



## **Intimate Care Policy**

The Intimate Care policy has been developed as a result of discussions between Staff and Governors. The policy was approved at the Board of Trustees in September 2021.

### **Introduction**

Bamford Academy aims to provide the necessary care, guidance and support for every child to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve and make a positive contribution.

It is our intention to develop independence in each child, however there will be occasions when help is required. Our Intimate Care Policy and Guidelines has been developed to safeguard children and staff.

We are committed to ensuring that all staff responsible for the intimate care of children will undertake their duties in a professional manner at all times. We recognise that there is a need to treat all children with respect when intimate care is given. No child should be attended to in a way that causes distress, embarrassment or pain.

They apply to everyone involved in the intimate care of children.

*Please note: The term parent/s is used to refer to parents, carers and legal guardians.*

### **Definition of Intimate Care**

Intimate care is defined as any activity that is required to meet the personal needs of an individual child on a regular basis or during a one-off incident. Such activities will be routinely carried out by most children for themselves, but for which some may not be able to due to a physical disability, special educational needs associated with learning difficulties, medical needs or needs arising from the child's stage of development. Parents have a responsibility to advise the school, in writing, of any known intimate care needs relating to their child.

Care may involve help with drinking, eating, oral care, washing, changing clothes, first aid and medical assistance, toileting or supervision of a child involved in intimate care.

In most cases intimate care will involve procedures to do with personal hygiene and the cleaning of equipment associated with the process. In the case of a specific procedure only a person suitably trained and assessed as competent will undertake the procedure. Any additional training will be provided by the school.

### **Aims**

The aims of this document and associated guidance are;

- To provide guidance and reassurance to staff and parent/s
- To safeguard the dignity, rights and wellbeing of children

- To assure parents that staff are knowledgeable about intimate care and that their individual needs and concerns are taken into account

### **Principles of Intimate Care**

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

- Every child has the right to feel safe and secure
- Every child has the right to be treated and valued as an individual
- Every child has the right to personal privacy
- Every child has the right to remain healthy
- Every child has the right to be treated with dignity and respect
- Every child has the right to a professional approach from all staff when meeting his or her needs
- Every child has the right to a consistent approach to their intimate care
- Every child has the right to information and support that will enable him or her to make informed and appropriate choices
- Every child has the right to express his/her views on their own intimate care and to have such views taken into account
- Every child has the right to be accepted for who they are, without regard to age, gender, ability, race, culture or beliefs
- Every child (and parent) has the right to information and procedures for any complaint or queries he or she may have regarding intimate care

### **Our Approach to Best Practice**

The management of all children with intimate care needs will be carefully planned. The child who requires intimate care is treated with respect at all times; the child's welfare and dignity is of paramount importance. Young children and children with special educational needs can be especially vulnerable. Staff involved with their intimate care need to be particularly sensitive to their individual needs

Staff who provide intimate care are trained to do so (including Child Protection and Moving and Handling) and are fully aware of best practice. Suitable equipment and facilities will be provided to assist with children who need special arrangements following assessment from physiotherapist/ occupational therapist and involvement from external agencies. Staff will be supported to adapt their practice in relation to the needs of individual children taking into account developmental changes such as the onset of puberty and menstruation. Wherever possible staff who are involved in the intimate care of children will not usually be involved with the delivery of sex education to the children in their care as an additional safeguard to both staff and children involved.

It is important to bear in mind that some forms of assistance can be open to misinterpretations. Adhering to the following guidelines of good practice should safeguard children and staff.

### **Involve the child in the intimate care**

The child will be supported to achieve the highest level of autonomy that is possible given their age and abilities. Staff will encourage each child to do as much for him/herself as he/she can. This may mean, for example, giving the child responsibility for washing themselves. Where a situation renders a child fully dependent, talking about what is going to be done and give choices where possible will support their transition to independence.

### **Treat every child with dignity and respect and ensure privacy appropriate to the child's age and situation**

Each child's right to privacy will be respected. Careful considerations will be given to each child's situation to determine how many carers need to be involved in the child's intimate care and the place where the intimate care is given to preserve the child's dignity. Care will only be given in accordance to that stated on the intimate care plan. Where possible one child will be cared at any one time by one staff member, with another member of staff overseeing the care given – the number and names of adults will be stated on the child's Intimate Care Plan.

Intimate care arrangements will be discussed with parents/carers on a regular basis and recorded on the child's intimate care plan. The needs and wishes of children and parents will be taken into account wherever possible.

### **Make sure practice in intimate care is consistent**

As a child may have multiple carers, a consistent approach to care is essential –this will be written into the child's care plan. Effective communication between all parties ensures that practice is consistent. Assistance will be given as soon as possible avoiding unnecessary delays.

Personal protective clothing should be worn e.g. aprons, gloves when giving intimate care.

### **Communication With Children**

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

- make eye contact at the child's level
- use simple language and repeat if necessary
- wait for response
- continue to explain to the child what is happening even if there is no response
- treat the child as an individual with dignity and respect

### **Be aware of your own limitations**

Staff members should only carry out activities s/he understands and feel competent with. Some procedures must only be carried out by members of staff who have been formally trained and assessed. Where necessary, advice should be sought from the Pastoral Leader/DSLs and school health service.

### **Promote positive self-esteem and body image**

Confident, self-assured children who feel their body belongs to them are less vulnerable to sexual abuse. The approach taken to intimate care can convey lots of messages to a child about their body worth. Our staff members will be respectful to the child's need for intimate care when carrying this out.

### **If you have any concerns you must report them**

In line with the Academy's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, everyone has a responsibility to safeguard children from harm. Staff have a responsibility to log any concerns linked to unusual markings, discolouration or swelling immediately on CPOMs and immediately report it to the designated person for child protection. If a child is accidentally hurt during the intimate care or misunderstands or misinterprets something, staff will reassure the child, ensuring the child's safety and self-refer the incident to the Headteacher.

### **Working with Parents**

Partnership with parents is an important principle in any educational setting and is particularly necessary in relation to children needing intimate care. Much of the information required to make the process of intimate care as comfortable as possible is available from parents, including knowledge and understanding of any religious/cultural sensitivities.

Prior permission must be obtained from parents before Intimate care procedures are carried out. Parents should be encouraged and empowered to work with staff to ensure their child's needs are identified, understood and met. This will include involvement with Health Care plans and any other plans which identify the support of intimate care where appropriate. Exchanging information with parents is essential through personal contact, telephone or correspondence. However information concerning intimate care procedures should not be recorded in home/school books as it may contain confidential information that could be accessed by people other than the parent and named staff member.

If a child becomes distressed or unhappy about being cared for by a particular member of staff, the member of staff or parents must inform the Headteacher so that the matter can be looked into. Parents/carers will be contacted at the earliest opportunity as part of this process in order to reach a resolution. Staffing schedules will be altered until the issue(s) are resolved so that the child's needs remain paramount.

### **Writing an Intimate Care Plan**

Where a routine procedure is required an intimate care plan should be agreed in discussion with the child, school staff, parents and relevant health personnel. The plan should be signed by all who contribute and reviewed on an agreed basis.

In developing the plan the following will be considered:

#### Whole School implications

- The importance of working towards independence

- Arrangements for home-school transport, sports day, school performances, examinations, school trips, swimming, etc.
- Ensuring that there is enough stock of equipment and medication (within date) such as nappies.
- The most appropriate staff member/s who will carry out the intimate care. In the best case scenario, this will be a staff member who, is known to the child
- Appropriate staff members who will substitute in the absence of the appointed person.
- The location where the intimate care will take place to persevere the child's dignity as well as safeguarding both staff and child
- Where the intimate care is needed and the boundaries within which the intimate care will be given by the adult ie. which parts of the body require intimate care

#### b) Classroom management

Consideration must be given to the following to protect the emotional wellbeing of a child:

- The child's seating arrangements in class
- A system for the child to leave class without disruption to the lesson
- Avoidance of missing the same lesson all year due to medical routines
- Awareness of a child's discomfort which may affect learning
- Implications for PE e.g. discreet clothing, additional time for changing
- Strategies for dealing with pressure from peers .e.g. teasing/bullying particularly if the child has an odour.

All plans will be clearly recorded to ensure clarity of expectation, roles and responsibilities. They will reflect all methods of communication including emergency procedures between home, school and the medical service. A procedure will also be included to explain how concerns arising from the intimate care process will be dealt with.

Any activity that is carried out as intimate care will be recorded on the school recording record in Appendix A and added to a child's personal file.

#### **Links with other agencies**

Positive links with other agencies will enable school based plans to take account of the knowledge, skills and expertise of other professionals and will ensure the child's well-being and development remains paramount. The school nurse will be informed of all children requiring intimate care and provide training to enable the school to fully meet individual needs.

#### **Pupil Voice**

Bamford Academy will agree the appropriate terminology for private parts of the body and functions to be used by staff. Where there is any doubt that a child is able to make an informed choice on these issues, the child's parents are usually in the best position to act as advocates. It is the responsibility of all staff caring for a child to ensure they are aware of the child's method and level of communication. Communication methods may include words, signs, symbols, body movements and eye pointing. To ensure effective communication with the child, staff will ascertain the agreed method of communication and identify this in the agreed Intimate Care Plan.

## **Recruitment**

Parents must feel confident that relevant staff have been carefully vetted and trained helping to avoid potentially stressful areas of anxiety and conflict. Recruitment and selection of candidates for posts involving intimate care will be made following the usual Safeguarding, Criminal Records Bureau checks, equal opportunities and employment rights legislation.

Candidates should be made fully aware of what will be required and detailed in their job description before accepting the post.

Intimate care can only be provided in school by those who have a job description to reflect this or have specifically indicated a willingness to do so.

## **Staff Professional Development**

- Staff will receive training in good working practices which comply with Health, Safety and Well Being policy requirements when available.
- All staff will receive Safeguarding Child Protection training in accordance with the requirements of KCSiE
- Staff will be trained in the specific types of intimate care that they carry out and fully understand the intimate care policy and guidelines within the context of their work.
- Where needed, staff will receive Moving and Handling training at least every year.
- Newly appointed staff will be closely supervised until completion of a successful probationary period.
- Whole school staff training should foster a culture of good practice and a whole school approach to intimate care outlined in this policy
- The school and individual staff will keep a dated record of all training undertaken.

The following guidelines will be used in training appropriate staff and those identified to support intimate care.

Staff members should be able to:

- Ensure that sensitive information about a child is only shared with those who need to know, whether it is parents or members of staff specifically involved with the child. Other personnel will only be given information that keeps the child safe.
- Consult parents about arrangements for intimate care
- Ensure staff are aware of the set intimate care procedures, the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy; Employee Handbook;
- Ensure staff understand the needs of refugee children, asylum seekers and children from different racial and cultural backgrounds and specialist advice is sought when necessary
- Ensure staff know who to ask for advice if they are unsure or uncomfortable about a particular situation.
- Ensure staff know of a whole school approach to intimate care

In addition identified staff members should be able to;

- Access other procedures and policies regarding the welfare of the child e.g. Child Protection
- Identify and use a communication system that the child is most comfortable with.

- 'Read' messages a young child is trying to convey
- Communicate with and involve the child in the intimate care process
- Offer choices, wherever possible
- Develop, where possible, greater independence with the procedure of intimate care
- Maintain confidentiality with children who discuss elements of their intimate care unless it is a child protection issue when Child Protection Procedures must be followed.

## **Environmental**

Where children have a long - term incontinence or a disability requiring regular intimate care, the school will require specially adapted facilities. Specialist advice from medical or therapy staff will be sought when considering space, heating, ventilation and lighting.

Additional considerations we have in place include:

- Facilities with hot & cold running water
- Protective clothing including disposable protective gloves - provided by the school
- Labelled bins for the disposal of wet & soiled nappies/pads (soiled items being 'double bagged' before being placed in bin)
- Waste for incineration (e.g. needles, catheters etc)
- Supplies of suitable cleaning materials; anti-bacterial spray, sterilising fluid, deodorisers , Anti-bacterial hand wash
- Supplies of appropriate clean clothing, nappies, disposal bags and wipes
- Changing mat or changing bench
- An effective system should be identified to alert staff for help in emergency

## **Invasive Procedures**

Two adults will be present when invasive procedures are performed unless the parents have agreed to the presence of one adult only. Whilst this may be seen as providing protection against a possible allegation against a member of staff, it further erodes the privacy of the child. School will ensure that there is always a member of staff nearby when intimate care takes place.

Further advice will be taken from outside agencies if necessary. If a child makes an allegation against a member of staff, all necessary procedures will be followed (see Multi - Agency Child Protection Procedures for details)

## **Vulnerability to abuse**

Children should be encouraged to recognise and challenge inappropriate assistance and behaviour that erodes their dignity and self worth. Staff should be encouraged to listen. It is essential that all staff are familiar with the school's Child Protection Policy and procedures.

The following are factors that can increase a child's vulnerability;

- Children who need help with intimate care are statistically more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse

- Children with disabilities may have less control over their lives than others
- Children do not always receive sex and relationship education and may therefore be less able to recognise abuse.
- Children may experience multiple carers
- Children may not be able to distinguish between intimate care and abuse
- Children may not be able to communicate

If a child is hurt accidentally he or she should be immediately reassured and the adult should check that he or she is safe and the incident reported immediately to the designated line manager.

If a child appears sexually aroused, misunderstands or misinterprets an action/instruction, the incident should be reported immediately to the designated child protection manager.

### **Allegations of abuse**

Personnel working in intimate situations with children can feel particularly vulnerable. This school policy can help to reassure both staff involved and the parents of vulnerable children.

Bamford Academy encourages an open and transparent culture including self referral so that concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified early; minimising the risk of abuse; and ensuring that adults working in or on behalf of the school are clear about professional boundaries and act within these boundaries, and in accordance with the ethos and values of the Academy.

All staff have a shared responsibility to report **all** concerns about a member of staff (including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor), posing a risk of harm to children (even if the allegation does not meet the harms threshold) with the Headteacher (or the Chair of Governors: Mr Adrian Powell; if the concern is about the Headteacher) so that incidents/behaviours can be recorded and dealt with appropriately.

All concerns is defined as – concerns no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' that an adult working in or on behalf of the school in a way that is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work.

The Principal/chair of governors will then follow the procedures set out in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021.

### **Racial Equality & Equal Opportunities Statement**

All children have equal access and inclusive rights to the curriculum regardless of their age, gender, race, religion, belief, disability or ability. We plan work that is differentiated for the performance of all groups and individuals. Bamford Academy is committed to creating a positive climate that will enable everyone to work free from racial intimidation and harassment and to achieve their full potential. Policies are available on each of these that expand on this further.

### **Relevant Policies**

- These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the following other policies:
- Accessibility Policy
- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Employee Handbook
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs
- Relationships Management Policy
- Anti-bullying policy

**Bamford Academy**  
**September 2021**

**Review Date: September 2023**