Watery Lane Preschool

Intimate Care Policy

Policy statement

Intimate care is an essential part of meeting children's basic needs. At Watery Lane Preschool, intimate care is carried out safely, respectfully and in a child-centred way. Children are treated with dignity and sensitivity, their privacy is considered alongside safeguarding, and they are encouraged to develop independence at a pace appropriate to their age, stage and individual needs.

No child will be excluded or treated less favourably because they are not yet toilet trained or because they require intimate care due to their age, development, SEND, disability or medical needs.

What is intimate care?

Intimate care describes care involving direct or indirect contact with, or exposure of, private parts of the body. In our setting this may include:

- changing nappies, pull-ups, underwear or soiled clothing;
- helping a child use the toilet and supporting wiping/cleaning;
- washing intimate areas where necessary following an accident;
- supporting continence or individual medical/personal care needs.

Personal care may also include changing outer clothing, washing hands or face, hair care, applying agreed creams and prompting children to use the toilet.

Procedures

Dignity, privacy and independence

- Staff explain what they are doing using age-appropriate language and seek the child's cooperation. Children are encouraged to do as much as they can independently.
- Care will normally be provided one-to-one by a familiar, suitable member of staff. Another member of staff will be nearby or aware that intimate care is taking place. Privacy will be maintained without creating unsafe or unnecessarily isolated practice.
- Children will never be rushed, shamed, blamed, teased or punished for toileting accidents or continence needs.
- If a child becomes distressed or refuses routine care, staff will reassure them and consider another familiar practitioner. Where delaying care may affect the child's health, hygiene or welfare, the Manager/Deputy will support an appropriate response and parents will be informed as necessary.

Nappy changing and toileting

- Children will be checked and changed according to their individual needs and promptly when staff become aware that they are wet or soiled.
- Staff will use disposable gloves and aprons where appropriate, clean the child sensitively, dispose of nappies/waste safely and clean the changing surface after use. Children will never be left unattended on a changing surface.
- Staff and children will wash and dry their hands following intimate care. Soiled clothing will be placed in a sealed bag and returned home; staff will not rinse soiled clothing by hand.
- Parents should provide nappies/pull-ups, wipes, suitable spare clothing and any clearly labelled agreed creams required by their child.

Parents, consent and individual needs

- Parents/carers are informed of our intimate care procedures when their child joins the setting and provide consent for staff to support toileting, changing and hygiene needs where required.
- We work closely with parents to support toilet training and individual routines. Where a child has regular, complex or specialist intimate care needs, an individual care plan and, where necessary, risk assessment will be agreed with parents and relevant professionals.
- Reasonable adjustments will be made for children with SEND, disabilities, medical needs or delayed continence so that they can participate fully in preschool life.

Safeguarding and staff suitability

- Only suitable staff who have completed the setting's required safer recruitment checks and induction will routinely undertake intimate care. Students, volunteers and visitors will not provide intimate care independently.
- All staff receive safeguarding guidance and appropriate training in intimate care, hygiene, professional boundaries and any specialist procedures required for an individual child.
- If staff notice unexplained marks, bruising, soreness, injury, unusual distress, a concerning comment/disclosure or another welfare concern during intimate care, they must report it immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and follow the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. Staff must not investigate concerns themselves.
- Any concern about an adult's conduct must be reported immediately in accordance with our safeguarding, allegations/low-level concerns and Whistleblowing procedures.

Recording and monitoring

- Routine intimate care will be recorded in accordance with the setting's normal procedures and parents informed as appropriate. Any unusual incident, injury, concern or deviation from an agreed care plan will be recorded factually and reported to the Manager/DSL.
- Intimate care practice is monitored through induction, supervision, observations and risk assessment. Staff should raise any concern or training need with the Manager.

Legal framework and guidance

- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework for group and school-based providers
- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004
- Equality Act 2010
- Current UKHSA guidance on preventing and controlling infections in education and childcare settings
- Somerset safeguarding and intimate care guidance/model policy

Links to other procedures and documentation

Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy; Health and Safety Policy; SEND Policy; Administering Medicines Policy; Managing Children who are Sick, Infectious or with Allergies Policy; Equality and Inclusion Policy; Whistleblowing Policy; Staff Code of Conduct; and relevant individual care plans/risk assessments.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of Watery Lane Preschool

Held on _____

Signed on behalf of Management Committee _____

Name of signatory_____ Role of signatory _____

Date to be reviewed _____