Personal Care Policy 2026-2027

Reviewed: October 2026

1. Introduction

The Personal Care Policy has been developed to safeguard children and staff. It applies to everyone involved in personal care for children in this setting.

2. Definition of Personal Care

Personal care refers to the support and assistance provided to children in areas such as washing, dressing, eating, drinking, toileting and meeting other hygiene needs. It also includes the care and cleaning of the spaces and equipment used for personal care.

A child's personal care needs may change over time and are influenced by their age and developmental stage. Additionally, some children may have specific medical or health needs that require support within their environment. Addressing these needs will be managed through separate procedures and policies.

3. Aims

The aims of this policy are:

- To safeguard the dignity, rights and wellbeing of children, ensuring that all care is provided in the best interests of children and their voice is heard
- To ensure that all staff follow best practice when providing personal care

4. Principles

To ensure that all children receive high-quality care, the setting will apply the following principles:

- All children have the right to be treated as individuals
- All children have the right to remain healthy
- All children have the right to privacy, dignity and a professional approach from all staff when meeting their needs
- All children have the right to information and support that will enable them to make informed and appropriate choices
- All children have the right to be accepted for who they are without regard to age, gender, ability, race, culture or beliefs

- All children (and parents/carers) have the right to information and procedures for complaints or queries they may have regarding personal care

5. Our Approach to Best Practice

The management of all children with personal care needs will be carefully planned, considering individual needs. Staff responsible for providing personal care are trained to handle these responsibilities and are fully aware of best practices, including safeguarding, code of conduct and positive handling techniques. Appropriate equipment and facilities will be made available to meet specific needs as necessary. We will seek advice from health professionals, such as occupational therapists, physiotherapists and other specialists when required. Additionally, staff will receive training tailored to the specific needs of each child when necessary.

Staff will promote independence and support children to be an active part of their personal care routine, giving consideration to their age and stage of development and encouraging each individual to do as much for themselves as appropriate. For example, this may mean supporting and encouraging a child to clean themselves.

Where appropriate or where best practice requires, personal care plans will be drawn up for particular individuals, reflecting their specific needs and circumstances.

Legal requirements regarding staffing levels for personal care state that any staff member performing this task alone must discreetly inform another staff member beforehand. This task should always be carried out when another staff member is nearby, visible or able to listen to what is happening.

Positive engagement with the process is necessary. If a child shows any sign of reluctance or distress, the personal care procedures will be paused until they are calm and regulated. This may mean, not carrying out the personal care intervention at the allocated time or having to pause during the process to allow the child to calm and settle. Ensuring that they are calm and positively engaged with the process of personal care will support positive outcomes for the child.

If staff become concerned whilst undertaking personal care, they should ask for assistance from a colleague. The incident must be reported and recorded.

The number of adults required to provide support will be determined by the individual needs of the child or where support is provided on a one-to-one basis, the early years setting will ensure all safeguarding protocols are met.

If a child is hurt accidentally, they should be immediately reassured and the member of staff should check that they are safe. The incident must be reported immediately to the manager/designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and the information recorded. Parents/carers should be made aware of the incident on the same day. If a member of staff has any concerns about physical changes in a child's presentation (for example, marks, bruises, soreness, etc.), they will immediately report concerns to the manager/designated safeguarding lead (DSL).

If workers providing personal care are concerned about a child or young person's reactions or responses during personal care or are concerned that they may have misunderstood or misinterpreted an action or instruction, this should be recorded and reported immediately to the manager/designated safeguarding lead (DSL).

6. When to Begin Toilet Training

We acknowledge that children are unique and will join us at different points in respect of their learning and development journey, including toileting and self-care. The advice on when to start toilet training children can vary. NHS guidance explains that most children are ready to begin toilet training from around 18 months to 2 years. The NHS provides advice on how to potty train. ERIC, The Children's Bowel and Bladder Charity, has helpful information and resources on toilet training in early years settings. However, some people may choose to start earlier.

We will ensure as part of our duty of care that children who are in nappies or pull-ups are changed in a timely manner. Between the age of 18 months to 2 years, based upon the child's development and with parents' permission, we will encourage children to wear pull-ups or trainer pants in preparation of toilet training.

We will ensure that the changing areas are warm, clean, safe and suitable. To ensure children's privacy is protected we will keep blinds down and tilted or cover windows where necessary. The changing area will store each child's changing accessories. For example, nappies, pull-ups, wipes, training pants, spare clothing (which are supplied by parents).

Staff will have access to appropriate equipment and resources to facilitate the changing and cleaning of the child. Staff will be familiar with the hygiene procedures and carry them out when changing nappies, pull-ups, training pants, soiled or wet clothing.

Staff recognise that nappy changing is relaxed and a perfect opportunity to promote independence in young children. They should avoid pulling faces or making negative comments about nappy contents or the child. Nappies and pull-ups are disposed of hygienically. Soiled clothing is bagged for parents to take home. The changing areas will be left clean and ready for the next child. Children are encouraged to take an interest in using the toilet. For example, they may just want to sit on the toilet at first. Older children can use the toilets whenever they have the need to and are encouraged to be as independent as is age and developmentally appropriate. Children are reminded at regular times to go to the toilet. Children are encouraged to wash their hands and have soap and towels to dry their hands.

Starting toilet training after 2 and a half to 3 years of age can make it harder for some children to learn this new skill. However, we recognise that for some children this might be the case and we will work closely with parent/carers to manage this.

Different cultures may start toilet training at different ages. Toilet training should be guided by the child's parents or carers. It is important to respect parental preferences during the process.

7. Toilet Training Challenges

It is not uncommon for children who are toilet trained and reliably clean and dry at home to start having accidents when they begin at an early years setting.

8. Supporting Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

On occasions, some children may find toilet training challenging. These children often benefit from additional support with toilet training.

Almost all children can learn to be clean and dry, including children with SEND. Some children may find toilet training more difficult. These children need extra time and effort with toilet training.

If children keep wearing nappies after they are ready for toilet training, we recognise it might be harder for them to become accustomed to using the toilet in a new place.

We will regularly review the information and advice from:

- Contact on toilet training for families with children living with a disability
- ERIC on toilet training children with additional needs

9. Working in Partnership

We will work closely with parents, carers and specialists to give children consistent messages about toilet training.

We will help parents and carers understand the importance of toilet training in the early years. This will help children in our care to get ready for the transition to school. We recommend that parents and carers view 'The Institute of Health Visiting's 'advice and tips on toilet training'.

Where a child is struggling with toilet training, we encourage parents and carers to talk to their GP or health visitor.

Where necessary, we will discuss concerns with our:

- Supervisors, managers or senior leaders
- The local authority
- The Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO)

If we decide to seek external support, we will engage parents and carers in the process at all stages. This includes involving parents and carers in:

- Sharing their thoughts
- Assessing their child's needs
- Planning next steps
- Reviewing their child's progress

10. Personal Care Plan

Some children may need a personal care plan. The plan will take into account the child's preferred method of communication and other information which will support the child to be fully involved in the personal care process.

If a child becomes distressed or unhappy about being cared for by a particular member of staff, the matter will be investigated 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 issues 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.

11. Relevant Policies

This policy will be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Accessibility
- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Health and Safety
- Moving and Handling
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions at Nursery
- Anti-Bullying
- SEND

12. Supportive Resources for Children Needing a Support Plan

- Supporting Document 1: Permission for schools to provide personal care (school/parents)
- Supporting Document 2: Supporting with personal care. (school/child)
- Supporting Document 3: Toilet management plan (school/child)

School name: Sir James Knott Nursery School and Nest

Date of policy review: October 2026

Date of next review: October 2027

The named persons for drawing up and leading the review of this policy are: **John Croft Headteacher/ SENDCo**

Supporting Document 1

Parent/Carer Form:

PERMISSION FOR NURSERY TO PROVIDE PERSONAL CARE

Child's forename:		Child's surname:	
Date of birth:		Male/Female:	

I agree to:

- The school to providing appropriate personal care support for my child
- Advise the school of any existing or new medical or health care needs that my child has, which may affect the provision of personal care
- Continue to liaise with the school regarding the sharing of information and reviewing of the plan

Nature of care required:

Name of parent/carer:		Parent/carer name:	
Address:		Address:	
Relationship to child:		Relationship to child:	
Signature:		Signature:	
Date:		Date:	

Supporting Document 2

Nursery Form: Supporting with Personal Care

This form can be used to address specific concerns/challenges

Child's name: DOB:

Date:

School:

Staff helping you with personal care will:

- Stop what they are doing to help you as soon as you communicate you need support
- Treat you with respect and ensure privacy and dignity at all times
- Ask permission before touching you or your clothing
- Check that you are as comfortable as possible, both physically and emotionally
- Ensure communication is positive and focused on you and your needs

Child

As the child who requires help in the toilet, you can expect me to do the following:

- I will try, whenever possible, to let you know as soon as possible that I will need support so that you can be available and be prepared to help me
- I will try to follow my agreed-upon support plan if I have one
- I will work with you to ensure my needs are met
- I will communicate with you or other trusted adults if I feel uncomfortable or embarrassed at any time

We will review this agreement on:

Supporting Document 3

School/Parent Form

TOILET MANAGEMENT PLAN

Child's name:

DOB:

Name of support staff involved:

Location of suitable toilet facilities:

Area of need:

Support required:

Equipment/resources required:

Frequency of support:

Review date:

Parents/carers:

Child (if appropriate):

Staff/role

Date