

Middleton School
Intimate Care Policy



Reviewed Sept 2026

Ratified by Governing Body Sept 2026

Due for review Sept 2027

Intimate Care Policy

Introduction

It is our intention at Middleton School to develop independence in each child, however there will be occasions when help and assistance is required with some self care tasks. Intimate care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure (such as cleaning up a child 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 a child's needs and any child protection issues. A child's dignity should always be preserved with a high level of privacy, choice and control. Staff behaviour must be open to scrutiny and staff must work in partnership with parents/carers to provide continuity of care to children wherever possible.

Middleton School 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. Our school 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.

What is intimate care in our school?

Intimate care may be defined as an activity required to meet the personal care needs of each individual child in partnership with the parent, carer and the child. In school this may occur on a regular basis or during a one-off incident. All children are always encouraged to be independent therefore the child should be encouraged to do as much cleaning and removal of clothes as is practical. If a child needs intimate care parental permission must be obtained and an agreement signed (appendix 1). The pupil's dignity must always be considered and where contact of a more intimate nature is required (e.g. assisting with toileting or the removal of wet/soiled clothing), another member of staff should be in the vicinity and should be made aware of the task being undertaken.

Intimate care is any care which involves one of the following:

- 1. Assisting a child to change his/her clothes**
- 2. Changing or washing a child who has soiled him / herself**
- 3. Children wearing nappies**
- 4. Supervising a child involved in intimate self-care**
- 5. Providing comfort to an upset or distressed child and limited touch**
- 6. Swimming**
- 7. Residential trips**
- 8. Menstruation**
- 9. Positive handling**
- 10. Providing first aid assistance**
- 11. Assisting a child who requires a specific medical procedure and who is not able to carry this out unaided. ***

* In the case of a specific procedure only a person suitably trained and assessed as competent should undertake the procedure. Parents have the responsibility to advise the school of any known intimate care needs relating to their child.

1. Assisting a child to change his / her clothes

On occasions an individual child may require some assistance with changing if, for example, gets wet outside, or has vomit on his/her clothes etc. Staff will always encourage children to attempt undressing and dressing unaided. However, if assistance is required this will be given. Staff will always inform another member of staff of their intended actions. Staff will always endeavour to have a colleague in attendance when supporting dressing/undressing and will always give the child the opportunity to change in private, unless the child is in such distress that it is not possible to do so. If staff are concerned in any way parents will be sent for and asked to assist their child and informed if the child becomes distressed

2. Changing a child who has soiled him/herself

If a child soils him/herself in school a professional judgement has to be made whether it is appropriate to change the child in school, or request the parent/carer to collect the child for changing. In either circumstance the child's needs are paramount and he/she should be comforted and reassured throughout. The following guidelines outline our procedures but we will also seek to make age-appropriate responses.

- The child will be given the opportunity to change his / her underwear in private and carry out this process themselves.
- School will have a supply of clean underwear and spare uniform for this purpose. (In addition, pupils who regularly soil will be asked to supply spare clothes).
- If the child is distressed and unable to accept support then the emergency contact will be asked to attend. If none of the contacts can be reached the Headteacher is to be consulted and the decision taken on the basis of loco-parentis and our duty of care to meet the needs of the child.
- With consent from parents (appendix 1) staff may clean a soiled child.
- Where necessary, a child may be showered in the presence of two staff members in order to maintain personal care.

3. Children wearing nappies

Parents are asked to sign a simple agreement form outlining who will be responsible, within the school, for changing the child and when and where this will be carried out. This agreement allows the school and the parent to be aware of all the issues surrounding this task right from the outset (see Appendix 1). Where children are being toilet trained, or their toileting is being monitored for medical reasons, an intimate care log may be completed.

4. Supervising a child involved in intimate self-care

Some children may still need to be supervised while using the toilet. Children are encouraged to toilet themselves independently, however at times they may need assistance. Parental support should already have been obtained

5. Providing comfort to an upset or distressed child and limited touch

All staff engaged in the care and education 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 pupils this will be in response to the pupil'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.

Children with special needs may require more physical contact to assist their everyday learning. 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.

There may be occasions when a distressed pupil 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 pupil's distress, their age, the extent and cause of the distress. Particular care must be taken in instances which involve the same pupil over a period of time.

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 vulnerable to allegations of abuse. Ensuring that a witness is present will help to protect staff from such allegations.

6. Swimming

At Middleton School all pupils participate in a swimming programme. Children are entitled to respect and privacy when changing their clothes 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, teasing or other unacceptable behaviour does not occur. Our swimming venues have an open changing room but may also have cubicles as an option. This supports effective and discrete supervision and privacy for our children when changing. Where a child needs additional support for changing parental permission will be sought so as to maintain dignity but increase independence.

7. Menstruation

Some children will experience puberty and develop periods during their Primary Education. They should be supported and encouraged to keep their own supply of sanitary protection without having to request it from staff/carers. A central bank of sanitary protection will also be stored in school. However it should be recognised that some children will not know how to deal with menstruation and they will need guidance and support to manage their periods appropriately. This should be provided by staff in a positive manner and is taught through the PSCE curriculum. There should also be adequate provision for the private disposal of used sanitary protection. If a child needs further assistance seek advice from the Headteacher.

9. Positive handling

There may be occasions where it is necessary for staff to restrain children physically to prevent them from inflicting damage on either themselves, others or property. In all cases of Restrictive Intervention the incident must be documented and reported. Staff must be fully aware of the school's Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy.

10. Providing first aid assistance

Staff who administer first aid should ensure wherever possible that another adult or other children are present. The pupil's dignity must always be considered and where contact of a more intimate nature is required (e.g. assisting with toileting or the removal of wet/soiled clothing), another member of staff should be in the vicinity and should be made aware of the task being undertaken.

11. Assisting a child who requires a specific medical procedure

Our Administration of Medications Policy should be referred to.

Individual Health Care Plan

Individual Health Care plans will be drawn up for children requiring ongoing intimate care to suit their individual circumstances. It is vital that these plans are prepared prior to admission, and where possible opportunities are made for the child and family to meet the staff who will be providing intimate care. The plan should be signed by all who contribute and reviewed on a regular basis. When writing a plan, whole school and classroom management considerations should be taken into account, for example:

- The importance of working towards independence
- Arrangements for home/school transport, sports days, school visits, swimming etc
- Substitutes in case of staff absence
- A system to leave class with minimum disruption
- Awareness of discomfort that may disrupt learning
- Implications for PE (changing, discreet clothing etc.)

Any plan should be clearly recorded to ensure clarity of roles, responsibilities and expectations. A procedure should be included to explain how concerns arising from the intimate care process will be dealt with. This is the responsibility of the child's teacher. These will be reviewed on a termly basis and discussed with the parents/carers.

Responsibility of staff

The management of all children with intimate care needs will be carefully planned. Staff will be supported to adapt their practice in relation to the needs of individual children. The child will be supported to achieve the highest level of independence that is possible given their age and abilities. Staff will encourage each child to do as much for themselves as they can.

Any member of staff may provide intimate care, provided it does not require unusual procedures or techniques (e.g. lifts or hoists). Volunteers are not to provide intimate care, but they may be used as a witness. 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.

Wherever possible the same child will not be cared for by the same adult on a regular basis; ideally there will be a rota of carers known to the child who will take turns in providing care.

Resources

The dignity and privacy of the child is of paramount concern. An area will be made private when a child is to be changed.

Staff should always wear appropriate PPE when dealing with a child who is bleeding or soiled or when changing a soiled nappy. Any soiled waste should be placed in a polythene waste disposal bag, which can be sealed. This bag should then be placed in a bin (complete with a liner) which is specifically designated for the disposal of such waste. The bin should be emptied on a weekly basis and it can be collected as part of the usual refuse collection service as this waste is not classed as clinical waste. Staff should be aware of the school's Health and Safety policy.

The Protection of Children

If a member of staff has any concerns about physical changes in a child's presentation, e.g. marks, bruises, soreness etc. they 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. Further advice will be taken from outside agencies if necessary and appropriate. If a child makes an allegation against a member of staff, all necessary procedures will be followed.

Monitoring and review

- This policy will be monitored by the Governing Body.
- The policy will be reviewed every two years..

Appendix (i)

Intimate Care Agreement

Middleton School



In order to best meet the needs of your children when they are with us, we would like to set up an individual agreement between parents and the school with regard to intimate care.

Intimate care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure which are children are unable to do for themselves arising from the child's stage of development.

Intimate care may involve helping with drinking, eating, dressing, toileting, or comforting. In most cases at school intimate care will involve procedures to do with personal hygiene.

Staff at Middleton providing intimate care, are aware of the need to adhere to good Child Protection practice in order to minimise the risks for both the children and themselves. All school staff are supported and trained so that they feel confident in their practice.

Name of child.....

- I give permission to Middleton to provide appropriate intimate care to my child.
- I understand that this will generally be carried out by staff from my child's class but may also be carried out by another member of staff.
- I will contact my child's teacher if there are any issues I would like to discuss.

Signed..... Date

Parent/Carer

Signed..... Date

Headteacher (On behalf of staff employed at Middleton School):