



FIRST BRIDGE SCHOOL

# Intimate care policy

## **Introduction**

First Bridge School is committed to supporting pupils to develop independence in all aspects of their personal care. Intimate care is carried out safely, respectfully, and in line with each pupil's developmental needs, communication profile, and dignity. Our approach prioritises safeguarding, privacy, and the creation of supportive learning environments that enable pupils to build confidence in managing their own self-care routines.

To support toileting independence and the use of reinforcement during toilet learning, staff may use standard tablet devices only in open bathroom areas where handwashing takes place. Pupils who use tablet devices for communication continue to have access to their devices inside toilet cubicles. The device is held by the pupil at all times, or placed inside the therapist's tote bag, and is never held by the adult.

Where reinforcement tools are required inside cubicles, staff will use an alternative device that has its camera permanently disabled or set to "off" by default, ensuring privacy is always protected. These devices are used solely to provide the visual, auditory, or interactive reinforcers pupils need to stay motivated and successful while learning new self-care skills.

## **Definitions**

Intimate care can be defined as any care which involves washing or conducting a procedure to intimate personal areas which most people usually conduct themselves, but are unable to do because of their age, physical difficulties, or other needs. Examples include care associated with continence as well as more ordinary tasks such as help with washing, toileting, or dressing. It also includes supervision of individuals involved in intimate self-care.

## **Staff training**

All staff responsible for conducting intimate care receive:

- training in the specific types of intimate care they undertake.
- regular safeguarding training.
- manual handling training.

They are familiar with:

- control measures set out in risk assessments carried out by the school.
- hygiene and health and safety procedures and risk assessments.

They are also encouraged to seek further advice if necessary.

Clinical supervisors ensure that staff supporting pupils with intimate care understand the procedures outlined in this policy. They provide clinical supervision and sign off staff members as competent at the point of the care plan being deployed.

### **Nappy changing**

For pupils requiring nappy changes, written consent from parents or carers is obtained before the pupil begins attending First Bridge School. Nappy changes are carried out by the pupil's designated staff members, and staff never work alone during these procedures. All staff involved are trained and assessed for competency in manual handling and health and safety procedures, including the use of gloves and/or aprons when appropriate/needed, as well as the safe disposal of nappies.

### **Toilet training and support**

As part of toilet training, pupils are expected to demonstrate independence in specific developmental skills. Once these skills are established, toilet training is initiated in partnership with parents. Designated staff members implement an evidence-based protocol (Azrin and Foxx, 1971), which is fully individualised to the needs of each pupil. Progress is monitored daily through data collection on successes and accidents, which informs the next steps in the programme. Parents are kept informed of progress and are trained and encouraged to use the same process at home.

Where possible, two staff are available during toilet training/and or visits. In rare circumstances, it may be that as pupils transition, staff are alone in a bathroom with a pupil for a very short amount of time. Bathroom cubicles are never closed in these instances, and staff locations are always known due to our highly-structured schedules. Staff adhere to appropriate health and safety measures, including the use of gloves and aprons when needed. Wet clothing is stored in sealed bags and sent home with the pupil.

Once pupils have achieved independence in using the toilet, they are encouraged to close the cubicle door to promote privacy. Staff continue to

assist pupils in the bathroom as necessary, ensuring correct handwashing procedures are followed.

### **Support with dressing and undressing**

Many of our pupils require some level of support with dressing as part of their personal care and independence learning. Where assistance is needed, staff use a least-to-most prompting approach, ensuring the pupil is actively involved at all times (for example, guiding them to touch and move their own clothing). Physical prompts may include hand-over-hand support to help pupils' complete specific steps safely and successfully; however, this support is systematically reduced and faded as quickly as appropriate, based on the pupil's progress, so that pupils develop independence in dressing and can complete routines with the minimum level of adult support.

### **Safeguarding concerns**

If a member of staff conducting intimate care has concerns about physical changes in a pupil's appearance (e.g. bruises, marks, soreness), they report this using the school safeguarding procedures which involves logging on CPOMS and directly informing the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). If a pupil is hurt accidentally or there is an issue when conducting an intimate care procedure, the staff member again reports the incident immediately to the DSL and logs it on CPOMS. If a pupil makes an allegation against a member of staff, the responsibility for the intimate care of that pupil is given to another member of staff as quickly as possible and the allegation is investigated according to the school's safeguarding procedures.