



Intimate care

At Clare House Nursery, we recognise that intimate care is an important part of supporting a child's health, wellbeing, comfort and personal development. All children will be treated with sensitivity, kindness and respect, with their dignity, privacy and individual needs maintained at all times. Staff will provide intimate care in a calm and reassuring manner, encouraging children's independence wherever developmentally appropriate and listening carefully to their verbal and non-verbal communication.

When carrying out any intimate care, staff must remain fully aware of their safeguarding responsibilities, ensuring that their practice protects both the child and themselves and is always safe, appropriate, professional and in the best interests of the child.

As an additional safeguarding measure, mirrors are positioned behind each changing unit to enhance visibility within the changing area. This supports greater transparency during intimate care routines and helps to safeguard both the child and the member of staff, while continuing to respect the child's privacy and dignity.

Safeguarding and Children's Voice

Intimate care is an important part of safeguarding and provides valuable opportunities to build trusting relationships with children.

Before beginning the nappy change, practitioners will explain to the child what is going to happen using calm, reassuring and age-appropriate language. Wherever developmentally appropriate, practitioners will seek the child's cooperation, listen to both verbal and non-verbal communication and respect the child's wishes and feelings. If a child appears distressed, anxious or reluctant, practitioners will respond sensitively, offer reassurance and, where appropriate, ask whether they would feel more comfortable being supported by another familiar practitioner.

Practitioners remain professionally curious throughout intimate care routines. Any unexplained injuries, bruising, soreness, changes in behaviour, emotional responses or disclosures made during personal care will be treated as safeguarding concerns and reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in accordance with the nursery's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Record of Concern procedures.

Staff Suitability

Only practitioners who have successfully completed the nursery's safer recruitment procedures, including an Enhanced DBS check, identity verification, right to work checks and induction, may undertake intimate care routines independently.

No member of staff who has not received their Enhanced DBS clearance may carry out intimate care or nappy changing unsupervised.

In addition, newly appointed staff will not undertake intimate care or nappy changing independently until they have:

- Completed the setting's induction process and received appropriate training in intimate care, nappy changing, safeguarding, hygiene and infection control procedures.
- Received appropriate moving and handling guidance where required.
- Been given sufficient opportunity to observe experienced members of staff carrying out intimate care in accordance with the setting's policies and procedures.
- Been appropriately supervised while beginning to undertake intimate care duties.
- Demonstrated that they understand and consistently follow the setting's safeguarding, dignity, privacy and intimate care procedures.
- Reached a point where the Manager, Room Supervisor and established staff team are satisfied that they are suitable, competent and trustworthy to undertake intimate care independently.
- Confirmed that they themselves feel confident and comfortable undertaking intimate care responsibilities.

The introduction of a new member of staff to intimate care will always be child-centred and gradual. Initially, intimate care should only be undertaken with children who have developed a secure and trusting relationship with that member of staff and who are comfortable receiving their care.

A child's voice, behaviour and non-verbal communication must always be respected. If a child shows distress, resistance, discomfort or indicates that they do not want a particular member of staff to provide their intimate care, this must not be forced. Wherever possible, a familiar and trusted member of staff will provide the care instead.

Our priority at all times is to ensure that intimate care is provided in a way that safeguards children, protects their dignity and privacy, respects their individual wishes and promotes their emotional wellbeing and sense of security.

Procedure

Before beginning any nappy change, practitioners must ensure they have all necessary equipment prepared, including clean nappies, wipes, creams (where parental consent has been obtained), hygiene roll and appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), so that the child is never left unattended during the procedure.

- Wash hands thoroughly and put on a clean disposable apron and gloves before each nappy change.
- Cover the changing mat with fresh disposable hygiene roll.
- Encourage children who are developmentally able to climb the changing steps independently, reducing the need for lifting and promoting independence.
- Never leave a child unattended on the changing unit, even for a moment.
- Remove the soiled nappy carefully and clean the child's skin using wipes or other agreed products, wiping from front to back where appropriate.
- Apply barrier cream only where written parental permission has been obtained and check the child's records for any allergies or sensitivities before use.
- Place the used nappy, wipes, gloves, apron and hygiene roll into a nappy sack before disposing of them in the designated nappy disposal bin.
- Clean and disinfect the changing mat thoroughly after every use using the nursery's approved antibacterial cleaning product and disposable paper.
- Remove PPE safely and wash hands thoroughly immediately after every nappy change.
- Support the child to wash their hands where developmentally appropriate.
- Record the nappy change in accordance with nursery procedures where required.

Where an older child who wears underwear has a wetting or soiling accident, staff will respond sensitively and respectfully, supporting and guiding the child to change while encouraging independence wherever appropriate.

Staff should talk reassuringly to the child throughout, explaining what they are doing and ensuring that the child is never blamed, embarrassed, shamed or told off for having an accident.

The child's privacy, dignity and individual needs must be respected at all times. Staff must remain mindful of their safeguarding responsibilities, particularly when supporting a child within a toilet cubicle. Where possible, staff should position themselves slightly back from the toilet cubicle doorway so that they remain visible to other members of staff, while still maintaining the child's dignity and privacy. Any hands-on assistance should be limited to what the child requires, with the child encouraged to manage as much of their own changing and personal care as they are developmentally able to do.

Infection Prevention

- PPE must be changed between every child.
- Fresh hygiene roll must be used for every nappy change.
- The changing area must be cleaned and disinfected after each use.
- The nappy disposal bin must be emptied regularly, or sooner if required, to maintain hygiene standards and minimise infection risks.
- Any wet or soiled clothing must be placed securely in a nappy sack, clearly identified as belonging to the child, and sent home with the child on the same day.

