

# **INTIMATE CARE POLICY**



## **Alexander McLeod Primary School**

**Updated: July 2024**

**Date of review: September 2026**

## **Purpose**

Alexander McLeod Primary School takes seriously its responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children and young people in its care. Meeting a pupil's intimate care needs is one aspect of safeguarding. This document aims to provide clear principles and guidance on the issue of supporting intimate care needs in the school environment.

This policy should be read in conjunction with Alexander McLeod Primary School:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Special Needs and Inclusion Policy
- Responsibility for Health and Safety Policy
- Sex and Relationship Education Policy (SRE)

## **Rationale**

Intimate care is defined as any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an intimate procedure that most children carry out for themselves, but which some are unable to do. Examples include support with dressing and undressing (underwear), changing incontinence pads and nappies, helping someone use the toilet or washing intimate parts of the body. Pupils with a physical disability may be unable to meet their own care needs for a variety of reasons and will require regular support. No child shall be attended to in a way that causes distress, embarrassment or pain to either the child or adult.

## **Aims**

- To safeguard the rights and promote the welfare of children;
- To provide guidance and reassurance to staff;
- To assure parents and carers that their child's needs will be met;
- To remove barriers to learning and participation and ensure inclusion for all children.

## **Principles**

Children and Young People who have personal care needs fall within the terms of the Equality Act 2000, (section 29) which states that the setting must make 'reasonable adjustments' to support them, regardless of age, gender, disability, religion, ethnicity or sexual orientation whilst ensuring respect and dignity when intimate care is given. At Alexander McLeod all children must be welcomed and not excluded from any activities because of a delay in achieving continence. Neither will they be required to wait for parents/carers to arrive to attend to them, or sent home to change.

## **Commitments**

The following are the fundamental principles of intimate care upon in which our policy guidelines are based:

- Every child has a right to be safe
- Every child has the right to personal privacy
- Every child has the right to be valued as an individual
- Every child has the right to be treated with dignity and respect
- Every child has the right to be involved and consulted in their own intimate care to the best of the child's abilities

- Every child has the right to express their views on their own intimate care and to have their views taken into account
- Every child has the right to have levels of intimate care that are appropriate and consistent
- No child should be attended to in a way that causes distress or pain and staff must be sensitive to each child's individual needs

We will:

- Promote independence wherever possible;
- Consult parents and carers and respect their views and wishes and take religious and cultural values into account.

## **Best practice**

As part of initial gathering of information from parents when a child starts school, staff will seek parental views on practices at home for their child. Parents will receive a copy of this policy, which will be included in the Parent Pack. Parents will also be offered an opportunity to discuss their child's needs with an appropriate member of staff.

All children at Alexander McLeod Primary School who require intimate care are treated respectfully at all times; the child's welfare and dignity is of paramount importance. 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 at Alexander McLeod Primary School will raise the child's awareness of any intimate care procedures before they take place by the use of objects of reference, symbols, signs, gesture and verbal explanation as appropriate. During the procedure staff will give explanations of what is happening in a straightforward and simple way so that children are reassured and made to feel comfortable.

All intimate care practices should be valued as part of that child's essential curriculum.

They are an opportunity to develop independent and age-appropriate skills, increase dignity and raise self-esteem. Choice and decision making skills will form part of the process, e.g. "Do you want to go to the toilet or not?"; "Should we wash your hands or face first?"; "Can I help fasten your trousers?".

## **Promoting personal development**

Achieving continence is one of the many developmental milestones usually reached within the context of learning before a child transfers to school. At Alexander McLeod Primary School we acknowledge that there may be children with longer term continence issues for whom an individual programme may need to be put in place. In addition there may be children joining us in school who are at various points of developing their independence in toileting who may need short term support in this important area of self-care.

No child will be refused a place at Alexander McLeod Primary School in relation to continence issues. We are committed wholeheartedly to working with children, parents/carers and any support agencies deemed necessary to ensure appropriate provision is made for all children with needs in this specific area of personal development. If intimate care is required parents/carers will be asked to sign an intimate care permission form (Appendix).

Children's dignity will be preserved and a high level of privacy, choice and control will be provided to them. Staff behaviour is open to scrutiny and staff at Alexander McLeod Primary School will work in partnership with parents/carers to provide continuity of care to children.

## Health and safety

Children may be changed in any of the toilet areas throughout school, depending on the location of their classroom. Appropriate resources provided:

From Home	In School
1. Nappies/pull-ups 2. Wipes 3. Spare clothes	1. Disposable gloves 2. Spare wet wipes 3. Where necessary, spare nappies and/or pull-ups 4. Nappy sacks 5. Clinical bin for disposal of nappies 6. Spare underwear 7. Plastic bags for wet/soiled clothing 8. Antibacterial cleanser
From Home (Menstruation)	In School
1. Sanitary wear 2. Wipes if appropriate 3. Spare clothes	1. Emergency sanitary pack 2. Disposable gloves 3. Clinical bin for disposal of pads 4. Plastic bags for soiled clothing 5. Antibacterial cleanser and hot water

If a child accidentally wets or soils him/herself, they will be attended to in the toilet area usually used by that child. Staff involved in this procedure will be expected to wear disposable gloves.

All children will stand up for all procedures of intimate care, even very young children. Where appropriate, all children will be taught personal safety skills carefully matched to their level of development and understanding through PSHE as referred to in the SRE policy.

Wet or soiled nappies, gloves and aprons and any items used for cleaning the changing area will be disposed of in the appropriate waste bin provided. Wet or soiled underwear/clothing will be returned to parents. Temporary storage of these will be in a tied bag hung on a child's peg.

Hot water and liquid soap will be available to wash hands as soon as the task is complete. Paper towels will be available for drying hands.

The premises Manager will be informed that the area has been used and will arrange for the area to be cleaned if required.

Where specialist equipment and facilities above that currently available in the school are required, every effort will be made to provide appropriate facilities in a timely fashion, following assessment by outside professional agencies.

## Medical procedures and intimate care

Intimate care procedures will be adhered to when assisting a child who requires a specific medical procedure and who is not able to carry this out unaided. Parental permission must be given before any medication is dispensed in school. A small number of children will have significant medical needs. In addition to the arrangements included in the school's Children with Medical Needs Policy, these children's requirements will be in stated in the Medical Alert Handbok and ratified by the school nurse.

## **Working with children of the opposite sex**

There is positive value in both male and female staff being involved with children. However, the current ratio of female to male staff in the primary schools means that assistance will more often be given by a woman.

Note\* The religious views, beliefs and cultural values of children and their families should be taken into account, particularly as they might affect certain practices or determine the gender of the carer.

## **Swimming**

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 in the changing rooms.

Staff should announce their intention of entering changing rooms, avoid remaining in changing rooms unless pupil needs require it, avoid any physical contact when children are in a state of undress and avoid any visually intrusive behaviour. Given the vulnerabilities of the situation, it is strongly recommended that when supervising children in a state of undress, another member of staff is present. However, this may not always be possible and therefore Staff need to be vigilant about their own conduct.

If an incident has taken place that has necessitated a member of staff to be present when children are changing an incident report will be completed.

Where a child needs additional support for swimming, a member of staff will liaise with the poolside staff regarding the child's additional needs. Parental permission will be sought and if necessary a personal care plan will be drawn up; this will also include assistance if required to change the child clothes to maintain dignity but increase independence.

## **Safeguarding**

At Alexander McLeod Primary School we have no anticipation that the intimate care of a child either in nappies or otherwise should raise any safeguarding issues as all staff are checked through the Disclosure and Barring Service. In addition, all staff have received Safeguarding Training from the school's designated safeguard lead. Therefore it will be normal practice for only one adult to be involved in attending to a child's personal needs. The person attending to a child will always be a member of the school staff.

The school's Child Protection Policy and procedures will always be adhered to. If a member of staff has a concern about physical changes in a child's presentation, e.g. marks, bruises, soreness etc. They will immediately report concerns to the appropriate 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. If a child makes an allegation against a member of staff, all necessary procedures will be followed (Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges (September 2022)). Similarly, any adult who has concerns about the conduct of a colleague at the school or about any improper practice will report this to the Designated Teacher or Head teacher, in accordance with the Safeguarding or/and Whistle blowing policy.

## **Support for staff**

All staff should be aware of the policy and guidelines for providing intimate care for children. There should be regular opportunities for them to raise any issues and share concerns. Staff will be offered training where appropriate.

This document was approved and adopted by the governing body of Alexander McLeod Primary School.



## Alexander McLeod Primary School

### Permission for school to provide intimate care

Child's name ..... Class .....

DOB .....

- I give permission to Alexander McLeod Primary School to provide appropriate intimate care support to my child, e.g. changing soiled clothing, washing and toileting.
- I will advise the Headteacher or Inclusion Lead of any medical reason my child may have which affects issues of intimate care.
- I understand that intimate care is provided at school on a one-to-one basis.
- I understand that member(s) of staff providing intimate care for my child have been DBS checked and received appropriate training, including Safeguarding.

Name (please print) .....

Signature .....

Relationship to child .....

Date .....