



Personal and Intimate Care Guidelines

It is paramount any student provided with a service has their intimate and personal care needs met to a high standard. All staff and carers involved in the intimate and personal care should ensure the student receives care appropriate to their needs, whatever that may be. It is every staff member and carer's responsibility to adhere to this procedure; they have a duty of care to strive to achieve high levels of personal and intimate care for every individual student provided with a service.

All staff and carers will be Enhanced DBS approved (3 yearly update if no break in service) before they have any contact with young people on behalf of the College.

The aims of this policy are:

- To safeguard the dignity, rights and well-being of students
- To ensure students are treated sensitively and appropriate when they experience intimate personal care
- To provide guidance and reassurance to staff
- To ensure parents/carers and students, where appropriate, are involved in planning the intimate care of the students and are confident that their concerns and the individual needs of the student are taken into account
- To reassure parents that staff and carers are knowledgeable about intimate care

The views of parents and those with parental responsibility must be sought and listened to with regard to every aspect of the student's personal and intimate care.

What is meant by Personal and Intimate Care?

There is a clear difference between personal care and intimate care. Personal care tasks relate primarily to independent social functioning and presentation. These include activities such as brushing teeth, combing hair and so on. Intimate care tasks are essentially of a physical nature and are concerned with basic bodily functions, or which may involve intimate contact. These include supporting a student to eat, using a toilet, dressing, changing incontinence pads or sanitary wear.



The service aims to support independence in each student to as great an extent as is possible and safe. However, there will be occasions when help is required. This procedure has been developed to safeguard students and staff

Disabled learners are especially vulnerable and staff and carers involved with their personal and intimate care need to be sensitive to their individual needs. Safeguarding training alerts staff and carers to the fact some abusers may seek to use intimate care as an opportunity to abuse students. It is also important to be aware some care tasks (such as help with toileting) can be open to misinterpretation. Adhering to these guidelines of good practice will safeguard both students and staff/carers. These guidelines also underpin the core values of privacy, dignity, rights, fulfilment, choice and independence.

Good Practice in Personal and Intimate Care

The following bullet points highlight principles that should inform all practice regarding personal and intimate care:

- Get to know the student before working with them
- Be aware of any cultural or religious sensitivities related to aspects of intimate care
- Speak to the student by name and ensure they are aware of what intimate care is to take place
- Address student in an age appropriate manner
- Agree terminology for parts of the body and bodily functions that will be used by all
- Respect student's preference for a particular sequence of care
- Give clear prompts in an appropriate way to allow student to anticipate and prepare for events
- Encourage student to do as much as possible for themselves
- Always seek the student's permission to carry out a task
- Provide facilities that allow time, dignity and privacy
- Keep records as required

Intimate Care

Intimate care is defined as any activity that is required to meet the personal needs of an individual student on a regular basis or during a one-off incident.



Achieving Best Practice

The management of all students with intimate care needs must be carefully planned:

- The wellbeing/care plan must identify the student's health care needs

In all cases, the family must be fully involved with and in agreement with the plan and must sign the care guidelines (and any management plans arising from risk assessments). It is also essential the student is as fully involved as possible in the development of these guidelines.

Staff and carers who provide intimate care must be fully inducted in the needs of the individual student, regularly trained in Safeguarding and Moving and Handling if necessary, and aware of best practice.

Staff/carers involved in undertaking intimate care tasks have a clear responsibility to maintain a high standard of hygiene, and must take appropriate measures to ensure health, safety and hygiene. For example, cuts or sores must be covered with waterproof adhesive dressings, thorough hand-washing should be undertaken, disposable gloves should be worn when necessary, and equipment used for medical procedures must be clean, sterilised and in good working order.

Individual intimate care plans must be drawn up for particular students as appropriate to suit the circumstances of the student. Careful consideration must be given to each student's situation to determine how many carers might need to be present when a student is toileted. Intimate care arrangements will be discussed with parents/carers on a regular basis and the needs and wishes of students and parents must be taken into account. If circumstances arise where it is felt the wishes of the family or student are inappropriate, impact negatively on the student, or put the student or staff members/carers at risk, this must be fully discussed with the family and fed back through the line management process. In all cases the welfare and safeguarding of the student will be paramount.



Involve the student in their intimate care

Through the named person/carer's introduction to the student and by building a relationship to try to encourage a student's independence as far as possible in their intimate care. Where the student is fully dependent, talk with them about what is going to be done and give them choice where possible. Be vigilant if a student appears to be uncomfortable with care support and ensure supervisors/line managers are informed.

Treat every student as an individual

Do not make assumptions about how things are done with a student. Families all have their own way of doing things, their own names for body parts etc. Cultural, ethnic and religious differences may affect what is or is not appropriate. Ask the student and respect their wishes, unless the student's welfare/safety would be compromised.

Treat every student with dignity and respect and ensure privacy appropriate to the student's age and situation

A lot of care is carried out by one staff member/carer alone with one student. The practice of providing one to one intimate care of a student alone is supported, unless the activity requires two persons for the greater comfort/safety of the student or if they prefer two people.

Make sure practice in intimate care is safeguarded by minimum staff intervention

As a student can have multiple carers a consistent approach to care is essential. Effective communication between parents/carers/agencies ensures practice is consistent.

Be aware of your own limitations

Only carry out care activities you understand, feel competent and confident to carry out. If in doubt, ask. Some procedures must only be carried out by staff that have been formally trained and assessed, e.g. the administration of rectal Diazepam.



Promote positive self-esteem and body image

Confident, self-assured students who feel their body belongs to them are less vulnerable to sexual abuse. The approach you take to intimate care can convey lots of messages to a student about their body worth. Your attitude to a student's intimate care is important. Keeping in mind the student's age, routine care can be relaxed, enjoyable and fun

If you have any concerns you must report them

If you observe any unusual markings, discolouration or swellings including the genital area, report immediately to your manager/designated person. If during intimate care of a student you accidentally hurt them or the student appears to be sexually aroused by your actions, misunderstands or misinterprets something, reassure the student, ensure their safety and report the incident immediately to your manager/designated person. Report and record any unusual emotional or behavioural response made by the student. A written record of concerns must be made and entered in the student's record/personal file. It is important to follow the College's reporting and recording procedures. Parents/carers must be informed about concerns.

Working with Students of the Opposite Sex

There is a positive value in both male and female staff being involved with students. Ideally, every student should have the choice of carer for all their intimate care. The individual student's safety, dignity and privacy are of paramount importance. The practical guidelines set out below, are written in the knowledge that the current ratio of female to male staff across all social care settings for disabled students means it is more difficult to offer the choice of same sex carer to male students.

Male and female staff/carers can be involved with students of either sex in:

- Key working and liaising with families
- Co-ordinating of and contribution to a student's review
- Meeting the developmental, emotional and recreational needs of the student
- Escorting the students between sites, on outings and to clinics unless intimate care is needed



Intimate Care

Wherever possible, male and female students should be offered the choice of carer (and second carer where required). Where there is any doubt a student is able to make an informed choice on these issues, the student's parents are usually in the best position to act as advocates. It may be possible to determine a student's wishes by observation of their reactions to the intimate care they receive. It should not be assumed a student cannot make a choice.

If there are any concerns about the appropriateness of the student's family's choice of worker, these must be shared and discussed with the manager of the service, and agreed as appropriate by that manager, before physical care tasks are carried out. These discussions and decisions must be recorded on the student's file.

The intimate care of male and female students may be carried out by a member of staff/carers of the opposite sex with the following provisions:

- The delivery of intimate care by approved and competent staff/carers will be governed by expected professional conduct, in conjunction with agency policy and procedures.
- When intimate care is being carried out, all students have the right to dignity and privacy, i.e. they should be appropriately covered, the door closed or screens/curtains put in place. Any specific religious or cultural requirements must be respected and specialised adaptations and arrangements may be required.
- If the student appears distressed or uncomfortable when personal care tasks are being carried out, the care should stop immediately. Try to ascertain why the student is distressed and provide reassurance. Report concerns to your Designated Manager and make a written record.

Communication

It is the responsibility of all staff and carers caring for a student to ensure they are aware of the student's methods and levels of communication (both receptive and expressive). Students communicate using different methods, e.g. words, signs, symbols, body movements, eye pointing.



To promote communication:

- Ascertain how the student communicates. This information will be found on the student's placement plan or information for carers form. If in doubt, consult with the key worker, social worker or family
- Make eye contact at the student's level
- If the student understands language, use simple language and repeat if necessary. Speak in a gentle, even, confident tone.
- Wait for response
- Continue to explain to the student what is happening even if there is no response (unless it is clear that speaking to the student is causing distress)
- Treat the student as an individual with dignity and respect

Responsibilities of Management and Staff and Carers undertaking Care Tasks

It is the responsibility of management:

- To ensure staff and carers will receive ongoing training in which comply with health and safety regulations such as hygiene procedures; manual handling, awareness of medical conditions and associated first aid/Safeguarding procedures; and other aspects of intimate care
- To keep a record of training undertaken by staff and carers and to ensure refresher and updating training is provided where required
- To ensure staff are made fully aware of the individual intimate care protocols for the students they are supporting

It is the responsibility of staff and carers undertaking care tasks:

- To be familiar with the College's procedure for the management of personal and intimate care
- To adhere to health and safety and intimate personal care policies and procedures and must report any health and safety concerns to management within their establishment
- That designated staff/carers will liaise with parents/carers and other appropriate services over the development and implementation of the agreed intimate care protocol
- That designated staff will liaise with other professionals regarding specific aspects of intimate care (e.g. College Nurse) and their advice will be included in the student's individual intimate care protocol



- To understand the needs of students from different racial and cultural backgrounds and specialist advice is sought when necessary

Safeguarding

In-house Safeguarding Procedures and Multi-Agency Safeguarding Procedures must be adhered to. All students should be taught personal safety skills carefully matched to their level of ability, development and understanding. If a member of staff or carer has any concerns about physical changes in a student's presentation, e.g. marks, bruises, soreness, etc they must immediately report their concerns to the duty Safeguarding Officer. If a student becomes distressed or unhappy about being cared for by a particular member of staff/carers, the matter will be looked into and outcomes recorded. Staff schedules, accommodation arrangements or short breaks must be altered until the issue(s) are resolved so that student's needs remain paramount

Further advice must be taken from external agencies if necessary. If a student makes an allegation against a member of staff or carer/s, all safeguarding procedures must be followed.

Working with Families

Partnership with parents is an important principle in any setting and is particularly necessary in relation to students needing intimate care. Much of the information required to make the process of intimate care as comfortable as possible is available from parents, including knowledge and understanding of any religious/cultural sensitivities.

Prior permission must be obtained from parents before intimate care procedures are carried out. Parents should be encouraged and empowered to work with staff/carers to ensure the student's needs are identified, understood and met. This will include involvement with care plans and any other plans which identify the support of intimate care where appropriate. Exchanging information with parents is essential through personal contact, telephone or correspondence.