



# **Intimate Care Policy**

**St Ann's School**

September 2022

To be reviewed September 2024

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

**This policy should be read in conjunction with St Ann's Appropriate Touch Policy.**

**St Ann's is proud to be a Unicef Gold Rights Respecting School. Through our daily practice we actively promote the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Article 16, the right to privacy, and Article 24, the right to health and health services are particularly pertinent to St Ann's Intimate Care Policy.**

- 1.1 Staff who work with children and young people who have special needs realise that the issue of intimate care is a difficult one and will require staff to be respectful of the young person'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 showering or bathing.
- 1.3 The young person's dignity will be preserved and a high level of privacy, choice and control will be provided to him/her. Staff who provide intimate care to children and young people have a high awareness of child protection issues. Staff behaviour is open to scrutiny and staff at St Ann's School work in partnership with parents/carers to provide continuity of care to children/young people wherever possible.
- 1.4 Personal safety is an integral part of the Personal, Social and Health Education curriculum, and is delivered to all students as appropriate to their developmental level and degree of understanding. This work is shared with parents/carers who are encouraged to reinforce the personal safety messages within the home.
- 1.5 St Ann's 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. St Ann's recognises that there is a need to treat all students with respect when intimate care is given. No young person should be attended to in a way that causes distress, embarrassment or pain.

## 2.0 ST ANN'S APPROACH TO BEST PRACTICE

- 2.1 All young people who require intimate care are treated respectfully at all times; the student's welfare and dignity is of paramount importance.
- 2.2 Staff who provide intimate care are trained to do so (including Child Protection and Health and Safety training in moving and handling) and are fully aware of best practice. Specialist equipment eg postural management furniture, commodes, tracking, hoists and slings will be provided to assist with young people who need special arrangements following assessment from the physiotherapist and /or occupational therapist as required.
- 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 the same group of young people as an additional safeguard to both the 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 through vocalisations, facial expressions, gesture, speech, Makaton signing, use of symbols, tactile signing, objects of reference, VOCA etc to ascertain the young person's needs and preferences. The student is therefore facilitated as far as possible to be aware of each procedure that is carried out, and in line with their cognitive ability, the reasons for such procedures.
- 2.5 As a basic principle students 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 in the shower. Intimate care plans will be drawn up for individual students as appropriate to suit the circumstances of the student. These plans include a full risk assessment to address issues such as moving and handling, personal safety of the young person and their carers, and health matters.

- 2.6 Each young person's right to privacy will be respected. Careful consideration will be given to each young person's situation to determine how many carers might need to be present when a student needs help with intimate care. Given the age, size and complexity of need of St Ann's students generally two or more carers will work in partnership to provide the appropriate level of personal care.
- 2.7 Wherever possible the same young person will not be cared for exclusively by the same adults, rather there will be a rota of carers known to the student 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 students and parents/carers will be carefully considered alongside any possible constraints; e.g. staffing and equal opportunities legislation.
- 2.9 All students are encouraged to communicate to any trusted adult within school, any issues or concerns that they may have about the quality of care they receive.

### **3.0 THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE.**

- 3.1 St Ann's Child Protection Procedures and Inter-Agency Child Protection procedures will be accessible to staff and adhered to.
- 3.2 Where appropriate, all students 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. he/she will immediately report concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. At St Ann's this is Gillian Carver Headteacher or Mary Kelly Deputy Headteacher who is the Deputy Designated safeguarding Lead. A clear record of the concern will be completed via CPOMS and referred to social care if necessary. Parents/Carers will be asked for their consent or informed that a referral is necessary prior to it being made, unless doing so is likely to place the young person at greater risk of harm. [See St Ann's Child Protection Policy and Guidelines].
- 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. Staffing schedules will be altered until the issue(s) are resolved so that the young person's needs remain paramount. Further advice will be taken from outside agencies if necessary.
- 3.5 If a student makes an allegation against a member of school staff, all necessary procedures will be followed [see St Ann's Child Protection Policy and Guidelines]
- 3.6 Staff are not permitted to carry mobile phones on their person whilst on duty, except in exceptional circumstances, where this has been pre arranged with the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher for a clearly defined period of time, usually no more than the morning or afternoon session, because of a family emergency. On no account must mobile phones be taken into any areas of the school premises where intimate care procedures are carried out.