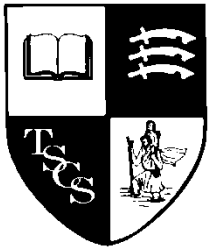


THE ST. CHRISTOPHER SCHOOL

SEN Trust Southend



Academy Trust - Special School

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INTIMATE CARE POLICY

First Written: 02.08.2023
Date Adopted by Governors: 04.10.2023
Review Date: 01.08.2025 (or earlier if deemed necessary)

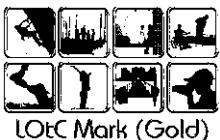
This policy needs to be read in conjunction with the schools' Safeguarding and Whistleblowing Policy. It also needs to read in conjunction with our First Aid and Educational Visits Policies to further inform practice.

Rationale:

The St. Christopher School is committed to ensuring that all staff responsible for intimate care routines of learners will carry out these routines in a professional manner at all times. The school recognises that there is a need to treat all learners with care and respect when intimate care is given; we additionally recognise that we have a duty to safeguard all staff who undertake intimate care with a policy which informs practice.

Intimate care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure (such as cleaning up a learner after having evacuated their bowels/bladder). In most cases such care will involve cleaning intimate personal areas for hygiene purposes as part of a staff member's duty of care. In the case of a specific procedure only a person suitably trained and assessed as competent by the Headteacher should undertake the procedure, (e.g. the administration of medication.)

The issue of intimate care is a sensitive one and will require staff to be respectful of the learner's needs. The learner's dignity should always be preserved with a high level of privacy, choice and control. There shall be a high awareness of child protection issues and if any member of staff has any concerns in relation to the intimate care of learners, they must bring this to the IMMEDIATE attention of the school's Designated Safeguarding lead/Deputy Safeguarding lead using MyConcern to record this concern.



Learning Outside the Classroom



Southend-on-Sea



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Any care should not cause distress or pain during intimate care routines, the individual needs of learners must always be taken in to account, so as not to cause or aggravate any ongoing issues e.g. – hip displacement, skin sores/irritations and sensitivity to wipes etc. Staff must consult with parents, the school first aider/ appointed person, and physiotherapist if any learner shows any signs of distress through intimate care routine to seek further advice and guidance to inform practice.

Staff behaviour must be open to scrutiny and staff must work in partnership with parents/carers obtaining further advice and guidance if necessary, to provide continuity of care to learners/young people wherever possible.

It is recognised that the learners will develop into adults and as a result there will be changes to their bodies. It will be the responsibility of the class Teacher to check with parents/carers during learner reviews if, for example, the incontinence products they are supplied with and the hygiene methods applied meet the needs of their child. If it becomes apparent that such products/hygiene methods are not meeting the learner's needs this will be discussed in depth to support the family, liaising with the school nurse/continence nurse/school GP as necessary.

Intimate care will continue to be included in the school's safeguarding training outlining the protocols all staff must follow whilst delivering such care. Within such training the school will identify the appropriate pathways which must be followed if any member of staff has concerns in relation to safeguarding/ whistleblowing.

Aims:

1. To recognise that there is a need to treat all learners with respect when intimate care is given
2. To ensure that all staff responsible for the intimate care of learners will undertake their duties in a professional manner at all times
3. To ensure that Safeguarding procedures are followed at all times to protect both learner and staff
4. To ensure the school has established the appropriate pathways to ensure learner hygiene needs are supported in a relevant and meaningful way discussing such aspects with parents/carers

Monitoring and Evaluation:

This policy will be monitored by the Governors of our The St. Christopher School, who will formally evaluate it on a biennial basis (or earlier if necessary). This policy will also work alongside the school's Safeguarding/Whistleblowing policy to provide an avenue for any staff who may have concerns regarding in this area.

Best Practice:

1. The management of all learners with intimate care needs will be carefully planned. The learner who requires intimate care is treated with respect at all times; the learner's welfare and dignity are of paramount importance.
2. Staff who provide intimate care are trained to do so (including Safeguarding and Health and Safety training in lifting and moving and handling) and are fully aware of best practice.

3. Staff will be supported to adapt their practice in relation to the needs of individual learners taking into account developmental changes such as the onset of puberty and menstruation.
4. The learner will be supported to achieve the highest level of autonomy that is possible given their age and abilities. Staff will encourage each learner to do as much for him/herself as he/she can. This may mean, for example, giving the learner responsibility for washing themselves.
5. Individual intimate care plans will be drawn up for particular learners as appropriate to suit the circumstances of the learner; these will take the advice and guidance of any multi-agency team as appropriate – e.g. – school GP/nurse/continence team. If such plans are required it will be the role of the school first aider and Class Teacher/Headteacher to identify particular learner; any plan will be discussed with parents/carers before it is implemented.
6. Each learner's right to privacy will be respected. Careful consideration will be given to each learner's situation to determine how many carers might need to be present when a learner is toileted.
7. Wherever possible the same learner will not be cared for by the same adult(s) on a regular basis; ideally there will be a rota of carers known to the learner who will take turns in providing care. This will ensure, as far as possible, that over-familiar relationships are discouraged from developing, whilst at the same time guarding against the care being carried out by a succession of completely different carers. If any member of the class team consider they are expected to support over and above the rest of the team they need to bring this to their line managers immediate attention.
8. Wherever possible staff should only care intimately for an individual of the same sex. However, in certain circumstances this principle may need to be waived where failure to provide appropriate care would result in negligence for example, female staff supporting boys where there are no male staff available.
9. However, it is recognised that male staff are in a different situation and need to take greater care over not placing themselves in situations where they could be accused of safeguarding learner issues:
 - a. Never be in an intimate care/intimate contact situation on your own with a learner
 - b. Never assist with the toileting arrangements for girls over eight unless there is an emergency
 - c. When assisting moving and handling procedures with older learners, ensure that this is done with minimum intimate contact
 - d. Be confident to refuse to participate in a potentially intimate care/intimate contact situation if you feel unhappy with this. This should be discussed openly by the Class Team at the next possible meeting so that clear protocols can be established. This should also form part of a Senior Leadership Team discussion as it may have consequences for the manner in which the school staff can be deployed
10. Intimate care arrangements will be discussed with parents/carers on a regular basis and recorded on the learner's care plan. The needs and wishes of learner/parents will be taken into account wherever possible within the constraints of staffing and equal opportunities legislation. When necessary the school will ask the parents/carers to demonstrate the level of intimate care required to ensure all staff are consistent within their approach if/as required.

11. Best practice acknowledges ideally two members of staff would support a young person with toileting if they are in a closed room. However, the school understands that from a staffing perspective it is not always possible to release two members of a team. A second person should always be aware and where it is possible to release two members of a team, it should be actioned.

Safeguarding:

- School and Multi-Agency Safeguarding Procedures will be adhered to at all times.
- All learners will be taught personal safety skills carefully matched to their level of development and understanding within the school's Relationships/Sex Education Curriculum.
- If a member of staff has any concerns about physical changes in a learner's presentation, e.g., marks, bruises, soreness etc. s/he will immediately report concerns to one of the Safeguarding Officers using MyConcern.
- If a learner becomes distressed or unhappy about being cared for by a particular member of staff, the matter will be looked into, as per the safeguarding policy, 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 the issue(s) are resolved so that the learner's needs remain paramount. Further advice will be taken from outside agencies if necessary.
- If a learner makes an allegation against a member of staff, all necessary procedures will be followed; the CEO will be notified with immediate effect who in turn will liaise with the LADO (see Multi - Agency Child Protection Procedures for details).

Guidance to safeguard learners and staff with regard to situations which may lend themselves to allegations of abuse.

Physical Contact:

- All staff engaged in the care and education of learners and young people need to exercise caution in the use of physical contact. The expectation is that staff will work in 'limited touch' cultures and that when physical contact is made with learners this will be in response to the learner's needs at the time, will be of limited duration and will be appropriate given their age, stage of development and background.
- Staff should be aware that even well-intentioned physical contact might be misconstrued directly by the learner, an observer or by anyone the action is described to. Staff must therefore always be prepared to justify actions and accept that all physical contact be open to scrutiny.
- Physical contact which is repeated with an individual learner or young person is likely to raise questions unless the justification for this is formally agreed by the learner, the organisation and those with parental responsibility.
- Learners with special needs may require more physical contact to assist their everyday learning. The general culture of 'limited touch' will be adapted where appropriate to the individual requirements of each learner. The arrangements must be understood and agreed by all concerned, justified in terms of the learner's needs, consistently applied and open to scrutiny. Wherever possible, consultation with colleagues should take place where

any deviation from the arrangements is anticipated. Any deviation and the justification for it should be documented and reported.

- Extra caution may be required where a learner has suffered previous abuse or neglect. In the learner's view, physical contact might be associated with such experiences and lead to staff vulnerable to allegations of abuse. Additionally, some such learners are extremely needy and seek out inappropriate physical contact. In such circumstances staff should deter the learner without causing them a negative experience. Ensuring that a witness is present will help to protect staff from such allegations.

Learners in distress:

- There may be occasions when a distressed learner needs comfort and reassurance that may include physical touch such as a caring parent would give. Staff must remain self-aware at all times to ensure that their contact is not threatening or intrusive and not subject to misinterpretation.
- Judgement will need to take account of the circumstances of a learner's distress, their age, the extent and cause of the distress. Unless the learner needs an immediate response, staff should consider whether they are the most appropriate person to respond. It may be more suitable to involve the learner's relative.
- Particular care must be taken in instances which involve the same learner over a period of time.
- Where a member of staff has a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance, they should seek further advice, from their line manager or other appropriate person.

First Aid and intimate care:

- Staff who administer first aid should ensure wherever possible that another adult or other learner are present.
- Staff who administer first aid must be in receipt of appropriate training and be identified as one of the school's registered first aiders; any first aid given needs to be brought to the attention of parents/carers.
- All first aid procedures must be recorded in the first aid log system by the end of the school day, where possible, clearly identifying date, time and member of staff completing the log.
- The learner's dignity must always be considered and where contact of a more intimate nature is required.
- Regular requirements of an intimate nature should be planned for. Agreements between the school/organisation, those with parental responsibility and the learner concerned should be documented and easily understood. The necessity for such requirements should be reviewed regularly. The learner's views must also be actively sought and, in particular, any discomfort with the arrangements addressed.

Health and Safety:

- Staff should adhere to the dress code when supporting with intimate care and wear protective/appropriate clothing – gloves/apron; any soiled waste must be placed in the appropriate bin which can be sealed and disposed of at the end of each school day.