they understand and feel competent and confident to carry out. If in doubt staff should ask.
- Suitable equipment and facilities are made available.
- Every intimate care procedure will be completed within an atmosphere of total respect and dignity both for the individual receiving care and for the person involved in giving the care.
- The number of adults engaged in the care should only reflect the minimum needed to perform the task safely and respectfully. Each situation should reflect both the safety and vulnerability of children/young people and staff.
- Intimate care is discussed and agreed with parents and carers beforehand.
- The needs and wishes of the child/young person are taken into consideration.
- An appropriate written plan for intimate personal care is discussed, agreed and shared with the child or young person and their family, signed by all involved and reviewed on a regular basis.
- Every plan supporting intimate care must demonstrate how the child/young person can be enabled to develop their independence as far as is reasonably practical for the child/young person.
- Intimate care is logged and recorded and records retained. The record will include the date and time the intimate care was carried out and by whom.
- Equal opportunities legislation is taken into account.

Intimate care – safeguarding children

If a member of staff has any concerns about physical or behavioural changes in a child/young person's presentation, e.g. marks, bruises, soreness, becoming watchful and wary, freezing, gaze aversion, they will immediately pass their concerns to the Designated Person for Child Protection in their setting.

Children and young people are entitled to respect and privacy at all times and especially when in a state of undress, changing clothes, bathing or undertaking any form of personal care. There are occasions where there will be a need for an appropriate level of supervision in order to safeguard young people and/or satisfy health and safety considerations. This supervision should be appropriate to the needs and age of the children and young people concerned and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment.

Research has shown that young children are especially vulnerable to abuse in addition to children and young people with disabilities. It is important to remember that some individuals may choose this line of work to gain access to vulnerable children in order to abuse them.

Adults will be vigilant about their own behaviour, ensuring they strictly follow agreed procedures and be mindful of the needs of the children and young people with whom they care for. In the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff, volunteer or student, the procedures for an Allegation of Abuse (as per the guidance and flow chart) will be followed.

Visits and outings

The setting has procedures and plans in place for the day-to-day intimate care needs of a child or young person, but further consideration and risk assessment will need to be taken in good time before a trip or for an activity.

Useful contacts

Early Years' Service

earlyyears.service@cambridgeshire.gov.uk