



# Intimate Care Policy

## Lockyer's Middle School

As a Rights Respecting School, children's rights are at the heart of our policies. We recognise, teach, practise and promote the rights of every child as outlined in the United Convention on the Rights of the Child.

**Article 23:** *A child has the right to special education and care if they have a disability so that they live a full life.*

## 1) Principles

- 1.1 The Academy Committee will act in accordance with Section 175/157 of the Education Act 2002 and the Government guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2021) to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils<sup>1</sup> at this school.
- 1.2 Lockyer's Middle School takes seriously its responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children and young people in its care. Meeting a pupil's intimate care needs is one aspect of safeguarding.
- 1.3 The Academy Committee recognises its duties and responsibilities in relation to the Equality Act 2010 which requires that any pupil with an impairment that affects his/her ability to carry out day-to-day activities must not be discriminated against.
- 1.4 This intimate care policy should be read in conjunction with the school's:
- Child Protection Policy
  - Code of Conduct Policy and Guidance On Safer Working Practice
  - Whistleblowing Policy
  - Dealing with Allegations Policy
  - Health and Safety Policy and Procedures
  - Special Educational Needs & Disability Policy
  - Supporting Children with Medical Conditions and Managing Medicines Policy
- In addition and where necessary, the school will refer to the Wimborne Academy Trust policy relating to moving and handling.
- 1.5 The Academy Committee is committed to ensuring that all staff responsible for the intimate care of pupils will undertake their duties in a professional manner at all times. It is acknowledged that these adults are in a position of great trust.
- 1.6 We recognise that there is a need to treat all pupils, whatever their age, gender, disability, religion, ethnicity or sexual orientation with respect and dignity when intimate care is given. The child's welfare is of paramount importance and his/her experience of intimate and personal care will be a positive one. It is essential that every pupil is treated as an individual and that care is given gently and sensitively: no pupil will be attended to in a way that causes distress or pain.
- 1.7 Staff will work in close partnership with parent/carers and other professionals to share information and provide continuity of care.

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<sup>1</sup> References to 'pupils' throughout this policy includes all children and young people who receive education at this establishment.

- 1.8 Where pupils with complex and/or long term health conditions have a health care plan in place<sup>2</sup>, the plan will, where relevant, take into account the principles and best practice guidance in this intimate care policy.

## 2) Definition

- 2.1 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 some pupils 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.
- 2.2 It also includes supervision of pupils involved in intimate self-care.

## 3) Best Practice

- 3.1 Pupils who require regular assistance with intimate care have written health care plans or intimate care plans agreed by staff, parents/carers and any other professionals actively involved, such as school nurses or physiotherapists. Ideally the plan will be agreed at a meeting at which all key staff and the pupil will also be present wherever possible/appropriate. Any historical concerns (such as past abuse) will be taken into account. The plan will be reviewed as necessary, but at least annually.
- 3.2 Where relevant, it is good practice to agree with the pupil and parents/carers appropriate terminology for private parts of the body and functions and this noted in the plan.
- 3.3 Where a care plan is **not** in place, parents/carers will be informed the same day if their child has needed help with meeting intimate care needs (e.g. has had an 'accident' and wet or soiled him/herself). It is recommended practice that information on intimate care is treated as confidential and communicated in person by telephone or by sealed letter, not through the home/school diary.
- 3.4 In relation to record keeping, a written record will be kept in an agreed format every time a child has an invasive medical procedure e.g. support with catheter usage (see afore-mentioned DSCB multi-agency guidance for the management of long term health conditions for children and young people).
- 3.5 Accurate records will also be kept when a child requires assistance with intimate care; these can be brief but will, as a minimum, include full date, times and any comments such as changes in the child's behaviour. It will be clear who was present in every case.

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<sup>2</sup> See DSCB Multi-Agency Guidance for the Management of Long Term Health Conditions for Children and Young People, 2011

- 3.6 These records will be kept in the child's file and available to parents/carers on request.
- 3.7 All pupils will be supported to achieve the highest level of autonomy that is possible given their age and abilities. Staff will encourage each individual pupil to do as much for his/herself as possible.
- 3.8 Staff who provide intimate care are trained in personal care (e.g. health and safety training in moving and handling) according to the needs of the pupil. Staff will be fully aware of best practice regarding infection control, including the requirement to wear disposable gloves and aprons where appropriate.
- 3.9 Staff will be supported to adapt their practice in relation to the needs of individual pupils taking into account developmental changes such as the onset of puberty and menstruation.
- 3.10 There is careful communication with each pupil who needs help with intimate care in line with their preferred means of communication (verbal, symbolic, etc) to discuss their needs and preferences. Where the pupil is of an appropriate age and level of understanding permission will be sought before starting an intimate procedure.
- 3.11 Staff who provide intimate care will speak to the pupil personally by name, explain what they are doing and communicate with all children in a way that reflects their ages.
- 3.12 Every child's right to privacy and modesty will be respected. Careful consideration will be given to each pupil's situation to determine who and how many carers might need to be present when s/he needs help with intimate care. SEN advice suggests that reducing the numbers of staff involved goes some way to preserving the child's privacy and dignity. Wherever possible, the pupil's wishes and feelings will be sought and taken into account.
- 3.13 As far as possible, staff will not provide intimate care without another member of staff being present. However, in extreme circumstances, should this become unavoidable then an individual member of staff must inform another appropriate adult when they are going alone to assist a pupil with intimate care.
- 3.14 The religious views, beliefs and cultural values of children and their families will be taken into account, particularly as they might affect certain practices or determine the gender of the carer.
- 3.15 Whilst safer working practice is important, such as in relation to staff caring for a pupil of the same gender, there is research<sup>3</sup> which suggests there may be

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<sup>3</sup> National Children's Bureau (2004) *The Dignity of Risk*

missed opportunities for children and young people due to over anxiety about risk factors; ideally, every pupil should have a choice regarding the member of staff. It is important that the process is transparent so that all issues stated above can be respected; this can best be achieved through a meeting with all parties, as described above, to agree what actions will be taken, where and by whom.

- 3.16 Adults who assist pupils with intimate care will be employees of the school, not students or volunteers, and therefore have the usual range of safer recruitment checks, including enhanced DBS checks.
- 3.17 All staff will be aware of the school's confidentiality policy. Sensitive information will be shared only with those who need to know.
- 3.18 If necessary, advice will be taken from the school's current contractor responsible for the disposal of large amounts of waste products.

#### **4) Child Protection**

- 4.1 The Academy Committee and staff at this school recognise that pupils with special needs and who are disabled are particularly vulnerable to all types of abuse.
- 4.2 The school's child protection policy will be adhered to.
- 4.3 From a child protection perspective it is acknowledged that intimate care involves risks for children and adults as it may involve staff touching private parts of a pupil's body. In this school best practice will be promoted and all adults (including those who are involved in intimate care and others in the vicinity) will be encouraged to be vigilant at all times, to seek advice where relevant and take account of safer working practice.
- 4.4 Where appropriate, pupils will be taught personal safety skills carefully matched to their level of development and understanding.
- 4.5 If a member of staff has any concerns about physical changes in a pupil's presentation, e.g. unexplained marks, bruises, etc s/he will immediately report concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Headteacher. A clear written record of the concern will be completed and a referral made to Children's Services Social Care if appropriate, in accordance with the school's child protection policy. Parents/carers will be asked for their consent or informed that a referral is necessary prior to it being made but this should only be done where such discussion and agreement-seeking will not place the child at increased risk of suffering significant harm.
- 4.6 If a pupil becomes unusually distressed or very unhappy about being cared for by a particular member of staff, this will be reported to the class teacher or

Headteacher. The matter will be investigated at an appropriate level (usually the Headteacher) and outcomes recorded. Parents/carers will be contacted as soon as possible in order to reach a resolution. Staffing schedules will be altered until the issue/s is/are resolved so that the child's needs remain paramount. Further advice will be taken from outside agencies if necessary.

- 4.7 If a pupil, or any other person, makes an allegation against an adult working at the school this will be reported to the Headteacher (or to the Chief Executive Officer if the concern is about the Headteacher) who will consult the Local Authority Designated Officer in accordance with the school's policy: Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Members of Staff and Volunteers.
- 4.8 Similarly, any adult who has concerns about the conduct of a colleague at the school or about any improper practice will report this to the Headteacher or to the Chief Executive Officer, in accordance with the Child Protection Policy and Whistleblowing policy.

## **5) Physiotherapy**

- 5.1 Pupils who require physiotherapy whilst at school will have this carried out by a trained physiotherapist. If it is agreed in the IEP or care plan that a member of the school staff should undertake part of the physiotherapy regime (such as assisting children with exercises), then the required technique must be demonstrated by the physiotherapist personally, written guidance given and updated regularly. The physiotherapist will observe the member of staff applying the technique.
- 5.2 Under no circumstances will school staff devise and carry out their own exercises or physiotherapy programmes.
- 5.3 Any concerns about the regime or any failure in equipment will be reported to the physiotherapist.

## **6) Medical Procedures**

- 6.1 Pupils who are disabled might require assistance with invasive or non-invasive medical procedures such as the administration of rectal medication, managing catheters or colostomy bags. These procedures will be discussed with parents/carers, documented in the health care plan and only carried out by staff who have been trained to do so.
- 6.2 It is particularly important that these staff follow appropriate infection control guidelines and ensure that any medical items are disposed of correctly.
- 6.3 Any members of staff who administer first aid will be appropriately trained in accordance with LA guidance. If an examination of a child is required in an

emergency aid situation it is advisable to have another adult present, with due regard to the child's privacy and dignity.