

The Rydal Academy

Intimate Care Policy

Accepted by: The Rydal Academy LGB September 2014

Approving Body: Local Governing Body

Committee: LGB

Review Cycle: 3 years

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Introduction

Staff who work with young children and those who have special needs will realise that the issue of intimate care is a difficult one and will require staff to be respectful of children's needs.

Intimate care can be defined as care tasks of an intimate nature, associated with bodily functions, body products, personal hygiene and sun protection. Intimate care in these circumstances may demand direct or indirect contact with, or exposure of, the genitals or unclothes areas of the body such as arms and legs. Examples include care associated with continence, menstrual management and sun safety as well as more ordinary tasks such as help with washing or bathing.

Children's dignity will be preserved and a high level of privacy, choice and control will be provided to them. Staff who provide intimate care to children have a high awareness of child protection issues. Staff behaviour is open to scrutiny and staff at The Rydal Academy work in partnership with parents/carers to provide continuity of care to children/young people wherever possible.

Staff deliver a personal safety curriculum, as part of Personal, Social, Health and Relationships Education, to all children as appropriate to their developmental level and degree of understanding. This work is shared with parents who are encouraged to reinforce the personal safety messages within the home and talks from the school nurse.

The Rydal Academy 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. We recognise 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

All children who require intimate care are treated respectfully at all times; the child's welfare and dignity are of paramount importance.

Staff who provide intimate care are trained to do so (including Child Protection) and are fully aware of best practice. If required, apparatus will be provided to assist with children who need special arrangements following assessment from physiotherapist/occupational therapist as required.

Staff will be supported to adapt their practice in relation to the needs of individual children taking into account developmental issues.

There is careful communication with each child who needs help with intimate care to discuss the child's needs and preferences. The child is aware of each procedure that is carried out and the reasons for it.

As a basic principle, children 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

themselves as they can. This may mean, for example, giving the child responsibility for washing themselves or removing wet clothes.

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 needs help with intimate care.

Parents/carers will be involved with their child's health care arrangements on a regular basis; a clear account of the agreed arrangements will be recorded on the child's care plan. The needs and wishes of children and parents will be carefully considered alongside any possible constraints, e.g., staffing and equal opportunities legislation.

The Protection of Children

Safeguarding and Child Protection procedures will be accessible to staff and adhered to.

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

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 designated person for child protection. A clear record of the concern will be completed and referred to Darlington Children's Services if necessary. Parents will be asked for their consent or informed that a referral is necessary prior to it being made unless doing so is likely to place the child at greater risk of harm. (The child protection policy will be followed)

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.

If a child makes an allegation against a member of staff, all necessary procedures will be followed. (Refer to Staff Discipline and Child Protection policies)