

INTIMATE CARE POLICY

(To be read in conjunction with the child protection policy.)

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. 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/young people wherever possible.

The Time Out Group 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. The Time Out Group recognises 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 will be carefully planned and appropriate steps will be written into the child's personal risk assessment. 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 trained to do so (including Child Protection and Health and Safety training in lifting and moving) and are fully aware of best practice. Apparatus will be provided to assist with children who need special arrangements in liaison with their parents, school and / or physiotherapist.

Staff will be supported to adapt their practice in relation to the needs of individual children taking into account developmental changes such as the onset of puberty and menstruation. 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.

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 two adults will be present when a child is toileted and where possible and appropriate a choice will be given to the child as to who that is i.e. male / female members of staff. Wherever possible the same child will not be cared for by the same two adults on a regular basis.

Intimate care arrangements will be discussed with parents/carers on a regular basis and recorded on the child's care plan / risk assessment. 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

Child Protection procedures will be adhered to. If a member of staff has any concerns about physical changes in a child's presentation, e.g. marks, bruises, soreness etc. s/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.

- 'Working Together To Safeguard Children', Inter-Agency Child Protection Procedures.
- What To Do IF You're Worried A Child Is Being Abused. Summary (2003) www.doh.gov.uk/safeguardingchildren/index.htm

Physical Contact

All staff engaged in the care 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 children this will be in response to the children'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 group and those with parental responsibility.

Children with special needs may require more physical contact to assist their everyday needs. The general culture of 'limited touch' will be adapted where appropriate to the individual requirements of each child. The 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 open 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.

A child in distress

There may be occasions when a distressed child 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 child'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 relative.

Particular care must be taken in instances which involve the same child 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 group leader.

Showers/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 child needs require it, avoid any physical contact when children are in a state of undress where possible and avoid any visually intrusive behaviour. Given the vulnerabilities of the situation, it is strongly recommended where possible 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.

This policy was adopted by the committee on Tuesday 6th September 2011

Signed..... Chair Date

Signed..... Vice Chair..... Date

Signed..... Secretary Date

Signed..... Treasurer Date