



## **Intimate Care Policy March 2025**

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## **Introduction**

The Lightyear Federation is aware that some learners may require assistance from members of staff for personal care, including toileting, either due to the age and developmental level of the child, or as a result of disability or medical need. Our main aim is to ensure that our learners are safe, secure and protected from harm.

Our intimate care policy has been developed to safeguard children and staff. The principles and procedures apply to everyone involved in the intimate care of children.

This intimate care policy should be read in conjunction with 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' and the schools' policies on Safeguarding and Child Protection, Staff Code of Conduct, Whistleblowing, Allegations against staff, Health and Safety and SEND.

## **Aim**

The intimate care policy aims to provide a clear framework for staff to ensure the safety and dignity of all learners who need support with personal care, including toileting and continence management. It will also clarify for learners and their families the support they can expect from school.

## **Definition**

- Intimate care can be defined as any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out a procedure to intimate personal areas which most people usually carry out themselves; examples include care associated with continence and menstrual management, as well as more ordinary tasks such as help with washing, toileting or dressing.
- It also includes supervision of pupils involved in intimate self-care.

## **Principles**

It is our intention to develop independence in each child, however we recognise that there will be times when adult help will be required.

We will ensure that all children:

- Are treated as individuals
- Are treated with respect and that their rights to safety, dignity and privacy are respected
- Are provided with consistent care, delivered by a familiar adult, wherever possible
- Has the right to express their views on their own intimate care and to have their views taken into account.

## **Providing Intimate Care – Our Responsibilities and Procedures**

- The Lightyear Federation is committed to ensuring that all staff responsible for the intimate care of pupils will undertake their duties in a professional manner at all times. It is acknowledged that these adults are in a position of great trust.
- We recognise that there is a need to treat all pupils, whatever their age, gender, disability, religion, ethnicity or sexual orientation with respect and dignity when intimate care is given. The child's welfare is of paramount importance and his/her experience of intimate and personal care should be a positive one. It is essential that every pupil is treated as an individual and that care is given gently and sensitively: no pupil should be attended to in a way that causes distress or pain.
- Staff will work in close partnership with parent/carers and other professionals to share information and provide continuity of care. We will work with parents to promote toilet training unless there are medical reasons why this is not appropriate.

- Pupils who require regular assistance with intimate care have Intimate Care/Health Care Plans written and agreed by staff, parents/carers and any other professionals actively involved, such as school nurses or physiotherapists. The care plan will be reviewed annually or sooner if the learner's needs change, and at any time of change of circumstances, e.g. for residential trips or staff changes (where the staff member concerned is providing intimate care). They should also consider procedures for educational visits/day trips. Ideally the plan should be agreed at a meeting at which all key staff and the pupil should also be present wherever possible/appropriate. Any historical concerns (such as past abuse) should be considered.
- The detail and method of intimate care should be agreed and recorded in the child's Health Care Plan/Risk Assessment. This agreement will be signed by Parent/Carer.
- A written record will be kept of all support with intimate care. This will include the date and time of the care, who was present and any care given that has differed from the care plan, together with the reason for this. Any changes in the learner's behaviour or appearance will be documented and reported to a senior member of staff, in line with the safeguarding policy.
- Only adults who are employees of the Lightyear Federation will assist pupils with intimate care (not students or volunteers) as employed staff will have the usual range of safer recruitment checks, including enhanced DBS checks.
- Staff who provide intimate care are trained in health and safety/moving and handling and safeguarding of children.
- All staff should be aware of confidentiality. Sensitive information will be shared only with those who need to know.
- Staff will be supported to adapt their practice in relation to the needs of individual pupils taking into account developmental changes such as the onset of puberty and menstruation.
- There will be careful communication with each pupil who needs help with intimate care in line with their preferred means of communication (verbal, symbolic, etc) to discuss their needs and preferences. Where the pupil is of an appropriate age and level of understanding, permission should be sought before starting an intimate procedure.
- Staff who provide intimate care should speak to the pupil personally by name, explain what they are doing, and communicate with all children in a way that reflects their age.
- Only in an emergency would staff undertake intimate care that has not been agreed with parents/carers. Where a care plan is not in place, parents/carers will be informed the same day if their child has needed help with meeting intimate care needs (e.g. has had an 'accident' and wet or soiled him/herself). It is recommended practice that information on intimate care should be treated as confidential and communicated in person or by telephone.
- Every child's right to privacy and modesty will be respected. All pupils will be supported to achieve the highest level of autonomy that is possible given their age and abilities. Staff will encourage each individual pupil to do as much for his/herself as possible.
- Careful consideration will be given to each pupil's situation to determine who and how many carers might need to be present when s/he needs help with intimate care. SEN advice suggests that reducing the numbers of staff involved goes some way to preserving the child's privacy and dignity. Wherever possible, the pupil's wishes and feelings should be sought and taken into account, whilst also ensuring safe working practices for staff.
- Personal care staff will notify the teacher, line manager or other member of staff, discreetly, that they are taking a child/young person to carry out a care procedure. Wherever possible, two members of staff will be in the vicinity when a child needs intimate care e.g. the second staff member could be in the same room or the adjacent room with the adjoining door open.

- The religious views, beliefs and cultural values of children and their families will be considered, particularly as they might affect certain practices or determine the gender of the staff member providing intimate care.
- Health & Safety guidelines should always be adhered to:
  - Staff should familiarise themselves with best practice regarding infection control, including wearing disposable gloves and aprons where appropriate.
  - When changing children that have soiled, asking a child to lay down on a changing mat or changing station rather than attempt to change standing up ensures the staff member is not face to face with the child.
  - Yellow bags or nappy bags to be provided for the disposal of soiled items and they should be “double bagged” before placing them in the bin.
  - Appropriate hand washing should always be carried out and promoted to the child.
- No member of staff will carry a mobile phone, camera or similar device whilst providing intimate care.
- If a situation occurs which causes personal care staff to feel uncomfortable or concerned, a senior member of staff will be called, and the incident reported and recorded.
- Whilst safer working practice is important, such as in relation to staff caring for a pupil of the same gender, there is research which suggests there may be missed opportunities for children and young people due to over anxiety about risk factors; ideally, every pupil should have a choice regarding the member of staff. There might also be occasions when the member of staff has good reason not to work alone with a pupil. It is important that the process is transparent so that all issues stated above can be respected; this can best be achieved through a meeting with all parties to agree what actions will be taken, where and by whom.
- All staff will act according to their safeguarding policy and procedures if there are any concerns for the learner’s wellbeing.
- Where relevant, it is good practice to agree with the pupil and parents/carers appropriate terminology for private parts of the body and functions and this should be noted in the plan.
- In relation to record keeping, a written record should be kept in a format agreed by parents and staff every time a child has an invasive medical procedure, e.g. support with catheter usage (see afore-mentioned multi-agency guidance for the management of long-term health conditions for children and young people).
- Members of staff must be given the choice as to whether they are prepared to provide intimate care to pupils. All staff undertaking intimate care must be given appropriate training within the school.

### **Governors Responsibilities**

- The Governing Body will promote the welfare and safeguarding of pupils who attend the schools within the Lightyear Federation.
- The Governing Body recognises its duties and responsibilities in relation to the Equalities Act 2010 which requires that any pupil with an impairment that affects his/her ability to carry out day-today activities must not be discriminated against.
- The Governing Body will ensure that this policy is monitored and reviewed at least every three years.

### **Parent/Carer Responsibilities**

- Parents/carers should ensure that all relevant information is proved to the school as soon as possible so that their child's needs can be met. This will include the nature of their child's needs, details of any involved professionals as well as any changes in medication, care of condition.
- Parents/carers should work alongside the school to achieve the maximum possible level of independence at home.
- Parents/carers should work with school to develop and agree a care plan and ensure that the school always has the required equipment for their child's intimate care or toileting needs.

### **Safeguarding and Child Protection**

- The Lightyear Federation takes seriously its responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children in its care. Meeting a pupil's intimate care needs is one aspect of safeguarding. The school's safeguarding and child protection procedures will always be adhered to.
- From a child protection perspective, it is acknowledged that intimate care involves risks for children and adults as it may involve staff touching private parts of a pupil's body. In our schools, best practice will be promoted and all adults (including those who are involved in intimate care and others in the vicinity) will be encouraged to be vigilant at all times, to seek advice where relevant and take account of safer working practice.
- Where appropriate, pupils will be taught personal safety skills carefully matched to their level of development and understanding.
- If a member of staff has any concerns about physical changes in a pupil's presentation, e.g. unexplained marks, bruises, etc they will immediately report concerns to a Designated Safeguarding Lead. A clear written record of the concern will be completed and followed up with in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- If a pupil, or any other person, makes an allegation against an adult working at the school this should be reported to the Executive Headteacher (or to the Chair of Governors if the concern is about the Executive Headteacher) who will follow procedures in accordance with our 'Allegations Against Staff Policy' and statutory safeguarding guidance.
- 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 Executive Headteacher or to the Chair of Governors, in accordance with the child protection procedures and 'whistle-blowing' policy.