

LONSDALE



INTIMATE CARE POLICY

Reviewed by SLT

July 2022

Review Date:

July 2024

This policy is applicable to both School and REP

All pupils at Lonsdale have the right to be safe and to be treated with dignity and respect. These guidelines are to safeguard both pupils and staff and apply to every member of staff involved with the intimate care of pupils in school.

All staff involved with the intimate care of pupils have read the Lonsdale Child Protection Policy and newly employed staff are expected to read it as part of their induction programme.

School staff are expected to provide care and assistance to our pupils, including personal care and social physical contact, but they should be aware of the possibility of invading a pupil's privacy and take into consideration pupils' views and feelings.

All staff working with pupils need to be sensitive to their needs. Staff should be alert and aware that some care tasks could be open to possible misinterpretation. False allegations of sexual abuse are rare, but following basic guidelines will safeguard both pupils and staff.

- **Treat every pupil with dignity and respect and ensure privacy appropriate to pupils' age, culture, gender and needs.**

Pupils' views should be taken into account wherever possible. Working with a pupil on a one-to-one basis is actively encouraged, unless the task requires two people as agreed in their Care Plan or there are specific guidelines advising more than one staff member, e.g. Risk Assessment. Staff should be aware of the pupil's dignity and privacy at all times, endeavouring to be sensitive to their needs eg: culture, personal choice. Staff should be open, informing others of their intentions and ensuring that privacy and trust are maintained.

- **At all times encourage independence.**

Avoid doing care tasks for a pupil when they are capable of helping themselves.

Always encourage them to be as independent as possible.

If a pupil is fully dependent on you, refer to their Care Plan and discuss their needs with them, allowing them choices. Always seek specialist advice if unsure when dealing with pupils from different cultural and racial backgrounds.

- **Be responsive to pupils' reactions.**

Involve pupils in conversations about their personal care. Ask questions eg 'Am I doing this right?' 'Can you wash there?' If a pupil expresses a dislike to or reluctance to be supported by a member of staff, try to find out why and ensure that the Head of Support and Student Care is made aware.

- **Make sure practice in intimate care is as consistent as possible.**
It is the responsibility of all staff to follow pupils individual Care Plans. It is the responsibility of the form tutor to ensure the information on the Care Plan is relevant and up to date.
- **Never attempt a task unless you are competent.**
Always ask if unsure.
Certain intimate care procedures such as rectal examination must only be carried out by medical staff.
Procedures such as administering rectal drugs or catheterisation must only be carried out by trained and competent staff.
- **Report any concerns you have.**
It is not exceptional for boys to have erections, particularly on waking. Staff are expected to be sensitive to these normal bodily functions. However, staff need to be aware that their own dress and behaviour should not provoke sexual arousal (refer to dress code policy).

If during intimate care you accidentally hurt a pupil or they are sore/tender, or they appear to be sexually aroused by your actions, or if something said is misunderstood or misinterpreted or they exhibit an emotional reaction without an apparent cause, **report it as soon as possible to the Designated Senior Person/Deputy Designated Senior Person and make a note of the incident. It may be necessary to complete a 'cause for concern' in line with the Child Protection Policy.** It is important for both, pupils and staff, that these situations are not ignored.

- **Encourage pupils to have a positive image of their body.**
Encouraging a pupil to be assertive will help them to be less vulnerable to sexual abuse.
Correct approaches by staff when assisting pupils in their care will help the pupil to develop positive self-esteem and body awareness.
Always be age-appropriate. Routine care can be relaxed and enjoyable. Always bear in mind the pupils' right to say no.
- **Protect yourself against the possibility of allegations.**
By following the school procedures detailed in the Child Protection Policy, Intimate Care Policy and the Reducing the Risk of Allegations Policy, all staff will be protecting themselves. If in doubt, discuss with your line manager.

Should you become sexually aroused in the presence of children, please remove yourself from the situation.

Guidelines for working with pupils of the opposite sex

General Philosophy

- There is positive value in all staff working with male and female pupils at Lonsdale.
- If a student expresses feelings of being uncomfortable with a member of staff of the opposite sex, where possible the student would be offered the choice of a carer of the same sex.
- At all times the students' safety, dignity and privacy are of paramount importance.
- Pupils' views should be taken into account wherever possible.

Intimate Care

If possible male pupils should be offered the option of a male carer. However, this is often not possible and by necessity female carers must carry out most of the care. For female pupils, male staff can be involved as the second carer whenever the female pupil is comfortable with this, e.g. lifting in and out of

bed, hoisting from changing bed to wheelchair, **ensuring at all times the student is clothed or fully covered.**

If a member of staff needs to enter a bathroom or bedroom while it is occupied, they must knock first and wait for a reply. In school, toilet areas are managed to ensure privacy for pupils. In the Residential Department, staff should maintain privacy by ensuring bathrooms are occupied by only one pupil at any one time.

The practical guidelines set out in this policy are also written in the light of the following realities:

- The ratio of female to male staff at Lonsdale means that it is unlikely to be able to offer choice of same sex care to male pupils at all times.
- It is the established practice at Lonsdale that no male carers should be involved in the intimate care of female pupils.
- In the wider context, group care in mixed sex groups with mixed staff teams is increasingly the norm in adult residential services, and we have a responsibility to prepare young people at Lonsdale for their future life outside school.
- In practice male staff can be involved in the general care of all pupils. In order to protect individual staff and the school, male staff should not be involved in the intimate care of girls nor escort a single girl to an appointment or leisure activity.
- These guidelines must be implemented sensitively and with respect for the feelings of all involved.