



## Intimate Care Policy

**Aim:** To ensure that children who require personal or intimate care are supported in a manner that promotes their self-respect, dignity, and independence.

- To ensure that all staff responsible for children's intimate care undertake their duties in a professional manner and have clear guidelines to follow.
- To safeguard children and staff who require or provide personal or intimate care.

**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, but some people are unable to do because of their young age, physical difficulties or other special educational needs or impairments. At Noah's Ark, this will generally include care associated with nappy changing as well as tasks such as help with washing, toileting, or dressing.

### **Principles of Intimate Care**

We have based our policy on the following fundamental principles of intimate care:

Every child has the right to:

- Be safe.
- Personal privacy.
- Be valued as an individual.
- Be treated with dignity and respect.
- Be involved and consulted on their, own intimate care to the best of their abilities.
- Express their views on their own intimate care and to have such views considered.
- Have levels of intimate care that are appropriate and consistent.

### **Policy**

To meet the principles of intimate care, our policy is to:

**1. Involve the child in the intimate care.** We will encourage each child to do as much for themselves as they can. There will be careful communication with each child who needs help with intimate care in line with their preferred means of communication. We will ensure the child is aware of the intimate care that we might provide and the reasons why; staff will also communicate with the child about what they will do and give the child as much choice and control as possible. Staff will check their own practice by asking the child about their preferences while carrying out the intimate care.

**2. Treat every child with dignity and respect and ensure privacy appropriate to the child's age and situation.** Careful consideration will be given to each child's situation to determine how many staff might need to be present when a child needs help with intimate care.

**3. Make sure practice in intimate care is consistent.** Where possible, there will be named staff members known to the child who will support the child with intimate care and they will provide that care consistently and, if there is one, in line with the information in the child's care plan. Parent/carers/staff will be involved with their child's intimate care arrangements on a regular basis.

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**4. Be aware of our own limitations.** We will only carry out activities we understand and feel competent with. 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 we take to intimate care can convey lots of messages to a child about their body worth. Our attitude to a child's intimate care is important; we will promote the child's self-esteem and body image and we will also aim for the care to be provided in a relaxed and simple manner.

**6. Report any concerns.** If any unusual markings, discolouration, or swelling are observed then staff will report it immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. If a child is accidentally hurt during intimate care or misunderstands or misinterprets something, we will reassure the child, ensure their safety, and report the incident immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. We will report and record any unusual emotional or behavioural responses. A written record of concerns must be made available to parents and kept in the child's personal file.

**Other areas:**

**Recording:** Children who regularly require intimate care will have a written care plan drawn up with and agreed by the parents, and the child as appropriate. This will include a risk assessment to address issues such as moving and handling, personal safety of the child and the staff member as necessary. These will be reviewed annually or when necessary.

Children who require intimate care occasionally may not have a written plan, but parents will be informed of the support the staff have given.

We always make a record of nappy changing, which is available to parents should they wish to see it.

**Training and equipment:** Staff who provide intimate care will be trained in Child Protection and in any other relevant areas e.g., manual handling. We will aim to provide any equipment necessary to support children's access to intimate care.

**Key working:** All children are assigned a key person. The key person will advocate for their needs as well as being a first point of contact for the child and family.

Reviewed by Corinne McIntosh 23/10/24

Signed..... date.....

Print name..... Role.....

Signed..... date.....

Print name..... Role.....