



FRIENDS' SCHOOL SAFFRON WALDEN

POLICY FOR INTIMATE CARE

Introduction

Staff who work with young children, or children/young people* who have special needs, will realise that the issue of intimate care is a difficult one and requires staff to be respectful of children's needs. Intimate care can be defined as care tasks of an intimate nature, associated with bodily functions, body products and personal hygiene which demand direct or indirect contact with or exposure of the genitals. Examples include care associated with continence and menstrual management, as well as more ordinary tasks such as help with washing or bathing.

Children's dignity will be preserved and a high level of privacy, choice and control will be provided to them. Staff who provide intimate care to children have a high awareness of Child Protection issues. Staff behaviour is open to scrutiny, and staff at Friends' School work in partnership with parents and carers to provide continuity of care to children wherever possible.

Teaching staff deliver information about privacy and personal safety as part of Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) to all children as appropriate to their age and degree of understanding. Some of this work may be shared with parents who are encouraged to reinforce the personal safety messages within the home.

Friends' School is 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 any way that causes distress or pain.

Our approach to best practice

All children who require intimate care are treated respectfully at all times; the child's welfare and dignity are of paramount importance.

Staff who provide intimate care are trained to do so (including Child Protection, and Health and Safety training in moving and handling as necessary) and are fully aware of best practice. Training will be updated biennially. Apparatus will be provided to assist with children who need special arrangements following assessment from a physiotherapist/ occupational therapist as required.

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 those children in their care as an additional safeguard to both the staff and children involved.

As a basic principle, children 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 themselves as they can. This may mean, for example, giving the child responsibility for washing themselves. Individual intimate care arrangements will be made for particular children as appropriate to suit the circumstances of the child.

Each child's right to privacy will be respected. Careful consideration will be given to each child's situation to determine how many carers might need to be present when a child needs help with intimate care. Where possible, one child will be cared for by one adult unless there is a sound reason for having two adults present.

Wherever possible the same child will not be cared for by the same adult on a continuous basis; there will be a rota of carers known to the child who will take turns in providing care. This will ensure, as far as possible, that over-familiar relationships are discouraged from developing, while at the same time guarding against the care being carried out by a succession of completely different carers.

Parents and carers will be involved with their child's intimate care arrangements on a regular basis. The needs and wishes of children and parents will be carefully considered alongside any possible constraints; e.g. staffing and equal opportunities legislation.

Each child will have an assigned senior member of staff (e.g. Head of Junior School or Head of Study Centre) to act as an advocate to whom they will be able to communicate any issues or concerns that they may have about the quality of care they receive.

The protection of children

Friends' School Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures and Inter-Agency Child Protection procedures are made known to staff, will be accessible to them, and will be adhered to.

Where appropriate, all children 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 child's presentation, e.g. marks, bruises, soreness etc. s/he will immediately report concerns to the Head or designated Child Protection Officer who will take the necessary action in line with the school's Child Protection Policy

If a child becomes distressed or unhappy about being cared for by a particular member of staff, the matter will be looked into and outcomes recorded.

Parents and carers will be contacted at the earliest opportunity as part of the 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. Further advice will be taken from outside agencies if necessary.

If a child makes an allegation against a member of staff, all prescribed procedures will be followed.

* Where 'children' are mentioned in this document, the term will also include young people.

Reviewed January 2012. (review date January 2013)