

FIRST BRIDGE CENTRE



INTIMATE CARE POLICY

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Intimate Care Policy

Introduction

First Bridge Centre is committed to ensuring individuals learn to manage as many of their daily living skills as possible. As part of this, First Bridge Centre staff may have to observe or assist with personal care.

Intimate care can be defined as any care which involves washing or carrying out a procedure to intimate personal areas which most people usually carry out themselves but some individuals are unable to do because of their young age, physical difficulties or other special 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.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees, casual and agency workers, contractors and Consultants. In addition, it applies to all clients receiving therapy in the Centre and at home. It has been developed to safeguard children and staff.

Working with Parents

We work closely with parents on all aspects of the child's care and education. Our intimate care and changing policy is shared with parents. This is essential for any intimate care routines which may require specialist training or support. If a child requires specific support the Centre will arrange a meeting with the parent to discover all the relevant information relating to this to enable the staff to care for the child fully and meet their individual needs.

Principles

First Bridge Centre takes seriously its responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children and young people in its care. Meeting an individual's intimate care needs is one aspect of safeguarding. This intimate care policy should be read in conjunction with other Safeguarding policies.

- First Bridge Centre is committed to ensuring that all staff responsible for the intimate care of individuals will undertake their duties in a professional manner at all times. It is acknowledged that these adults are in a position of great trust.
- We recognise that there is a need to treat all individuals, whatever their age, gender, disability, religion, ethnicity or sexual orientation with respect and dignity when intimate care is given. The child's welfare is of paramount importance and his/her experience of intimate and personal care should be a positive one. It is essential that every pupil is treated as an individual and that care is given gently and sensitively: no pupil should be attended to in a way that causes distress or pain.
- Staff will work in close partnership with parent/carers and other professionals to share information and provide continuity of care.
- Information on intimate care should be treated as confidential.

The following fundamental principles upon which this Policy and Guidelines are based pay due regard to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC):

- Every child has the right to be safe.
- Every child has the right to personal privacy.
- Every child has the right to be valued as an individual.
- Every child has the right to be treated with dignity and respect. (e.g. It would not be appropriate to leave a child in wet/soiled clothes for any period of time)
- Every child has the right to be involved and consulted in their own intimate care to the best of their abilities.
- Every child has the right to express their views on their own intimate care and to have such views taken into account.
- Every child has the right to have levels of intimate care that are as consistent as possible.

General Best Practice Guidelines

- Written consent from parents/carers for staff to carry out intimate care, toileting support and/or nappy changing is obtained for all students.
- Where relevant, it is good practice for the Key Person to agree with the pupil and parents/carers appropriate terminology for private parts of the body and functions.
- For home-based services, where written consent is not in place, parents/carers will be responsible for supporting all intimate care needs of children. If a child receives centre based services, parents/carers will be informed if their child has needed help with meeting intimate care needs (eg has had an 'accident' and wet or soiled him/herself). Accurate records should be kept when a child requires assistance with intimate care; these can be brief but should as a minimum, include full date, times and any comments such as changes in the child's behaviour. It should be clear who was present in every case.
- Staff involved with intimate care need to be vigilant to any issues that may require referrals to health or other agencies. In these circumstances accurate records should be kept.
- All individuals will be supported to achieve the highest level of autonomy that is possible given their age and abilities. Staff will encourage each individual pupil to do as much for his/herself as possible.
- Staff who provide intimate care should be made aware of best practice regarding infection control, including the requirement to wear disposable gloves and aprons where appropriate.
- Staff will be supported to adapt their practice in relation to the needs of individuals taking into account developmental changes such as the onset of puberty.
- There must be careful communication with each pupil who needs help with intimate care in line with their preferred means of communication (verbal, symbolic, etc) to discuss their needs and preferences. Where the pupil is of an appropriate age and level of understanding permission should be sought before starting an intimate procedure.
- Staff who provide intimate care should speak to the pupil personally by name, explain what they are doing and communicate with all children in a way that reflects their ages and developmental level.

- Every child's right to privacy and modesty will be respected. Careful consideration will be given to each pupil's situation to determine who and how many carers might need to be present when s/he needs help with intimate care. SEN advice suggests that reducing the numbers of staff involved goes some way to preserving the child's privacy and dignity. Wherever possible, the pupil's wishes and feelings should be sought and taken into account. If manual handling is required then the plan should note the safe number of adults needed to remain during the toileting process. See manual handling risk assessment.
- The religious views, beliefs and cultural values of children and their families should be taken into account, particularly as they might affect certain practices.
- Adults who assist individuals with intimate care should be employees of First Bridge Centre, not students or volunteers, and therefore have the expected range of safer recruitment checks, including enhanced DBS checks.
- All staff should be aware of First Bridge Centre's commitment to confidentiality. Sensitive information will be shared only with those who need to know.
- No member of staff will carry a mobile phone, camera or similar device whilst providing intimate care. See mobile phone policy.

Nappy changing

During nappy changing we:

- Ensure that the nappy changing area is inviting.
- Ensure that no child is ever left unattended during the nappy changing time.
- Ensure hygiene procedures are followed appropriately, e.g. staff put on gloves and aprons before changing starts, hands are washed after nappies are changed and changing mats cleaned before and after each use.
- Ensure practitioners are gentle when changing; they avoid pulling faces and making negative comments about 'nappy contents' and inappropriate comments about children's genitals when changing their nappies.
- Use this one-to-one time as a key opportunity to talk to children and help them learn, e.g. through singing and saying rhymes during the change.
- Provide older children with access to toilets when they have the need to and are encouraged to be independent.
- Record nappy changes on a nappy changing log.
- Nappies and pull-ups are disposed of hygienically. Any soiled nappies/pull-ups are bagged up and disposed of by a sanitary waste disposal company.
- Cloth nappies, trainer pants and ordinary pants that have been wet or soiled are rinsed and bagged for the parent to take home.

We have a duty of care towards children's personal needs. If children are left in wet or soiled nappies/pull ups in the centre this may constitute neglect and will be a disciplinary matter.

Safeguarding our students and staff

We wish to ensure the safety and welfare of all children whilst being changed and safeguard against any potential harm as well as ensuring the staff member involved is fully supported and able to perform their duties safely and confidently. We aim to support all parties by taking the following actions:

- Ensuring all staff undertaking intimate care and nappy changing have enhanced DBS checks.
- Conducting thorough inductions for all new staff to ensure they are fully aware of all centre procedures relating to intimate care and nappy changing.
- Training all staff in the appropriate methods for nappy changing and intimate care.
- Ensuring all staff have an up-to-date understanding of child protection and how to protect children from harm. This includes identifying signs and symptoms of abuse and how to raise these concerns as set out in our child protection procedures.
- First Bridge Centre and staff in this company recognise that individuals with special needs and who are disabled are particularly vulnerable to all types of abuse.
- First Bridge Centre's child protection procedures will be adhered to.
- Conducting working practice observations of all aspects of the centre's operations to ensure that procedures are working in practice and all children are supported fully by the staff. This includes all intimate care routines.
- Where appropriate, students will be taught personal safety skills carefully matched to their level of development and understanding.
- Following up procedures through supervision meetings and appraisals to identify any areas for development or further training.
- Promoting consistent and caring relationships through the key person system in the Centre and ensuring all parents understand how this works.
- Operate a whistleblowing policy to help staff raise any concerns relating to their peers or managers; and helping staff develop confidence in raising concerns as they arise in order to safeguard the children in the Centre. See Whistleblowing Policy.
- If an individual, or any other person, makes an allegation against an adult working at First Bridge Centre this should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will consult the Local Authority Designated Officer for allegations (LADO) in accordance with the Local Safeguarding Children Board policy. See Allegations Against Staff Policy.

Environmental Advice

First Bridge Centre ensures that toilet facilities are easily accessible and well maintained to promote children's awareness of good hygiene practices and developing independence.

Additional considerations may include:

- Protective clothing including disposable protective gloves - provided by First Bridge Centre
- Labelled bins for the disposal of wet and soiled nappies
- Supplies of suitable cleaning materials; anti-bacterial spray, sterilising fluid, and 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

Risk assessment

We conduct regular risk assessments of all aspects of First Bridge's operations, including intimate care, and review the safeguards in place. The setting has assessed all the risks relating to intimate care routines and has placed appropriate safeguards in place to ensure the safety of all involved.

We make sure staff do not change nappies whilst pregnant until a risk assessment has been discussed and conducted; and that students only change nappies with the support and close supervision of a qualified member of staff.