

Personal Care Procedures and Practice

Many of the students supported by Hedleys College require support with their personal care. Intimate care is a high risk activity in terms of opportunity for abuse and these guidelines aim to protect the individuals we support and staff.

These practice guidelines aim to provide all staff with Hedley College's standards and requirements when providing intimate or personal care to the individuals they are supporting.

Percy Hedley Foundation, our umbrella organisation defines intimate personal care as:

'Any care of a personal nature which someone requires. This can range from, for example, assisting someone to wipe his or her nose to care tasks of a much more personal nature such as washing a person's groin area.'

Basic Principles

1. To always treat every student with dignity and respect and ensure the privacy appropriate to an adult and the person's circumstances.
2. Staff should only provide the minimal level of intervention required, based upon the assessed needs of the individual, to enable the care task to be completed to the appropriate standard.
3. Involve the student themselves as far as possible in their own intimate/personal care.
4. The aim of any care task is to support or enable the student to become more independent or acquire new skills towards greater independence, therefore, intimate care should always be seen in the context of learning.
5. Always treat students in accordance with their beliefs and customs and their rights as an individual.
6. Staff should try to establish a positive relationship with new students before they carry out intimate care.
7. Staff should always treat the student with the dignity and respect you would expect for yourself in a similar situation. It is essential to understand the person's vulnerability in personal care tasks.
8. Many of the students the College support, have been dependent on carers for most of their life (some may even have had bad or very disrespectful experiences), do not necessarily understand their rights and may need to be taught appropriate behaviours and what they can expect or ask of staff.

9. If possible, there should be continuity of intimate care provided by the same or the least number of staff over a period of time. There should also be consistency of care, with the same approach provided in all the settings that the student attends e.g. home and college.
10. It is essential to try and ensure that intimate care tasks are provided by staff of the same sex. This is particularly important for female students.
11. Intimate care tasks are an integral part of the daily routine for many of the students supported by College, whether this involves providing full physical support or supervision. They must be valued as a necessary and important part of a person's routine. For many students these times are opportunities to develop their independence, acquire new skills, increase dignity etc. and staff should only intervene or support the student to do the tasks or part of the tasks that they are not able to do for themselves, even though this may take longer.
12. Intimate care must always take place within a private environment and provided by the minimum number of people. Staff should also make sure that this privacy is not likely to be violated during the task and that they provide the care in as dignified a manner as possible.
13. Staff must always explain to the student what is happening or what is likely to happen throughout the task, ask for their agreement to tasks and take it at a pace that the person feels safe and comfortable with. The language staff use and the conversation they have with the student needs to be reassuring, gentle and appropriate.
14. Intimate care tasks should form an integral part of the students care plan e.g. needs identified, goals agreed, religious, cultural, previous experiences, i.e., a history of abuse. The manager must ensure that all information is understood and followed by staff.
15. Staff must try not to put themselves or be placed in situations that make them feel concerned, uncomfortable or vulnerable and if they do they must report these incidences to the manager who will then review the situation or practice.
16. The environment must be as pleasant, clean, hygienic, warm and relaxing as possible. Staff should ensure that anything they are likely to need during the task is readily available and that they will not be interrupted unnecessarily.
17. Intimate care should be provided in a safe environment by trained staff. Staff must follow Health and Safety guidelines, e.g., Moving and handling, and there should always be adequate circulation space in the area. Appropriate equipment or aids should be available if necessary.
18. It can be particularly difficult to provide intimate care in community settings and to maintain the same standards of privacy and dignity. Staff should always plan ahead, being aware of the location and layout of toilets (especially the facilities adapted for people with disabilities), having staff of the same sex accompanying the students, taking some form of identification which may be given to members of the public if they express any concerns etc.
19. If staff become aware that the student is 'using' an intimate care situation in order to avoid other situations, get into certain situations or for any other reason,

then all those involved in the care planning or delivery must discuss and review the plan and procedures. This may need to include members of the College Senior Management Team, i.e., if there is evidence of inappropriate sexual or other behaviours.

20. Students are young adults and have sexual feelings and all staff must be aware that it is possible for both males and females to become sexually aroused during intimate care procedures. Staff must report any situation where they think this is or may be occurring and the procedures and practices must be reviewed.

Specific guidelines for the college residency

The Residential Services Manager must ensure that no member of the staff provides unsupervised intimate care to a student until they have read and demonstrated an understanding of these principles and guidelines and have a positive relationship with the person they are supporting.

The Residential Services Manager is responsible for ensuring that all files and records are kept up to date, are regularly reviewed and consistently reflect best practice.

All new staff will receive a comprehensive induction and training regarding to assisting with personal care.

Specific guidelines for the college day

The Learning Support Coordinator must ensure that no member of the staff provides unsupervised intimate care to a student until they have read and demonstrated an understanding of these principles and guidelines and have a positive relationship with the person they are supporting.

The Learning Support Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that all files and records are kept up to date, are regularly reviewed and consistently reflect best practice.

All new staff will receive a comprehensive induction and training regarding to assisting with personal care.

Equality Impact Assessment

This policy has been reviewed in terms of its impact upon individuals with protected characteristics

Outcome

No change needed

Policy was updated
(details below)