



Breakaway

Bathing / Personal care policy

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Policy Summary:

Regulation 6, 10 & 12 of Guide to Children's Homes Regulations 2015

Policy Aim:

Ensuring that health and safety of children when bathing or providing personal care.

Legislation, Central Government and other External Documents

- Children's Homes Regulations including Quality Standards 2015
- Care Standards Act 2000/14
- Children Act 2004

Breakaway References

- Breakaway Cross Gender Care Policy
- Children's Individual Care Plan
- Risk Assessments

Policy

During their stay at Breakaway, each child may use the bathing facilities, which include both the shower and bath. **It is essential that, under no circumstances, may a child be left out of the visual sight of their allocated worker in the bathroom area**, unless written consent has been obtained from the child's parent or guardian.

The personal care needs of each child are unique and are outlined in their individual care plan, 'This Is Me'. All care workers must read, fully understand, and adhere to the guidelines specified in the care plan when assisting with bathing. Additionally, individual risk assessments must be reviewed, understood, and followed to ensure the safety and well-being of the child.

In some cases, the written consent from the child's parent or guardian, as outlined in the care plan, may override the requirement for staff to maintain visual sight of the child while they bathe. In these circumstances, staff are expected to sit or stand outside the bathroom while the child showers or bathes. Routines play a vital role in providing children with a sense of security; therefore, adhering to the care plans helps reinforce familiarity and provides reassurance throughout their stay at Breakaway.

Privacy and Respecting Children's Dignity

Bathing is not only a time for children to wash but also an opportunity to relax and unwind. It is a private time, and children may feel vulnerable being undressed in front of carers. To respect this privacy, shower and bath curtains can be used. It is also important to note that some children may use bath time to explore their own bodies. Staff should allow the child to do this at their own pace, without directly watching or overseeing them. In such cases, staff should sit on a chair outside the shower or bath curtain or outside the bathroom, provided this is in line with the child's care plan.

Staffing arrangements should be made with consideration of the child's gender needs. If a child requires personal care assistance from someone of the same gender, this will be outlined in the child's care plan. This policy should be read in conjunction with Breakaway's Cross Gender Care Policy.

Procedure

- **Preparation Before Bathing:** Ensure you have everything needed for the entire duration of bathing or personal care before entering the bathroom with the child. Parents or carers are asked to provide toiletries for their child, which should be used. If the child has not brought toiletries, Breakaway's supply may be used, and a note should be made in the child's communication book that toiletries are required for the next stay. Always check individual consent forms in relation to this activity. If an item is missed when gathering supplies and is required during bathing, call for another staff member to retrieve it. Under no circumstances should a child be left alone in the bathroom unless written consent is provided. A supply of Breakaway toiletries is kept in the linen cupboard, if needed.
- **Towels and Flannels:** If Breakaway's towels and flannels are used, a fresh set must be used for each child. Towels and flannels must not be shared between children until they have been washed and sterilised.
- **Personal Hygiene:** It is important to encourage all females to wash their vaginas and bottoms from front to back to reduce the spread of infection.
- **Toothbrushes and Hair Care:** Each child should bring their own toothbrush. If a child does not have their own, Breakaway staff must provide a new one from the supply in the linen cupboard. A toothbrush provided for one child must not be used by any other child, and it must be clearly labelled with the child's name after use. Check to ensure a toothbrush is not already labelled with the child's name before providing a new one. Children should also bring their own hairbrush or comb. If these are not provided, a Breakaway hairbrush or comb from the linen cupboard may be used, but it must be thoroughly cleaned after each use.
- **Head Lice Care:** Children with head lice should have a hairbrush or comb for their sole use.
- **Slip Prevention:** To prevent slips when exiting the bath, or for care workers on wet floors, bath mats must be used to absorb excess water. If the bath mat does not adequately cover the wet floor, additional towels may be used.
- **Undressing and Dignity:** When assisting a child with undressing, explain each action clearly to ensure the child understands what is happening. While drying the child, cover any exposed body parts to maintain their dignity as you dry other areas.
- **Encouraging Independence:** If a child can independently undress themselves, they should be encouraged to do so. The care worker should only provide assistance if requested by the child.
- **Review Care Plans:** Always refer to the child's care plan and individual programmes within the 'This Is Me' document to understand the level of assistance the child may require.

Overhead Tracking in B-side bathroom

Staff must receive thorough training and feel confident in using the overhead tracking system efficiently before hoisting a child into the bath or shower trolley. Training should also include procedures for using the overhead tracking during a power failure or emergency situation. The overhead tracking system in the bathroom should only be used for children who require hoisting.

A-side Bath/ Walk in shower

The bath is fixed to the floor and cannot be adjusted, making it more suitable for children who are capable of performing a certain level of self-care.

When bathing a child, staff must ensure that a non-slip mat is placed in the bath before the child or young person enters. Additionally, the water temperature must be checked to ensure it is at a safe and acceptable level, not exceeding 43 degrees Celsius.

It is essential that the bath plug is attached to a metal chain to allow for quick removal in case of an emergency, such as a child experiencing a seizure, to ensure rapid drainage of the water.

For children with epilepsy, no plug should be used when they wish to use the bath. Instead, they should use the shower in the bath or, in the case of all epileptic children, showers should be the only bathing option due to the risks associated with bath water.

The shower is a walk-in type, and a non-slip mat must be placed in the shower tray before a child enters. Children who use a shower chair can be wheeled to access the shower.

A-side and B-side doors

Each bathroom door is equipped with a lock, and staff have the internal key to ensure access. It is the responsibility of each staff to obtain the key during handover if they do not already have it. The bathroom doors may be locked for the safety of the children when the bathrooms are not in use, particularly during night-time hours.

There are two separate communal toilets available for children's use. However, if a child prefers to use one of the bathrooms rather than the single toilets, their allocated worker will open the door for them. Staff should accompany the child into the bathroom if appropriate; if not, they must remain directly outside the bathroom door to ensure they can open the door if there are concerns for the child's safety.

Any staff member entering a bathroom or toilet must always introduce themselves before entering.