

MAVISBANK SCHOOL

"HELPING HANDS"

1. "Helping Hands" is a set of guidelines for staff who provide intimate care for children and young people with disabilities.
2. The purpose of the guidelines is to set out a framework within which staff who provide intimate care can offer a service and an approach which acknowledge the responsibilities and protect the rights of everyone involved.
3. The guidance is not prescriptive, but it offers advice for good practice; staff should be aware of these guidelines and encouraged to follow them for their own protection as well as for the protection of children.
4. As indicated in the "Safe and Well" notes children with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to all kinds of abuse.
5. From a child protection perspective, intimate care involves risks both for children and adults as it may involve the adult touching private parts of the child's body.
6. Disabled children have the right to be treated with sensitivity and respect in such a way that their experience of intimate care is a positive one.

SETTING THE CLIMATE FOR INTIMATE CARE

1. Each child / young person must be treated as an individual and care must be given as gently and sensitively as possible.
2. It is important for staff to bear in mind how they would feel in the child's position.
3. If possible, pupils should carry out/participate in aspects of personal care; this directly reflects the thinking behind Health and Wellbeing programmes in terms of giving pupils life skills and developing their independence.
4. Staff should be aware of and respond to the pupils' reactions and must treat the pupils with dignity at all times.
5. Pupils must be allowed privacy appropriate to their age and stage.

GOOD PRACTICE IN INTIMATE CARE

1. Staff should speak to the pupils by name so that they know they are the focus of the activity.
2. Pupils should be informed of what is happening in a straightforward and re-assuring manner using the Hanen Communication Technique and MGS on body signing.
3. Staff should give strong sensory clues such as a pad to signal the intention to wash or change the child.
4. Pupils should be given the opportunity to anticipate events through the use of such sensory clues in a supportive and unhurried manner.
5. Adequate screening should be available in order to respect the child's dignity and privacy.
6. Appropriate terminology for private parts of the body should be agreed and used by all staff.
7. Staff should speak to older children in a manner that reflects their age.
8. Items of protective clothing should be provided and readily accessible.
9. Supplies of suitable cleaning materials should be provided for cleaning and disinfecting changing surfaces.
10. It is not appropriate for volunteers to carry out intimate care procedures and students should only do so under the supervision of a trained member of staff following consultation with the students' college supervisors.

NB While it is considered preferable, especially for older and more physically mature children to receive intimate care from a member of staff of the same gender, there are usually more female than male staff employed for these tasks. Boys are therefore more likely to receive intimate care from a woman and this is usually acceptable to parents, although not in some cultures. Parents should be consulted where male members of staff might be required to provide intimate care for girls.

Procedures on
Menstruation and
Erections during changing procedures

Menstruation:

- Staff should be aware of when a pupil is beginning her menstruation cycle
- It should be acknowledged that the pupil may be in discomfort by gently reassuring her
- A hot water bottle is to be used as a signifier and as a comforter

Erections:

- Staff should be careful not to show embarrassment or allow the pupil to feel that something wrong has occurred
- Staff should try to quietly continue with the procedure
- If this is not possible then the pad should be used to cover the pupil
- Pupils should be given a short time before the procedure is completed
- During that time staff should talk to the pupil or involve him in some other aspect of personal care e.g. washing face

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