



# PERSONAL AND INTIMATE CARE POLICY

Date Reviewed: June 2021

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## **RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Child Protection (Safeguarding) Policy and Procedures  
Disclosure Policy and Procedure  
Health and Safety Policy  
Infection Control Policy  
Lone Working Policy  
Moving and Handling Policy  
Risk Assessment Policy  
Staff Code of Conduct  
Whistle Blowing Policy

## **INTRODUCTION**

Digitech Studio School is committed to providing outstanding educational opportunities for all our pupils and students. The safety and welfare of our pupils and students is of the utmost importance. All adults working in Digitech must protect children and vulnerable adults from abuse and be aware that any pupil or student may be abused or at risk of abuse.

Digitech Studio School will act in accordance with the documents 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (DfE 2015), 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (DfE 2016) and 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' (DfE 2015). Digitech takes seriously its responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children and young people in its care and to protect the staff who carry out the intimate care of pupils/students. Meeting a pupil or student's intimate care needs is one aspect of safeguarding.

Digitech recognises its duties and responsibilities in relation to the Equalities Act 2010 which requires that any child with an impairment that affects his/her ability to carry out day-to-day activities must not be discriminated against.

This policy should be read in conjunction with Digitech's Child Protection Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

## **DEFINITION**

Intimate care can be defined as any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out a procedure to intimate personal areas which most people usually carry out themselves but which some pupils/students are unable to do because of their young age, physical difficulties or other special needs. Examples include care associated with continence and menstrual management as well as more ordinary tasks such as help with washing, toileting or dressing. It also includes supervision of pupils/students involved in intimate self-care.

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## **OUR APPROACH TO BEST PRACTICE**

All pupils/students who require intimate care are treated respectfully at all times; the individual's welfare and dignity is of paramount importance. There is careful communication with each pupil/student who needs help with intimate care in line with their preferred means of communication (verbal, symbolic, etc.) to discuss the pupil/student's needs and preferences. The pupil/student is aware of each procedure that is carried out and the reasons for it.

Staff who provide intimate care should be trained to do so (including Child Protection and, where appropriate, Health and Safety training in moving and handling) and must be fully aware of best practice. Apparatus will be provided to assist with pupils/students who need special arrangements following assessment from an occupational therapist, as required. Staff will be supported to adapt their practice in relation to the needs of individual pupils/students, taking into account developmental changes such as the onset of puberty and menstruation.

Transfers and use of hoists during hygiene procedures will be carried out in accordance with Digitech's manual handling procedures. Hygiene procedures will be carried out in accordance with Digitech's Infection Control Policy. When using hot water (e.g. showers) with any student, staff will constantly monitor water temperature by hand throughout. Staff will notify Facilities immediately of any faults in any aspect of backroom fittings or water temperature.

As a basic principle, pupils/students will be supported to achieve the highest possible level of autonomy, given their age and abilities. Staff will encourage each pupil/student to do as much for themselves as they can. This may mean, for example, giving the pupil/student responsibility for cleaning their own teeth or washing their hands. Where appropriate, individual intimate care plans (Pupil Care Risk Assessments or PCRA's) may be drawn up for particular pupils/students to suit the circumstances of the individual. These plans include a full risk assessment to address issues such as moving and handling, personal safety of the pupil/student and the carer, and health. Wherever possible, the same pupil/student will not be cared for by the same adult on a regular basis; this aims to 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.

Wherever possible and practicable – though this may not always be so – pupils/students across the school will have their personal care needs met by a staff member of the same gender. It is always desirable that all female pupils have their intimate care needs met by female members of staff. There may however be some exceptional circumstances where this general rule needs to be amended; for example, in the case of an emergency where a male member of staff is the nearest person available to assist a female pupil/student to safety, despite the fact that that pupil/student may be in an 'intimate care context'. In such an event, it would be unethical and contrary to best health and safety practice to wait for a female member of staff and thus increase the risk to the pupil/student concerned.

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Where necessary, parents/carers will be involved with their child's intimate care arrangements on a regular basis, via discussions related to the individual pupil/student's needs. The needs and wishes of pupils/students and their parents/carers will be carefully considered alongside any possible constraints; e.g. staffing and equalities.

### **CHILD PROTECTION**

Where appropriate, all pupils/students will be taught personal safety skills carefully matched to their level of development and understanding, through PSHE (Personal, Social, Health Education) and RSE (Relationships and Sex Education) as well as incidentally throughout the day where relevant.

If a member of staff has any concerns about physical changes in a pupil/student's presentation when undertaking intimate care, e.g. marks, bruises, soreness etc., s/he will immediately report concerns to the Designated Person for Child Protection or a member of the schools Safeguarding Team.

If a pupil/student becomes distressed or unhappy about being cared for by a particular member of staff, the matter will be looked into and outcomes recorded. 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 pupil/student's needs remain paramount. Further advice will be taken from outside agencies if necessary.

If a pupil/student makes an allegation against a member of staff, all necessary procedures will be followed (see the Digitech's Child Protection Policy and Procedures for further details).

### **SAFE WORKING PRACTICES FOR STAFF**

All staff involved with the intimate care of Digitech pupils/students have an enhanced DBS check. Work experience students and volunteers must NOT be used to support pupils/students with their intimate care needs. Agency staff should not accompany pupils/students 1:1 during personal care unless authorised by the Principal and the Senior Leadership Team; these agency staff must also have an enhanced DBS check.

To ensure positive safeguarding practice, pupils/students who are able to manage most of their intimate care but just need oversight or minimal prompting can be taken to the toilet by one member of staff; visibility should be high, if respectfully discrete, while any assistance is being offered. Doors are not to be locked under any circumstances while managing intimate care within the school building although it is acknowledged that whilst in the wider community, intimate care needs of pupils/students may very well need to be met behind a locked door.

In an ideal scenario, if a pupil or student's intimate care needs are being attended to in the community, one staff member would supervise this in a cubicle, whilst a second staff member stands outside of the unlocked door. However, this may not always be possible (for example,

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due to other staff members being required elsewhere to maintain the health and safety of the overall group; or the pupil/student may require support from two staff members, in which case locking the door would help to maintain personal dignity). It cannot be guaranteed therefore, that pupils/students will have their needs attended to in an unlocked cubicle and it is important that staff risk assess the situation at the time.

It is important to consider that where a pupil/student requires two members of staff to support them with intimate care – which will be determined by individual need – then both of those staff members need to be ‘active’ and actively required to be there. This is to mitigate against the possibility of engendering a sense in that pupil/student that it is acceptable to have their intimate care needs attended to by one person whilst being ‘observed’ by another, which is plainly unsafe. Additionally, personal dignity is paramount and conversations between adults when supporting a pupil/student’s intimate care should be restricted and any dialogue centred on the needs of that pupil/student.

Where a specific need has been recognised, pupils/students should have a PCRA created. Any Pupil Care Risk Assessments (PCRAs) should always be up to date and agreed with parents/carers. There may also be appropriate references to behaviour support strategies in this context.

The expectation is that staff will work in a ‘limited touch’ culture with respect to intimate care and that when physical contact is made with pupils/students this will be in response to the pupil/student’s needs at the time, will be of limited duration and will be appropriate given their age, stage of development and background.

Mobile phones, cameras or similar devices must not be carried by staff while providing intimate care.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

The personal care needs of pupils/students will be organised by the class team, in consultation with parents/carers and other professionals as appropriate, and staff will be delegated appropriately by the teacher in that class.

Lunchtime Supervisors may also be involved in the intimate care of pupils/students and will follow the same procedures and receive the same training as class staff.

Any concerns regarding intimate care should in the first instance be referred to the class teacher. If concerns persist the class teacher should approach a member of the Senior Leadership Team to resolve the situation. If the concern is of a safeguarding nature, it should be reported in the first instance to the Designated Person for Child Protection and the safeguarding procedure followed.

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Digitech has regard to Deprivation of Liberty, which is a safeguard for people who lack capacity to make decisions regarding their own safety. Digitech will provide a safe environment for the diverse needs of all its pupils and students, ensuring the safety and due liberty of them all as individuals. Digitech will ensure that pupil/student choice and best interest is considered at all times and that decisions being made suit the needs of the pupil or student to whom they pertain.

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