



## **PRACTICE GUIDELINES**

### **INTIMATE CARE POLICY**

Children have a right to be safe and to be treated with dignity and respect. Intimate care includes washing, and toileting and changing nappies.

#### **Intimate care of children and young people with disabilities**

- Children with disabilities can be very vulnerable. They often need adult help with their personal care, including intimate care, long after non-disabled children of similar age have developed the skills to do such tasks for themselves.
- Having to depend on someone else to do these things for you may feel embarrassing or humiliating. Anyone involved with a person's intimate care needs to be sensitive to the child's needs and also aware that some care tasks could be open to possible misinterpretation.

#### **Definition of intimate care**

Intimate care may mean different things to different people but is usually used to describe any or all of the following activities:

- Washing any part of the body
- Dressing/undressing
- Changing nappy
- Assisting to use the toilet

#### **1. Treat every child as an individual**

Don't make assumptions about how things are done with a child. Families all have their own way of doing things, their own names for body parts etc. Cultural, ethnic and religious differences may affect what is or is not appropriate. Ask the child and/or parents and respect their wishes

## **2. Involve the children as far as possible in their own intimate care**

Try to avoid doing things for a child that she/he can do alone and if the child is able to help, ensure that they are given the chance to do so. Support the child in doing all they can for themselves. If a child is fully dependant on you, talk with them about what you are doing and give them choices wherever possible.

## **3. Be responsive to a child's reactions and make sure that intimate care is as consistent as possible**

You will have had opportunities to talk with parents and learn from them how they undertake intimate care tasks. However, you should also whenever possible, check things out by asking the child, e.g.:

“Is it OK to do it this way?”

“Can you wash there?”

“How does Mummy do this?”

“Does that feel comfortable?”

### **The following are some basic guidelines to help safeguard both staff and children.**

1. Be familiar with any special names the child uses for body parts.
2. Supply staff are not permitted to carry out any personal care for the child, unless the supply staff member has worked sufficient hours in the building to have built up a relationship with the child.
3. Supply staff should whenever possible give the pupil a choice of who they would like to help them with their intimate care.
4. When changing a child's nappy or soiled clothing, the member of staff must always wear protective gloves. Parent must provide a change of clothes.
5. For the safety of both staff and child it is considered totally inadvisable for a male member of staff to be involved in the intimate physical care of a girl of any age. The same limitations may not apply to female staff and boys.