Orchard Hill College Academy Trust

# PERSONAL AND INTIMATE CARE POLICY

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# Personal and Intimate Care Policy

## INTRODUCTION

OHCAT is committed to providing outstanding educational opportunities for all our pupils and students. The safety and welfare of our pupils and students is of the utmost importance. All adults working in OHCAT settings must protect children and vulnerable adults from abuse and be aware that any pupil or student may be abused or at risk of abuse.

OHCAT will act in accordance with DfE guidance including Keeping Children Safe in Education, Working Together to Safeguard Children and What to do if you're worried a child is being abused, as well as the clear safeguarding principles and processes laid out in our Child Protection, Adult Protection & Safeguarding Policy and associated policies/procedures.

OHCAT recognises its duties and responsibilities in relation to the Equalities Act 2010 which requires that any child with an impairment that affects his/her ability to carry out day-to-day activities must not be discriminated against.

This policy applies to pupils and students attending OHCAT Academies and should be read in conjunction with the Child Protection, Adult Protection & Safeguarding Policy for each school.

## DEFINITION

Intimate care can be defined as any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out a procedure to intimate personal areas which most people usually carry out themselves but which some pupils/students are unable to do because of their young age, physical difficulties or other special needs. Examples include care associated with continence and menstrual management as well as more ordinary tasks such as help with washing, toileting or dressing. It also includes supervision of pupils/students involved in intimate self-care.

## OUR APPROACH TO BEST PRACTICE

All pupils/students who require intimate care are treated respectfully at all times; the individual's welfare and dignity is of paramount importance. There is careful communication with each pupil/student who needs help with intimate care, in line with their preferred means of communication (verbal, symbolic, etc.), to discuss the pupil/student's needs and preferences. The pupil/student is aware of each procedure that is carried out and the reasons for it.

Staff who provide intimate care must be trained to do so (including comprehensive safeguarding training and, where appropriate, Health and Safety training in manual

handling) and must be fully aware of best practice. Specialist equipment will be provided to assist with pupils/students who need special arrangements following assessment from an occupational therapist, as required. Staff will be supported to adapt their practice in relation to the needs of individual pupils/students, taking into account developmental changes such as the onset of puberty and menstruation.

Transfers and use of hoists during hygiene procedures will be carried out in accordance with OHCAT manual handling procedures. Hygiene procedures will be carried out in accordance with the Infection Control Policy. When using hot water (e.g. showers) with any pupil/student, staff will constantly monitor water temperature by hand throughout. Staff will notify the Estates & Facilities team immediately of any faults in any aspect of backroom fittings or water temperature.

As a basic principle, pupils/students will be supported to achieve the highest possible level of autonomy, given their age and abilities. Staff will encourage each pupil/student to do as much for themselves as they can e.g. giving the pupil/student responsibility for cleaning their own teeth or washing their hands. Where appropriate, individual intimate care plans may be drawn up to suit the circumstances of the individual. These plans include a full risk assessment to address issues such as moving and handling, personal safety of the pupil/student and the carer, and health. Wherever possible, the same pupil/student will not be cared for by the same adult on a regular basis; this aims to discourage over-familiar relationships from developing, while at the same time guarding against the care being carried out by a succession of completely different carers.

Wherever possible and practicable, pupils/students across the school will have their personal care needs met by a staff member of the same gender. It is always desirable that all female pupils have their intimate care needs met by female members of staff. There may however be some exceptional circumstances where this general rule needs to be amended; for example, in the case of an emergency where a male member of staff is the nearest person available to assist a female pupil/student to safety, despite the fact that that pupil/student may be in an ‘intimate care context’. In such an event, it would be unethical and contrary to best health and safety practice to wait for a female member of staff and thus increase the risk to the pupil/student concerned.

Parents/carers will be involved with their child’s intimate care arrangements as necessary, via regular discussions related to the individual pupil/student’s needs. The needs and wishes of pupils/students and their parents/carers will be carefully considered alongside other relevant factors e.g. staffing and equalities.

## CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING

Pupils/students are taught personal safety skills carefully matched to their level of development and understanding, through Personal, Social, Health Education (PSHE) and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) as well as incidentally throughout the day where relevant.

If a member of staff has any concerns about physical or personal changes in a pupil/student's presentation when undertaking intimate care, e.g. marks, bruises, soreness, fearfulness etc., these must be immediately reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in line with the Child Protection, Adult Protection & Safeguarding Policy.

If a pupil/student 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 pupil/student's needs remain paramount. Further advice will be taken from outside agencies if necessary.

If a pupil/student makes an allegation against a member of staff, all necessary procedures will be followed. Please refer to the Child Protection, Adult Protection & Safeguarding Policy for further details.

## SAFE WORKING PRACTICES FOR STAFF

All staff involved with the intimate care of OHCAT pupils/students have an enhanced DBS check. Work experience students and volunteers must NOT be used to support pupils/students with their intimate care needs. Agency staff should not accompany pupils/students 1:1 during personal care unless authorised by the Principal and the Senior Leadership Team; these agency staff must also have an enhanced DBS check.

Where a specific need has been recognised, pupils/students should have a suitable risk assessment created, in line with the Risk Assessment Policy. Risk assessments must always be up to date and agreed with parents/carers. There may also be appropriate references to behaviour support strategies in this context.

The expectation is that staff will work in a 'limited touch' culture with respect to intimate care and that when physical contact is made with pupils/students this will be in response to the pupil/student's needs at the time, will be of limited duration and will be appropriate given their age, stage of development and background.

Mobile phones, cameras or similar devices **must not** be carried by staff while providing intimate care.

To ensure positive safeguarding practice, pupils/students who are able to manage most of their intimate care with oversight or minimal prompting can be taken to the toilet by one member of staff; visibility should be high, if respectfully discrete, while any assistance is being offered. Doors are not to be locked under any circumstances while managing intimate care within the school building.

Where a pupil or student's intimate care needs are being attended to whilst in the community, best practice is that one staff member will supervise in a cubicle while a second staff member stands outside of the unlocked door. However, this may not always be possible (for example, due to other staff members being required elsewhere

to maintain the health and safety of the overall group; or the pupil/student may require support from two staff members, in which case locking the door would help to maintain personal dignity). It cannot be guaranteed therefore, that pupils/students will have their needs attended to in an unlocked cubicle and it is important that staff risk assess the situation at the time.

It is important to consider that where a pupil/student requires two members of staff to support them with intimate care – which will be determined by individual need – then both of those staff members need to be 'active' and actively required to be there. This is to mitigate against the possibility of engendering a sense in that pupil/student that it is acceptable to have their intimate care needs attended to by one person whilst being 'observed' by another. Additionally, personal dignity is paramount and conversations between adults when supporting a pupil/student's intimate care should be restricted and any dialogue centred on the needs of that pupil/student.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

The personal care needs of pupils/students will be organised by the class team, in consultation with parents/carers and other professionals as appropriate, and staff will be delegated appropriately by the teacher in that class.

Lunchtime Supervisors may also be involved in the intimate care of pupils/students and will follow the same procedures and receive the same training as class staff.

Any concerns regarding intimate care should in the first instance be referred to the class teacher. If concerns persist the class teacher should approach a member of the Senior Leadership Team to resolve the situation. If the concern is of a safeguarding nature, it must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the safeguarding procedure followed.

OHCAT has regard to Deprivation of Liberty, which is a safeguard for people who lack capacity to make decisions regarding their own safety. OHCAT will provide a safe environment for the diverse needs of all its pupils and students, ensuring the safety and due liberty of them all as individuals. OHCAT will ensure that pupil/student choice and best interest is considered at all times and that decisions being made suit the needs of the pupil or student to whom they pertain.

## RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Child Protection, Adult Protection & Safeguarding Policy
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy
Health and Safety Policy
Infection Control Policy
Lone Working Policy
Mental Capacity & Consent Policy (Academies)
Manual Handling Policy
Recruitment & Selection Policy

Risk Assessment Policy
Staff Code of Conduct
Whistleblowing Policy