THE ST. CHRISTOPHER SCHOOL
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INTIMATE CARE POLICY

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Purpose - The St Christopher School is committed to ensuring that learners who require intimate care are supported safely, respectfully and with dignity. The school also has a duty to safeguard learners and staff through clear procedures and professional practice.

This policy should be read alongside the school's Safeguarding, Whistleblowing, First Aid and Educational Visits policies.

Definition - Intimate care is any support involving washing, toileting, changing clothing, cleaning intimate areas, or carrying out procedures related to a learner's personal care needs.

Any medical or invasive procedure must only be undertaken by a person who has received appropriate training and has been assessed as competent to carry out the task.

Principles - The school will ensure that:

1. All learners are treated with dignity, respect and privacy.
2. Learners' welfare and wellbeing always remain paramount.
3. Safeguarding procedures are followed consistently to protect learners and staff.
4. Learners are encouraged to develop independence wherever possible.
5. Parents/carers are involved in planning and reviewing intimate care arrangements.
6. Staff receive appropriate training and support to meet learners' needs safely and effectively.

Roles and Responsibilities

Staff - Staff providing intimate care will:

- Carry out all care professionally and sensitively.
- Follow safeguarding, health and safety, moving and handling, and infection control procedures.

- Respect each learner's privacy and individual preferences.
- Encourage learners to undertake any aspects of personal care they can manage independently.
- Record and report any concerns immediately in line with safeguarding procedures.
- Seek advice where a learner experiences pain, distress or discomfort during intimate care.

Parents and Carers - The school will work in partnership with parents/carers to ensure consistency of care and to review changing needs. Advice from health professionals may be sought where required.

Class Teachers - Class Teachers will review intimate care needs with parents/carers as part of learner reviews and ensure any necessary changes are discussed with relevant professionals.

Intimate Care Planning - Where required, an individual intimate care plan will be developed and agreed with parents/carers and relevant professionals. Plans will:

- Identify the learner's specific needs.
- Promote independence wherever possible.
- Outline agreed care arrangements.
- Be reviewed regularly.
- Reflect any medical, physical or sensory needs.

Best Practice - Learners will be supported in a manner that preserves dignity and privacy.

- Care arrangements will be planned around the individual needs of the learner.
- Staff will be appropriately trained before undertaking intimate care duties.
- Consideration will be given to the number of staff required to support a learner safely.
- To avoid over-familiarity, intimate care responsibilities should be shared across appropriately trained staff wherever practicable.
- Wherever possible, same-sex support should be provided. However, learner welfare and safe care remain the priority.
- Where staffing arrangements require flexibility, care will continue to be provided in a safe, professional and respectful manner.

Where possible, a second member of staff should be aware when intimate care is taking place. Where circumstances allow, two members of staff should support learners in closed environments.

Safeguarding - All staff must follow school and multi-agency safeguarding procedures.

Any concerns arising from intimate care, including:

- marks,
- bruising,
- soreness,
- behavioural changes,
- distress,
- disclosures, or
- allegations,

must be reported immediately through the school's safeguarding procedures and recorded on MyConcern.

If a learner demonstrates distress about being cared for by a particular member of staff, alternative arrangements will be considered while the concern is investigated.

Any allegation against a member of staff will be managed in accordance with safeguarding procedures and statutory guidance.

Physical Contact - Physical contact must:

- be necessary and appropriate;
- relate to the learner's needs at that time;
- be limited to what is required;
- be professionally justifiable; and
- remain open to scrutiny.

Additional care should be taken where learners have experienced previous trauma, abuse or neglect. Staff should remain aware that even well-intentioned contact may be misunderstood and should seek support if concerned about any situation.

Learners in Distress - Learners who are distressed may require reassurance or comfort. Staff should respond sensitively and professionally, taking account of the learner's age, needs and circumstances.

Where possible, support should be observable by others and should not continue beyond what is necessary to meet the learner's immediate needs.

First Aid and Intimate Care - Staff administering first aid must:

- hold appropriate training where required;
- follow school first aid procedures;
- inform parents/carers as appropriate;
- complete required records promptly; and
- preserve the learner's dignity at all times.

Ongoing intimate care requirements should be documented within Individual Support Plans, understood by all parties and reviewed regularly with parents/carers, any multi agency partners and, where appropriate, the learner.

Health and Safety - Staff supporting intimate care will:

- wear appropriate protective equipment;
- follow infection-control procedures;
- dispose of waste safely and appropriately; and
- adhere to moving and handling guidance where relevant.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be monitored by the Headteacher and Governors and reviewed biennially, or sooner if required by changes to legislation, guidance or school practice.