

Intimate Care Policy – Oriel High School

Date Amended: September 2025

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Next Review Date: September 2026

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Staff who work with young people who have special needs will understand that the issue of intimate and personal care is a difficult one and will require staff to be respectful of young people's needs.
- 1.2 Intimate care can be defined as care tasks of an intimate nature, associated with bodily functions, body products and personal hygiene which demand direct or indirect contact with or exposure of the genitals. Examples include care associated with continence and menstrual management as well as more ordinary tasks such as help with washing or bathing.
- 1.3 Young people's dignity will be preserved and a high level of privacy, choice and control will be afforded to them. Staff who provide intimate care to young people have a high awareness of child protection issues. Staff behaviour is open to scrutiny and staff at Oriel High School work in partnership with parents/carers to provide continuity of care to children/young people wherever possible.
- 1.4 Staff deliver a full personal safety curriculum, as part of Personal Development Curriculum (PDC) to all children as appropriate to their developmental level and degree of understanding. This work is shared with parents who are encouraged to reinforce the personal safety messages within the home.
- 1.5 Oriel High School is committed to ensuring that all staff responsible for the intimate care of young people will undertake their duties in a professional manner at all times. Oriel High School recognises that there is a need to treat all young people with respect when intimate care is given. No child should be attended to in a way that causes distress or pain.

2.0 OUR APPROACH TO BEST PRACTICE

- 2.1 All young people who require intimate care are treated respectfully at all times.
- 2.2 Staff who provide intimate care are aware of Child Protection, Health and Safety and Infection Control as well as being fully aware of best practice.
- 2.3 Staff will be supported to adapt their practice in relation to the needs of individual young people taking into account developmental changes such as the onset of puberty and menstruation. Wherever possible staff who are involved in the intimate care of young people will not usually be involved with the delivery of sex and relationship education to their young people as an additional safeguard to both staff and young people involved.
- 2.4 There is careful communication with each young person who needs help with intimate care in line with their preferred means of communication (verbal, symbolic, etc.) to discuss the young person's needs and preferences.
- 2.5 As a basic principle young people will be supported to achieve the highest level of autonomy that is possible given their age and abilities. Staff will encourage each young person to do as much for themselves as they can. This may mean, for example, giving the young person responsibility for washing themselves. Individual intimate care plans will be drawn up for particular young people as appropriate to suit the circumstances of that young person. These plans include a full risk assessment to address issues (where appropriate) such as moving and handling, personal safety of the young person and the carer and health.

2.6 Each young person's right to privacy will be respected. In accordance with West Sussex Guidance on Safe Working Practice (September 2006), young people are encouraged to act as independently as possible and to undertake as much of their own personal care as is practicable. When assistance is required, staff ensure that another appropriate adult is in the vicinity and is aware of the task to be undertaken.

Arrangements for intimate care are negotiated and agreed between the young person (as far as any learning difficulty makes this possible), their parents/carers and school staff. Such arrangements are recorded on an intimate care plan.

2.7 Wherever possible the same young person will not be cared for by the same adult on a regular basis; there will be a rota of carers known to the young person who will take turns in providing care. This will ensure, as far as possible, that over-familiar relationships are discouraged from developing, while at the same time guarding against the care being carried out by a succession of completely different carers.

2.8 Parents/carers will be involved with their young person's intimate care arrangements on a regular basis; a clear account of the agreed arrangements will be recorded on the young person's care plan. The needs and wishes of young person and parents will be carefully considered alongside any possible constraints; e.g. staffing and equal opportunities legislation.

2.9 Each young person will have an assigned senior member of staff to act as an advocate to whom they will be able to communicate any issues or concerns that they may have about the quality of care they receive.

3.0 THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

3.1 West Sussex Child Protection Procedures and Health Protection Agency guidance on Infection Control will be accessible to staff and adhered to.

3.2 Where appropriate, all young people will be taught personal safety skills carefully matched to their level of development and understanding.

3.3 If a member of staff has any concerns about physical changes in a young person's presentation, e.g. marks, bruises, soreness etc. s/he will immediately report concerns to the appropriate manager/ designated person for child protection. A clear record of the concern will be completed and West Sussex Child Protection procedures adhered to.

3.4 If a young person becomes distressed or unhappy about being cared for by a particular member of staff, the matter will be looked into and outcomes recorded. Parents/carers will be contacted at the earliest opportunity as part of this process in order to reach a resolution. Further advice may be taken from outside agencies if necessary.

3.5 If a young person makes an allegation against a member of staff, all necessary procedures will be followed (see West Sussex Child Protection Policy and Procedures).

Supporting documentation:

Code of Practice for Schools: Disability Discrimination Act 1995, Part 4

West Sussex County Council – Guidance for Safe Working Practice for the Protection of Children and Staff in Education Settings, September 2006

Oriel High School Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

Health and Safety Guidelines

Infection Control in Schools and other Childcare Settings – Health Protection Agency