



The
Rise
Partnership
Trust
Love • Learn • Laugh

RPT Intimate Care Policy

September 2023

Approved	November 2023
Review date	September 2024

With Reference to 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' – September 2023

PURPOSE

This document aims to provide clear principles and guidance on the issue of supporting intimate care needs in our school environment.

This policy should be read in conjunction with The Rise Partnership Trust's:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Single Equality Plan

RATIONALE

Many of our pupils require support in self-help and toileting and may experience difficulties at times for a variety of reasons. Some children, because of the nature of their developmental delay/special needs, are delayed in achieving continence and some may experience difficulties in this area due to medical needs.

AIMS

- To safeguard the rights and promote the welfare of children;
- To provide guidance and reassurance to staff;
- To assure parents and carers that their child's needs will be met;
- To remove barriers to learning and participation and ensure inclusion for all children.

PRINCIPLES

We believe that becoming continent is the right of every child, as it offers them better life chances in the longer term (whenever medically possible).

COMMITMENTS

- To protect a child's dignity with a high level of privacy, choice and control;
- To promote independence wherever possible;
- To ensure that the necessary PPE is available to staff;
- To consult parents and carers and respect their views and wishes and take religious and cultural values into account.

DEFINITION

Intimate care can be defined as any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out a procedure to intimate personal areas, which most people usually carry out themselves. Intimate care is required when some children are unable to do so, because of their young age or special needs, for example care associated with continence and menstrual management, as well as more ordinary tasks such as help with washing, toileting or dressing. Also included is supervision of children involved in intimate self-care, for example making sure that all pupils regardless of their needs, are showered properly when on a school residential trip.

BEST PRACTICE

As part of initial gathering of information from parents, when a child starts school, staff will seek parental views on practices at home for their child. Parents will also be offered an opportunity to discuss their child's needs with an appropriate member of staff.

All children at The Rise Partnership Trust, who require intimate care, are treated respectfully at all times; the child's welfare and dignity is of paramount importance. The expectation is when physical contact is made with pupils, this will be in response to the pupil's needs at the time and will be appropriate given their age, stage of development and background.

Staff will raise the child's awareness of any intimate care procedures, before they take place, by the use of objects of reference, symbols, signs, gesture and verbal explanation as appropriate.

All intimate care practices should be valued as part of that child's essential curriculum. They are an opportunity to develop independent and age-appropriate skills, increase dignity and raise self-esteem. Choice and decision making skills will form part of the process, e.g., "Should we wash your hands or face first?"; "Can I help fasten your trousers?" Emphasis should be on teaching the use of the 'Toilet' or 'Help' symbol, dressing and toileting schedules, and these will be available for use at all times.

The pupil should be involved, wherever possible, in their own intimate care routine: explain what you are doing and ask for their agreement. Try to avoid doing things for the child that s/he can do such as removing underclothes, or washing the private parts of a child's body. Support children in doing all that they can themselves, even if it takes longer. If a child is fully dependant on you, talk with her or him about what you are doing and give choices where possible.

Use as positive time – sing a favourite song/rhyme, talk about home/family/recent topic in class etc.

Staff should be responsive to a pupil's reactions. If the pupil appears to be distressed or uncomfortable, stop and try another approach. Be responsive to the child's reactions. It is appropriate to 'check' your practice by asking the child – particularly a child you have not previously cared for – "is it ok to do it this way?"; "Can you wash there?". If a child expresses dislike of a certain person carrying out her or his intimate care, try to find out why and respond accordingly.

Liaise with parents and other professionals. Liaison is essential particularly where there are a number of carers.

Encourage pupils to have a positive image of their own body – never show distaste at any of the intimate care procedures that have to be carried out for the pupil. Confident, assertive children who feel their body belongs to them are less vulnerable to abuse. The approach you take to a child's intimate care can convey lots of messages about what her or his body is 'worth'. Your attitude to the child's intimate care is important. As far as appropriate and keeping in mind the child's age, routine personal care of a child should be enjoyable, relaxed and fun.

Introducing Toilet Training

Incontinence can be part of a medical/ emotional condition, or can be part of a learning disability. Some children may never be totally continent, so the emphasis will be on management of the issue. Other children will be late in achieving developmental milestones and toilet training will be delayed accordingly.

Assess the child over a period of time to determine:

- Whether there is a pattern to when the child is wet or dirty;
- The indicators the child is giving that s/he needs the toilet (actions, facial expression);

- The number of visits to the toilet with monitoring of wet, soiled or dirty nappies which should help to determine toileting behaviour and show an emerging pattern.

Some strategies to support the process:

- Familiarise the child with the toilets, use other children as good models (being sensitive to their privacy), flush the toilets, wash hands etc.;
- Encourage the child to use the toilet when s/he is indicating in some way that there is a need, but do not force the issue;
- Set up a timed programme – most children can be toilet trained if they are given access to a frequent toileting routine and highly positive reinforcement for when they do use the toilet;
- Remember to keep the child well hydrated, so that they have more chance to practice i.e. encourage them to drink plenty of fluids;
- Take the child to the toilet, at a time that the monitoring had indicated the child usually open her/his bowels;
- Ensure the child is able to reach and is comfortable on the toilet;
- Stay with the child, talk to him/her, or take a book/toy to make the experience more relaxed;
- Be aware that the child may not always use the toilet; do not sit the child on the toilet for excessive periods of time;
- It may take time to develop the idea of what is expected; don't become anxious;
- Highly praise the child when the toilet is used, or give them a highly reinforcing treat to reinforce this positive behaviour;
- There may be some setbacks (possibly an emotional reason), patiently continue;
- Accidents will occur – deal with them discreetly and without fuss;
- It may take time – be patient and success will be very satisfying.

It is important to develop a common home/school approach in order for the process to succeed.

PLEASE NOTE – pull ups can actually delay independent toileting, as the child does not learn to recognise when they're wet.

The Parent

- Providing the setting/school with spare nappies and a change of underwear/clothing;
- Understanding and agreeing the procedures that will be followed when their child is changed at school – including the use of any cleanser, or the application of any cream;
- Agreeing to inform the setting/school should the child have any marks/rash;
- Agreeing to review the arrangements should be necessary;
- Agreeing to support the toileting programme at home (this will make the learning process quicker).

Bowel / Bladder Incontinence

We aim to provide a comprehensive, cohesive and responsive service to all school aged children who present with enuresis. Advice and support for families is easily accessible through staff at Manor School and The Avenue.

Both parents and pupils need to be confident that any soiling issues will be dealt with discreetly in school, whilst the child is working towards independent management of his/her needs. It is important that a common approach is used at home and at school, with agreed strategies and rewards. It should be acknowledged that this can be a long process with setbacks along the way.

Self-management in Early Years

- The supporting adult should use a low-key approach, acknowledging when the pupil identifies correctly that s/he needs changing, but never showing disappointment that they've soiled.
- Some children may need visual support in learning the sequence of events when using a toilet.

PROMOTING PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Continence

Achieving continence is one of the many developmental milestones usually reached for children, without special/additional needs within the context of learning, before a child transfers to school.

At Rise Partnership Trust Schools, we acknowledge that there may be children with longer term continence issues, for whom an individual programme may need to be put in place. In addition, there may be children joining us in school who are at various points of developing their independence in toileting, who may need short term support in this important area of self-care.

No child will be refused a place at Rise Partnership Trust Schools in relation to continence issues. We are committed wholeheartedly to working with children, parents and any support agencies deemed necessary to ensure appropriate provision is made for all children with needs in this specific area of personal development.

Children's dignity will be preserved and a high level of privacy, choice and control will be provided to them. Staff behaviour is open to scrutiny and staff will work in partnership with parents/carers to provide continuity of care to children.

Menstruation

Should a pupil at a Rise Partnership Trust School start their menstrual cycle then everything within this policy would appertain to the procedures, care, dignity and support for that pupil.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Children may be changed in any of the toilet areas throughout school, depending on the location of their classroom. Some toilet areas have designated Boys' or Girls' toilets. There are also shower facilities available if necessary.

Appropriate resources provided:

From Home

1. Nappies/pull-ups
2. Wipes
3. Spare clothes

In School

1. Disposable masks, gloves and aprons
2. Clinical bin for disposal of nappies
3. Plastic bags for wet/soiled clothing
4. Antibacterial cleanser

From Home (Menstruation)

1. Sanitary wear
2. Wipes if appropriate
3. Spare clothes

In School (from Medical Room)

1. Emergency sanitary pack
2. Disposable gloves
3. Clinical bin for disposal of pads
4. Plastic bags for soiled clothing
5. Antibacterial cleanser and hot water

If a child accidentally wets, or soils him/herself they will be attended to in the toilet area usually used by that child. It is essential that, whenever possible, a member of the child's staff team support the child with toileting (support staff, or teacher). If a member of the child's team is not available the staff working with, or supervising the child should always step in and ensure the child's needs are met ASAP in a caring, supportive manner.

Only one member of staff needs to be supporting the child.

Staff involved in this procedure will be expected to wear disposable gloves.

All children will stand up for all procedures of intimate care, even very young children.

Wet or soiled nappies, gloves and aprons and any items used for cleaning the changing area will be disposed of in the medical waste bin provided. The medical waste bin is located within the toilet area.

Wet or soiled underwear/clothing will be returned to parents.

The changing area will be cleaned after use.

Hot water and liquid soap will be available to wash hands as soon as the task is complete.

Paper towels will be available for drying hands.

Class teams are encouraged to plan for toileting in advance and should ensure that any resources i.e. spare clothes etc. are readily available.

SAFEGUARDING

At The Rise Partnership Trust we have no anticipation that the intimate care of a child either in nappies, pull ups or otherwise should raise any safeguarding issues, as all staff are checked through the Disclosure and Barring Service. In addition, all staff have received Safeguarding Training. Therefore, it will be normal practice for only one adult to be involved in attending to a child's personal needs.

At all times, staff will be encouraged to remain highly vigilant for any signs or symptoms of improper practice, as they do for all activities within school. If any marks or injuries are noticed on a child during changing, these will be reported following procedures outlined in the Safeguarding Policy and inter-agency child protection procedures. School staff have a mandatory duty to report any concerns relating to children who may have undergone any type of Female Genital Mutilation. These concerns will be reported to the police for further investigation.

Where appropriate, all children will be taught personal safety skills carefully matched to their level of development and understanding through PSHCE.

SUPPORT FOR STAFF

All staff should be aware of the policy and guidelines for providing intimate care for children. There should be regular opportunities for them to raise any issues and share concerns. Staff will be offered training where appropriate.