

THE HUB – INTIMATE CARE POLICY

Date: April 2025

Last Reviewed: April 2026

Next Review Date: April 2027

Principles

The Hub acts in accordance with all current government regulations and statutory guidance relating to safeguarding children, ensuring that the welfare of pupils is actively protected and promoted. Staff responsible for providing intimate care do so in a professional, respectful and safe manner at all times. The Hub recognises its duties under the Equality Act 2010, which requires that no learner with an impairment affecting their ability to carry out day-to-day activities is discriminated against. Intimate care must therefore be delivered in a way that upholds dignity, respects difference and ensures equality of access.

Staff work in close partnership with parents, carers and other professionals to share information and ensure continuity of care. Staff are given the choice to decide whether they feel capable of delivering intimate care, and those who agree to do so are provided with appropriate training. The Hub takes seriously its responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people, recognising that meeting a pupil's intimate care needs is an important aspect of safeguarding.

This policy has been developed to safeguard pupils and staff alike and should be read alongside The Hub's safeguarding and child protection procedures, staff code of conduct, whistleblowing policy, health and safety procedures, special educational needs policy, supporting pupils with medical needs policy and first aid policy. The Hub recognises the need to treat all pupils, regardless of age, gender, disability, religion, ethnicity or sexual orientation, with respect and dignity when intimate care is provided. The welfare of the child is paramount, and their experience of intimate and personal care must be positive. Every pupil must be treated as an individual, and

care must be given gently and sensitively so that no pupil is attended to in a way that causes distress or pain.

Where pupils have complex or long-term health conditions and a healthcare plan is in place, the plan should incorporate the principles and best practice outlined in this policy. All references to “pupils” throughout this policy include all children and young people who receive education at The Hub.

Respecting the Child’s Rights

The Hub ensures that children’s rights are upheld at all times during intimate care. Every child has the right to be safe, to personal privacy, to be valued as an individual, and to be treated with dignity and respect. Children have the right to be involved and consulted in their own intimate care to the best of their abilities, and to express their views about how their care is delivered. Their views must be taken into account. Children also have the right to receive intimate care that is consistent, predictable and delivered in a way that supports their emotional wellbeing.

Definition of Intimate Care

Intimate care refers to any care that involves washing, touching or carrying out a procedure to intimate personal areas that most people usually manage independently, but which some pupils are unable to do due to age, physical difficulties or special educational needs. This includes care associated with continence, menstrual management, washing, toileting and dressing. Intimate care also includes supervision of pupils who are engaged in intimate self-care.

Best Practice for Staff

Pupils who require regular assistance with intimate care have written plans such as Individual Education Plans, Person-Centred Education Plans, healthcare plans or intimate care plans. These plans are agreed by staff, parents, carers and relevant professionals, such as nurses or physiotherapists. Ideally, plans should be agreed at a meeting attended by key staff and, where appropriate, the pupil. Any historical concerns, including past abuse, should be considered. Plans must be reviewed as necessary, at least annually, and whenever circumstances change, such as during residential trips or staff changes. Plans should also consider procedures for educational visits and day trips.

Where relevant, appropriate terminology for private parts of the body and bodily functions should be agreed with the pupil and parents and recorded in the plan. Where a care plan is not in place, parents or carers will be informed on the same day if their child has required help with intimate care, such as after an accident. Information relating to intimate care is confidential and should be communicated sensitively, either by telephone or sealed letter, rather than through a home diary.

A written record must be kept whenever a child receives an invasive medical procedure, such as catheter support. Accurate records must also be kept when a child receives assistance with intimate care. These records may be brief but must

include the date, time, relevant observations and the names of staff present. Records are kept in the pupil's file and made available to parents on request.

Staff encourage pupils to do as much for themselves as possible. Staff providing intimate care receive appropriate training, including health and safety training in moving and handling, and must follow best practice in infection control, including wearing disposable gloves and aprons where appropriate. Staff are supported to adapt their practice to meet the developmental needs of pupils, including puberty and menstruation.

Staff must speak to pupils by name, explain what they are doing, and communicate in a manner appropriate to the pupil's age and understanding. Staff should inform another appropriate adult when they are going alone to assist a pupil with intimate care. Only employees of The Hub, not students or volunteers, may provide intimate care, and all staff must have completed safer recruitment checks, including enhanced DBS checks.

Staff must follow The Hub's confidentiality policy, sharing sensitive information only with those who need to know. Staff must not carry mobile phones, cameras or similar devices while providing intimate care. Pupils' preferred means of communication must be considered, and permission should be sought before beginning an intimate procedure where the pupil is of an appropriate age and understanding.

Every child's right to privacy and modesty must be respected. Careful consideration must be given to determine who and how many carers should be present. Reducing the number of staff involved helps preserve privacy and dignity. Wherever possible, the pupil's wishes and feelings should be taken into account. The religious views, beliefs and cultural values of pupils and their families must also be respected, particularly where they influence certain practices or the preferred gender of the carer.

While safer working practice is essential, including consideration of staff gender, research indicates that excessive anxiety about risk can limit opportunities for children. Ideally, pupils should have a choice regarding the member of staff providing care. Staff may also have valid reasons for not working alone with a pupil. Transparency is essential, and meetings involving all relevant parties should be used to agree actions, locations and responsibilities.

Health and safety guidelines must be followed regarding waste disposal. Advice should be sought from the relevant local authority department when disposing of large quantities of waste or clinical waste.

Child Protection

The Hub recognises that pupils with special educational needs may be particularly vulnerable to abuse. Child protection procedures must always be followed. Intimate care involves inherent risks for both children and adults, and staff must remain vigilant, seek advice when necessary and adhere to safer working practice.

Where appropriate, pupils are taught personal safety skills matched to their developmental level and understanding. If a member of staff notices physical changes in a pupil's presentation, such as unexplained marks or bruises, they must report concerns immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. A written record must be completed, and a referral made to Children's Services if appropriate. Parents or carers will be informed unless doing so would place the child at increased risk of harm.

If a pupil becomes distressed or unhappy about being cared for by a particular member of staff, this must be reported to the Directors. The matter will be investigated, outcomes recorded, and parents contacted promptly. Staffing arrangements will be altered until the issue is resolved, ensuring the child's needs remain paramount. External advice will be sought if necessary.

If a pupil or any other person makes an allegation against a member of staff, this must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will consult the Local Authority Designated Officer in accordance with The Hub's policy on allegations against staff. The allegation must not be discussed with other staff or the person concerned. Any adult with concerns about a colleague's conduct or improper practice must report this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in accordance with child protection and whistleblowing procedures.