



HALL GREEN SCHOOL

PERSONAL CARE POLICY

Adopted:	4 December 2024
Next Review:	December 2026
Governing Committee:	Full Governing Body
Responsibility:	Headteacher Chair of Governors

1. Principles

- 1.1 The Governing Body will act in accordance with Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 and the Government guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2022) to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at this school.
- 1.2 This school takes seriously its responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children and young people in its care. Meeting a pupil's personal care needs is one aspect of safeguarding.
- 1.3 The Governing Body recognises its duties and responsibilities in relation to the Equalities Act 2010 which requires that any pupil with an impairment that affects his/her ability to carry out day-to-day activities must not be discriminated against.
- 1.4 This personal care policy should be read in conjunction with the schools' policies as below (or similarly named):
 - Safeguarding and child protection policy
 - Staff code of conduct
 - Whistle-blowing policy
 - Health and safety policy and procedures
 - Special Educational Needs policy.
- 1.5 The Governing Body is committed to ensuring that all staff responsible for the personal care of pupils will undertake their duties in a professional manner at all times. It is acknowledged that these adults are in a position of great trust.
- 1.6 We recognise that there is a need to treat all pupils, whatever their age, gender, disability, religion, ethnicity or sexual orientation with respect and dignity when personal care is given. The child's welfare is of paramount importance and his/her experience of personal and intimate 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.
- 1.7 Staff will work in close partnership with parent/carers and other professionals to share information and provide continuity of care.
- 1.8 Where pupils with complex and/or long term health conditions have an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP) in place, the plan should, where relevant, take into account the principles and best practice guidance in this personal care policy.
- 1.9 Members of staff must be prepared to provide personal care to pupils unless they have their own physical difficulties.
- 1.10 All staff undertaking personal care must be given appropriate training.
- 1.11 This Personal Care Policy has been developed to safeguard children and staff. It applies to everyone involved in the personal care of children.

2. Child focused principles of personal care

The following are the fundamental principles upon which the Policy and Guidelines are based:

- 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.
- Every child has the right to be involved and consulted in their own personal care to the best of their abilities.
- Every child has the right to express their views on their own personal care and to have such views taken into account.
- Every child has the right to have levels of personal care that are as consistent as possible.

3. Definition

3.1 Personal 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 some pupils are unable to do because of their 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.

3.2 It also includes supervision of pupils involved in personal self-care.

4. Best Practice

4.1 Pupils who require regular assistance with personal care have written Physical Management Plans agreed by staff, parents/carers and any other professionals actively involved, such as Physical Difficulties Support Service (PDSS) or physiotherapists. Ideally the plan should be agreed at a meeting at which all key staff and the pupil should also be present wherever possible/appropriate. Any historical concerns (such as past abuse) should be taken into account. The plan should be reviewed as necessary, but at least annually, and at any time of change of circumstances, e.g. for residential trips or staff changes (where the staff member concerned is providing personal care) or during Annual Reviews of EHCPs. They should also take into account procedures for educational visits/day trips.

4.2 Where relevant, it is good practice to agree with the pupil and parents/carers that where a Physical Management Plan is **not** in place, parents/carers will be informed the same day if their child has needed help with meeting personal care needs (e.g. has had an 'accident' and wet or soiled him/herself). It is recommended practice that information on personal care should be treated as confidential and communicated in person by telephone or by sealed letter, not through the school planner.

- 4.3 In relation to record keeping, a written record should be kept in a format agreed by parents and staff every time a child has an invasive medical procedure, e.g. support with catheter usage (see afore-mentioned multi-agency guidance for the management of long term health conditions for children and young people).
- 4.4 Accurate records should also be kept when a child requires assistance with personal 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.
- 4.5 These records will be kept in the child's file and available to parents/carers on request.
- 4.6 All pupils 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.
- 4.7 Staff who provide personal care have (e.g. moving and handling training) according to the needs of the pupil. Staff should be fully aware of best practice regarding infection control, including the requirement to wear disposable gloves and aprons where appropriate.
- 4.8 Staff will be supported to adapt their practice in relation to the needs of individual pupils taking into account developmental changes such as the onset of puberty and menstruation.
- 4.9 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.
- 4.10 Staff who provide personal 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.
- 4.11 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 personal care. SEND 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.
- 4.12 An individual member of staff should always inform another appropriate adult when they are going alone to assist a pupil with personal care and must never undertake the task independently; there must always be two adults present.

- 4.13 The religious views, beliefs and cultural values of children and their families should be taken into account, particularly as they might affect certain practices or determine the gender of the carer.
- 4.14 Whilst safer working practice is important, such as in relation to staff caring for a pupil of the same gender, there is research¹ which suggests there may be missed opportunities for children and young people due to over anxiety about risk factors; ideally, every pupil should have a choice regarding the member of staff. There might also be occasions when the member of staff has good reason not to work with a pupil. It is important that the process is transparent so that all issues stated above can be respected; this can best be achieved through a meeting with all parties, as described above, to agree what actions will be taken, where and by whom.
- 4.15 Adults who assist pupils with personal care should be employees of the school, **not students or volunteers**, and therefore have the usual range of safer recruitment checks, including enhanced DBS checks.
- 4.16 All staff should be aware of the school's confidentiality policy. Sensitive information will be shared only with those who need to know.
- 4.17 Health & Safety guidelines should be adhered to regarding waste products.
- 4.18 No member of staff will carry a mobile phone, camera or similar device whilst providing personal care.

5. Child Protection

- 5.1 The Governors and staff at this school recognise that pupils with special needs and who are disabled are particularly vulnerable to all types of abuse.
- 5.2 The school's child protection procedures will be adhered to.
- 5.3 From a child protection perspective it is acknowledged that intimate personal care involves risks for children and adults as it may involve staff touching private parts of a pupil's body. In this school best practice will be promoted and all adults (including those who are involved in personal care and others in the vicinity) will be encouraged to be vigilant at all times, to seek advice where relevant and take account of safer working practice.
- 5.4 Where appropriate, pupils will be taught personal safety skills carefully matched to their level of development and understanding.
- 5.5 If a member of staff has any concerns about physical changes in a pupil's presentation, e.g. unexplained marks, bruises, etc s/he will immediately report concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Leads for Child Protection or Headteacher. A clear written record of the concern will be completed and a referral made, in accordance with the

school's child protection procedures. Parents/carers will be asked for their consent or informed that a referral is necessary prior to it being made but this should only be done where such discussion and agreement-seeking will not place the child at increased risk of suffering significant harm.

- 5.6 If a pupil becomes unusually distressed or very unhappy about being cared for by a particular member of staff, this should be reported to the SENDCo, Assistant Headteacher (Inclusion), or Headteacher. The matter will be investigated at an appropriate level (usually the Headteacher) and outcomes recorded. Parents/carers will be contacted as soon as possible in order to reach a resolution. Staffing schedules will be altered until the issue/s is/are resolved so that the child's needs remain paramount. Further advice will be taken from outside agencies if necessary.
- 5.7 If a pupil, or any other person, makes an allegation against an adult working at the school this should be reported to the Headteacher (or to the Chair of Governors if the concern is about the Headteacher) who will consult the Local Authority Designated Officer in accordance with the school's policy: Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Members of Staff and Volunteers. It should not be discussed with any other members of staff or the member of staff the allegation relates to.
- 5.8 Similarly, any adult who has concerns about the conduct of a colleague at the school or about any improper practice will report this to the Headteacher or to the Chair of Governors if related to the Headteacher, in accordance with the child protection procedures and 'whistle-blowing' policy.