

REGENT HOUSE SCHOOL



INTIMATE CARE POLICY

1. Rationale

At Regent House School we respect and value all children and are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our pupils so they can learn, in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. We believe every pupil should be able to participate in all school activities in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm. This is the responsibility of every adult employed by, or invited to deliver services at Regent House School. We recognise our responsibility to safeguard all who access school and promote the welfare of all our pupils by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect and bullying.

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1. Introduction

Intimate care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure (such as cleaning a pupil after they have soiled themselves) to intimate personal areas. In most cases such care will involve cleaning for hygiene purposes as part of a staff member's duty of care. In the case of a specific procedure to meet complex health needs only a person suitably trained and assessed as competent will undertake the procedure, (e.g. the administration of rectal diazepam).

The issue of intimate care is a sensitive one and will require staff to be respectful of the pupil's needs. The pupil's dignity should always be preserved with a high level of privacy, choice and control. There should always be a high awareness of possible safeguarding and child protection issues. As such, staff behaviour must be open to scrutiny and staff must work in partnership with parents, guardians and where appropriate, health professionals, to provide continuity of care to pupils wherever possible. The following document is based on best practice in school settings.

Regent House School 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. We recognise there is a need

to treat all pupils with respect especially when intimate care is given. No pupil should be attended to in a way that causes distress or pain.

The management of all pupils with intimate care needs will be carefully planned. The pupil's welfare and dignity is of paramount importance.

Staff who provide intimate care will be trained to do so (including Safeguarding, Child Protection and Health and Safety training in moving and handling) and be fully aware of best practise. Where an assessment made by a physiotherapist/occupational therapist determines special apparatus should be used to assist such care, this will be accommodated. Staff will be supported to adapt their practise in relation to the needs of individual pupils taking into account developmental changes.

Each pupil will be supported to achieve the highest level of autonomy that is possible, given their age and abilities. Staff will encourage each pupil to do as much for his/herself as he/she can. This may mean, for example, giving the pupil responsibility for washing themselves.

Where appropriate Individual Intimate Care Plans (IICP) will be drawn up for each pupil to suit their individual circumstances.

Each pupil's right to privacy will be respected. Careful consideration will be given to each pupil's situation e.g. determining how many carers might need to be present when a pupil is toileted.

Wherever possible, one pupil will be catered for by one adult unless there is a sound rationale for having more adults present. If this is the case, the reasons will be clearly documented.

2. The Protection of Children

Regent House School safeguarding procedures will be adhered to at all times. All pupils will be taught personal safety skills carefully matched to their level of development and understanding. If a member of staff has any concerns about physical changes in a pupil's presentation, e.g. marks, bruises, soreness etc. s/he will immediately report concerns to a member of the Safeguarding Team. If a pupil becomes distressed or unhappy about being cared for by a particular member of staff, the matter will be investigated and outcomes recorded. If a pupil makes an allegation against a member of staff, all necessary safeguarding and child protection procedures and protocols will be followed. Parents/guardians will be contacted and informed as part of this process in order to reach a resolution. Where deemed appropriate, staffing schedules will be altered until the issue(s) are resolved. During this time the pupil's needs remain of paramount importance. School will seek further specialist advice from outside agencies where necessary to maximize best outcomes for the pupil.

3. Additional Guidance

3.1 Health and Safety

When attending to the intimate care of pupils, staff should be aware of the school's Health and Safety policy. Staff should always wear an apron and gloves when dealing with a pupil who has soiled. Any soiled waste (urinary or faecal) should be placed in a yellow clinical waste disposal bag, which will be sealed. This bag should then be placed in a bin (complete with a liner) which is specifically designated for the disposal of such waste. The bin should be emptied regularly and it will be collected as part of the usual refuse collection service.

3.2 Special/complex health needs

Pupils with special/complex health needs have the same rights to safety and privacy when receiving intimate care. Additional vulnerabilities that may arise from a physical disability or learning difficulty must be considered with regard to individual teaching and care plans for each pupil. As with all arrangements for intimate care needs, agreements between the pupil, those with parental responsibility and the school should be easily understood and clearly recorded.

Regardless of age and ability, the views and emotional responses of pupils with special/ complex health needs should be actively sought (with advocacy arrangements in place for those who require assistance) in regular reviews of these intimate care arrangements.

3.3 Physical Contact

All staff engaged in the care and education of pupils need to exercise caution in the use of physical contact. The expectation is that staff will work in 'limited touch' cultures and that when physical contact is made with pupils this will be in response to the pupil's needs at the time, will be of limited duration and will be appropriate given their age, stage of development and background.

Staff should be aware that even well intentioned physical contact might be misconstrued directly by the pupil, an observer or by anyone the action is described to. Staff must therefore always make considered judgements when executing their duties, be prepared to justify actions and accept that all physical contact will be open to scrutiny.

Any physical contact with an individual pupil is likely to be open to question unless the justification for this is formally agreed by the pupil, the school and those with parental responsibility.

Pupils with complex health and/or special needs may require more physical contact to assist their everyday learning. The general culture of 'limited touch' will be adapted where appropriate to the individual requirements of each pupil. The arrangements must be understood and agreed by all concerned, justified in terms of the pupil's needs, consistently applied and open to scrutiny. Consultation with colleagues and, where possible, parents/guardians will take place where any deviation from the agreed arrangements is anticipated. Any deviation and the justification for it will be fully documented and reported.

Extra caution is required by staff where it is known a pupil has previously suffered abuse or neglect. In this case the pupil may view physical contact to be associated with such previous experiences and may result in staff being more vulnerable to allegations of abuse. Additionally, many such pupils may present as extremely needy and actively seek out inappropriate physical contact. In such circumstances staff should deter the pupil, minimising any negative experience. In such cases staff should ensure appropriate supervision ratios are maintained to safeguard against possible allegations.

3.4 Restraint

There may be occasions where it is necessary for staff to restrain pupils physically to prevent them from inflicting damage on either themselves, others or property. In such cases trained staff should use the minimum force necessary for the minimum length of time required for the pupil to regain self-control using accredited training techniques. In all cases of restraint each incident must be documented and reported. Staff must be fully aware of and adhere to all school's policies on the use of force to control or restrain and positive handling.

Under no circumstances is it permissible to use physical force as a form of punishment, to modify behaviour, or to make a pupil comply with an instruction. Physical force of this nature is deemed unacceptable by the Governing Body and is likely to, constitute a criminal offence.

3.5 Pupil in distress

There may be occasions when a distressed pupil needs comfort and reassurance that may include physical touch such as a caring parent would give. Staff must remain self-aware at all times to ensure that their contact is not threatening or intrusive and is not subject to misinterpretation.

Judgement will need to take account of the circumstances of a pupil's distress, the extent and cause of the distress. Unless the pupil needs an immediate response, staff should consider whether they are the most appropriate person to respond. It may be more suitable to involve the pupil's relative, school's pastoral support staff or, if available, a counsellor. To minimise the risk of misinterpretation/allegation, particular care must be taken in instances that involve the same pupil over a period of time. Where a member of staff has a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance they should seek further advice, from a member of the Safeguarding Team.

3.6 First Aid and intimate care

Regent House School has a full time Matron and many trained first-aiders in school. Staff who administer first aid should ensure wherever possible that another adult or other pupil are present. The pupil's dignity must always be considered and where contact of a more intimate nature is required (e.g. assisting with toileting or the removal of wet/soiled clothing), another member of staff should be in the vicinity and must be made aware of the task being undertaken. Regular requirements of an intimate nature should be planned for. For conditions known to school, administered first aid procedures should be in line with agreed care plans.

3.7 Changing clothes

Young people are entitled to respect and privacy when changing clothes. However, there must be the required level of supervision to safeguard pupils with regard to health and safety considerations and to ensure that bullying or teasing does not occur. This means that adults should announce their intention of entering changing rooms, avoid remaining in changing rooms unless the pupil's needs require it, avoid any physical contact when pupils are in a state of undress and avoid any visually intrusive behaviour.

Given the vulnerabilities of the situation, it is strongly recommended that when supervising pupils in a state of undress, another member of staff is present. However, this may not always be possible and therefore, staff need to be vigilant about their own conduct.

3.8 Out of school trips, clubs, etc

Employees should take particular care when supervising and providing intimate care for pupils in the less formal atmosphere of a residential setting, off site visit or after-school activity. Although more informal relationships in such circumstances tend to be usual, the standard of behaviour expected of staff will be no different from the behaviour expected within school. Staff and volunteers involved in such activities should be familiar with all relevant school policies and all Education Authority guidance regarding out of school activities. To ensure pupil's safety, increased vigilance may be required when monitoring their behaviour on field trips, residential etc. It is important to exercise

caution to ensure a pupil is not compromised or that the member of staff does not attract allegations of overly intrusive or abusive behaviour.

4. Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Governors every three years