**Intimate Care Policy**

**2024**

*Initiated by:* *SMT*

*Approved by:* *Governors/SMT*

*Date Approved: 04/11/24*

*Operational Date: Nov 24*

*Date of Review:* *Nov 26*

*Distribution:* *SMT/TLR’s/All relevant staff*

*Signed: R.Jenkins Chair of Governors*

*Signed: S.Type Head teacher*

**Rationale**

It is our intention to develop independence in each pupil however there will be occasions when help is required. Our intimate care policy has been developed to safeguard pupil’s and staff. It is one of a range of specific policies that contribute to our pastoral care policy. The principles and procedures apply to everyone involved in the intimate care of our pupils.

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

Such activities can include:

* toileting
* feeding
* oral care
* washing
* changing clothes
* first aid and medical assistance
* supervision of a pupil involved in intimate self-care
* applying sun cream
* dressing and undressing including swimming

Parents/carers have a responsibility to advise the school of any known intimate care needs relating to their child.

**Principles of Intimate Care**

The following are the fundamental principles of intimate care upon which our policy guidelines are based:

* Every pupil has the right to be safe.
* Every pupil has the right to personal privacy.
* Every pupil has the right to be valued as an individual.
* Every pupil has the right to be treated with dignity and respect.
* All pupils have the right to be involved and consulted in their own intimate care to the best of their abilities.
* All pupils have the right to express their views on their own intimate care and to have such views considered.
* Every pupil has the right to have levels of intimate care that are appropriate and consistent.

**School Responsibilities**

As a school we have a duty to meet the needs of all of our pupils and use the guidance set out in The United Nations Conventions on the Right of a Child (UNCRC1991).

This legislation sets out all rights including social, economic, and cultural rights of the child and the fundamental human rights to which all children are entitled. The Convention’s four key principles are all relevant to supporting pupils with intimate care needs:

* *Non-discriminatory* – To respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child, without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child’s or their parents/legal guardian’s race, colour, sex, language, religion or political or other opinion, nationality, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.
* *Best interests of the child*- In all actions concerning children, the best interests of the pupil shall be primary.
* *The right to survival and development* - Ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child.
* *The views of the child-* Assure the child is capable of forming his or her own views, the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

The following articles within the UNCRC ensure the intimate care needs of the pupil is met within school settings:

**Article 3**

The best interest of the child must be a top priority in all actions concerning children.

**Article 16**

Every child has the right to privacy.

**Article 23**

A child with a disability has the right to live a full and decent life in conditions that promote dignity, independence and an active role in the community.

**Article 27**

Every child has the right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet their physical, social and mental needs.

**Article 28**

Every child has the right to an education.

Park Lane School works together with parents/carers and health care professionals to ensure that the pupil’s needs are met with respect and dignity whilst supporting their intimate care needs.

Park Lane School shows due regard for the Equality Act 2010 which highlights the need for us to take reasonable steps to remove barriers to accessing an education.

The ALN Code (2021) sets out its aims that underpin an inclusive ALN System. The principles of the code state that meeting the needs of pupils should be part of a whole school approach.

‘The principles underpinning the ALN system aim to support the creation of a fully inclusive education system where all pupils are given the opportunity to succeed and have access to an education that meets their needs and enables them to participate in, benefit from, and enjoy learning.’ (ALN Code 2021, Chapter 3)

* All members of staff working with pupils are vetted by Disclosure Barring Service. This includes volunteers and students.
* Only those members of staff who are familiar with the intimate care policy and other pastoral care policies of the school are involved in the intimate care of pupils.
* Where anticipated, intimate care arrangements are agreed between the school and parents/guardians and, if appropriate, by the pupil.
* Only in an emergency would staff undertake any aspect of intimate care that has not been agreed by parents/guardians and school. Parents/guardians would then be contacted immediately.
* Intimate care arrangements can be reviewed at any time. The views of all relevant parties should be sought and considered to inform future arrangements.
* If a staff member has concerns about a colleague’s intimate care practice they must report this to the designated teacher for the pupil.
* Staff must take part in appropriate training (Child Protection, Manual Handling, Health and Safety).
* Staff must be aware that confidentiality is essential and forms part of their duties.

**Guidelines for Good Practice**

All pupils have the right to be safe and to be treated with dignity and respect. These guidelines are designed to safeguard pupils and staff. They apply to every member of staff involved with the intimate care of pupils.

Young pupils and pupils with additional learning needs can be especially vulnerable. Staff involved with their intimate care need to be particularly sensitive to their individual needs.

Members of staff also need to be aware that some adults may use intimate care, as an opportunity to abuse children/young people. It is important to bear in mind that some forms of assistance can be open to misinterpretation.

Adhering to the following guidelines of good practice should safeguard both pupils and staff.

* To safeguard both the pupil and staff a ratio of 2-1 must be followed.
* Agency staff with a DBS certificate can support a permanent member of staff when required.
* Involve the pupil in the intimate care - Try to encourage a pupil’s independence as far as possible in his or her intimate care. Where a situation renders a pupil fully dependent, talk about what is going to be done and, where possible, give choices. Check your practice by asking the pupil or parent/carers about any preferences while carrying out the intimate care.
* Treat every pupil with dignity and respect and ensure privacy appropriate to the pupil’s age and situation.
* Meeting individual needs should be carried out in line with their care plan.
* Make sure practice in intimate care is consistent. As a pupil may have multiple support staff, a consistent approach to care is essential. Effective communication between all parties ensures that practice is consistent.
* Be aware of your own limitations. Only carry out activities you understand and feel competent with. If in doubt, ask. Some procedures must only be carried out by members of staff who have been formally trained and assessed.
* Promote positive self-esteem and body image. Confident, self-assured pupils who feel their bodies belong to them are less vulnerable to sexual abuse. The approach you take to intimate care can convey lots of messages to a pupil about their body worth. Your attitude to a pupil’s intimate care is important. Keeping in mind the pupil’s age, routine care can be both efficient and relaxed.
* If you have any concerns you must report them. If you observe any unusual markings, discoloration or swelling, report it immediately to the designated officer for child protection. If a pupil is accidentally hurt during intimate care or misunderstands or
* misinterprets something, reassure the child, ensure their safety and report the incident immediately to the designated teacher. Report and record any unusual emotional or behavioural response by the pupil. All recording of safeguarding issues will be recorded using “*My Concern Safeguarding software”.*

**Working with Pupils of the Opposite Sex.**

* There is positive value in both male and female staff being involved with pupils. Ideally every pupil should have the choice for intimate care but the current ratio of female to male staff means that assistance will more often be given by a female.
* The intimate care of boys and girls can be carried out by a member of staff of the opposite sex with the following provisions:
* When intimate care is being carried out, all pupils have the right to dignity and privacy, i.e. they should be appropriately covered, the door closed or screens/curtains put in place;
* If the pupil appears distressed or uncomfortable when personal tasks are being carried out, the care should stop immediately. Try to ascertain why the pupil is distressed and provide reassurance.
* Report any concerns to the designated staff for child protection and make a written record.
* Parents/carers must be informed about any concerns.

**Partnership With Parents/Carers**

* Park Lane School will ensure that they work in partnership with parents/carers to ensure the needs of all pupils are met in a safe, meaningful, and relevant environment. We will demonstrate an understanding of the difficulties.
* Parents/Carers and school build a trusting relationship to ensure the intimate care needs of pupils are met within school and on educational visits by staff.
* Parents/Carers have a key role to play in effectively developing their pupil’s independence (appropriate to their ability) and toilet training, where possible. It is

important to plan consistent approaches together, which can be used across a number of settings (for example, school and home).

* A meeting should be held before the pupil is due to start school and when there are significant changes. If the pupil starts school and there is a need for intimate care, then a meeting should be held as soon as possible.
* Parents/Carers will need to sign an agreement and a letter agreeing to any intimate care as well as support from other agencies.
* Terminology used is familiar to parents/carers.

**Communication with Pupils**

It is the responsibility of all staff caring for a pupil to ensure that they are aware of the pupil’s method and level of communication. Depending on their maturity and levels of stress pupils may communicate using different methods - words, signs, symbols, devices, body movements, eye pointing, etc. To ensure effective communication:

* make eye contact at the pupil’s level
* use simple language through the pupils preferred communication method and repeat if necessary
* wait for response
* continue to explain to the pupil what is happening even if there is no response
* treat the pupil as an individual with dignity and respect