

Intimate and Personal Care Policy

Dignity, privacy and safeguarding during short break respite

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Related policies	Safeguarding; Health & Safety; Medication; Risk Assessment

1. Purpose and Scope

PURE JOY ADVENTURES provides short break and respite activities for children and young people with disabilities and additional needs. Short break respite gives families a planned break from their caring responsibilities whilst ensuring that the child or young person continues to receive high-quality, safe and consistent support. This policy sets out how PURE JOY ADVENTURES will deliver intimate and personal care during all short break respite activities and away-from-home experiences.

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and contractors working on behalf of PURE JOY ADVENTURES who may be required to provide intimate or personal care to a child or young person during a short break placement. It should be read alongside the organisation's Safeguarding Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Medication Policy and any individual short break care plan agreed for the child or young person.

The goal of this policy is to ensure that every child and young person who attends a PURE JOY ADVENTURES short break is treated with dignity and respect, that their safety and wellbeing are paramount at all times, and that both staff and children are protected from the risk of harm or allegation.

2. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, 'intimate care' refers to care tasks of an intimate nature associated with bodily functions, bodily products and personal hygiene, which require direct or indirect contact with, or exposure of, the sexual parts of the body as defined culturally by the individual. During short break respite activities, examples of intimate care may include washing or dressing intimate body areas, toileting support (including changing continence pads or nappies), changing menstruation products, managing catheters, assisting a young person on to the toilet, or supporting them to clean themselves following a soiling or wetting episode.

'Personal care' refers to those care tasks that do not involve contact with or exposure of the sexual parts of the body and are generally associated with personal presentation and daily living. During short break activities, examples of personal care may include washing non-intimate areas of the body, feeding and mealtime support, prompting or escorting a young person to the toilet, oral care, nail care, shaving, dressing and undressing, hair care, and supervising a young person in their own intimate self-care.

A 'short break respite placement' is any PURE JOY ADVENTURES programme, day activity, recreational experience during which PURE JOY ADVENTURES staff take on a temporary caring responsibility for a child or young person, enabling their parent or carer to take a planned break.

3. Implementation

PURE JOY ADVENTURES recognises that children and young people with additional needs who attend short break provision can be particularly vulnerable. The temporary nature of a short break placement means that some children will be spending time with staff they may not yet know well, making it even more important that intimate and personal care is managed in a planned, transparent and child-centred way.

Before a child or young person begins attending a short break placement, a Short Break Care Plan will be completed in partnership with the young person, their parents or carers, and any relevant professionals. This plan will detail all intimate and personal care requirements specific to that individual, the agreed approach to delivering that care, equipment needs, communication methods, and the staff who are authorised to provide care. No member of staff will provide intimate or personal care to a child or young person without first reading and understanding that individual's Short Break Care Plan.

If a member of staff is unable to work within the guidelines set out in this policy, they must raise their concerns with their line manager before undertaking any care. Staff who have concerns about a task they feel unqualified or uncomfortable to perform must never proceed without guidance; the welfare of the young person must always come first, and no staff member should carry out a procedure they have not been trained to perform.

4. Dignity and Respect

All intimate and personal care delivered during PURE JOY ADVENTURES short break activities will be provided with dignity, respect and sensitivity. Staff must approach every care interaction gently and calmly, ensuring that the young person feels safe and in control throughout. Rushed, dismissive or careless handling of intimate care is never acceptable.

Privacy is a fundamental right, and all children and young people are entitled to it regardless of their age, disability or level of dependence. Staff must take active steps to uphold privacy during all care interactions: this includes ensuring that care takes place in a designated, appropriate space, that the young person's body is covered with clothing or towels wherever possible, and that doors are managed in a way that is both safe and private. The approach to doors and privacy screens must be agreed in the young person's Short Break Care Plan, taking into account any health or safety factors such as a history of epilepsy or behaviours of concern.

Information about a young person's intimate and personal care needs is private and confidential. Staff must only share such information with colleagues who need it to deliver care safely, and must never discuss a young person's care needs in public spaces, shared areas or in the presence of other young people. Information sharing must always have a legitimate purpose and, wherever possible, the consent of the young person or, where they lack capacity, their parent or carer.

5. Participation and Consent

The active participation of the young person in their own care is central to the ethos of PURE JOY ADVENTURES short break provision. Before any care interaction begins, staff must seek the young person's consent or assent. This may be verbal, through an agreed communication system, through Makaton signing, the use of symbols or any other agreed method. The method of seeking consent will be recorded in the young person's Short Break Care Plan.

Staff must give every young person the opportunity to carry out their own care if they are able to do so, and must actively encourage independence at every stage. Care should be delivered in a way that is enabling and empowering, not passive. Where a young person can wash a particular area themselves, clean up after toileting, or manage any part of their own care routine, they must be given the time, space and support to do so. Staff should avoid carrying out tasks on behalf of a young person that the young person can manage for themselves or with minimal prompting.

Where a young person is fully dependent on staff for their care, staff should narrate what they are doing throughout the process, giving the young person choices wherever possible — for example, which wash cloth to use, what order to dress in, or which towel they prefer. Children and young people should always be asked about their views on touch and physical contact, and those views must be taken seriously and acted upon.

6. Responsiveness to the Young Person

Staff must be alert and responsive to the reactions, expressed views and preferences of each young person throughout every care interaction. This is particularly important during short break respite, where a

young person may not yet have an established relationship with care staff and may find it harder to communicate their feelings. Staff should check in with the young person regularly during care, using language and communication methods appropriate to the individual: for example, asking 'Is it OK if I do it this way?' or 'Do you want to try washing that part yourself?'

If a young person expresses discomfort, distress or dislike in relation to a particular member of staff carrying out their personal care, staff must take this seriously and explore the reason. A young person's objection to a particular staff member should never be dismissed or overridden without careful consideration. Any such concern must be discussed with the activity lead or designated safeguarding lead as soon as possible, and an alternative arrangement made where this is safe and practicable.

Staff should use their knowledge of the young person, developed through the Short Break Care Plan, handover information from parents and carers, and their own experience of working with the individual, to notice and respond to changes in the young person's behaviour or emotional state during or after care. Any change in behaviour — whether increased distress, withdrawal, unusual compliance or any other shift — should be recorded and reported to the designated safeguarding lead without delay.

7. Body Image and Self-Esteem

The way in which staff approach intimate and personal care has a direct impact on the messages young people receive about their own bodies. PURE JOY ADVENTURES is committed to ensuring that all care interactions support positive body image and healthy self-esteem in the young people it supports. Staff must approach all care tasks in a matter-of-fact, respectful and warm manner, conveying clearly through their words and actions that the young person's body belongs to them and is valued.

Where the age and understanding of the young person makes it appropriate, care interactions can be used as natural opportunities to reinforce safety messages about bodies, personal space and appropriate touch. Young people who feel confident and safe in their bodies, and who understand the concept of bodily autonomy, are less vulnerable to abuse. Care routines should feel as relaxed, positive and empowering as possible. Staff should avoid language or body language that implies embarrassment, impatience or negativity about any aspect of the care they are providing.

8. Consistency of Practice

Consistency is especially important in short break respite provision, where a young person may arrive already anxious about being in an unfamiliar setting or with unfamiliar staff. A consistent and predictable care routine helps children and young people to feel safe, reduces distress, and minimises the risk of misunderstanding or allegation.

The Short Break Care Plan for each young person will clearly set out how their care is to be delivered, including the language and terminology to be used, the physical approach (for example, that intimate areas must always be washed using a wash tool rather than bare hands), the equipment required and the staff who are authorised to provide care. All staff involved in a young person's short break placement must read the Short Break Care Plan before working with that young person, and must follow its agreed approach consistently. The activity lead is responsible for ensuring that all team members working with a particular young person are familiar with their care plan and are following it.

Where a change to a young person's care routine is identified as necessary — whether due to a change in the young person's needs, new equipment, or feedback from parents or carers — all relevant staff must be informed of the change before it is implemented. Changes to care routines must be updated in the Short Break Care Plan and communicated to the parent or carer.

Key elements of consistency for each young person on a short break placement include: using the recognised words, symbols or signing agreed with the young person and their family; always washing intimate areas using a flannel, sponge or wash tool rather than bare hands; following the individual Short Break Care Plan for every interaction; and, as far as is practicable, ensuring that the same small number of staff are responsible for that young person's intimate care throughout the placement.

9. Gender Considerations

PURE JOY ADVENTURES recognises that the gender of the adult providing intimate care is an important consideration for many young people and their families, and is committed to taking this into account in all short break placements. As a general guide, children up to the age of approximately eight years can be supported with intimate and personal care by staff of either gender. From around the age of eight, as young people develop psychologically and physically, the gender of the care giver becomes increasingly significant in terms of privacy, dignity and the young person's own sense of self. From this age, it is good practice for intimate care to be provided by a member of staff of the same gender as the young person wherever this is possible.

The gender preference of the young person and their parent or carer will be recorded in the Short Break Care Plan and will be respected as far as staffing allows. PURE JOY ADVENTURES acknowledges that in practice, its staffing group may not always make it possible to match a same-gender care giver to every young person. Where this is the case, the position will be explained clearly to the family during the care planning process, an agreed alternative arrangement will be put in place, and this arrangement will be reviewed regularly.

In the event that a same-gender staff member is not available but a staff member of the opposite gender who is known and trusted by the young person is present, the young person will be offered the choice of receiving support from that person. In emergency or unplanned situations, the priority will always be the welfare of the young person; any departure from the agreed gender arrangement in such circumstances must be recorded and the parent or carer informed as soon as practicable.

10. Safeguarding and Documentation

Short break respite provision carries particular safeguarding responsibilities. Children and young people with additional needs who attend short break activities may be less able to communicate concerns or discomfort, and may have experienced previous abuse or neglect. All staff must remain alert throughout each short break placement to signs and indicators that a young person may be at risk of harm, or that harm may have already occurred.

Indicators that must be reported and recorded immediately include unexplained bruising, marks or injuries — particularly around intimate areas; signs of sexually transmitted infection, pregnancy or unusual discharge; frequent wetting or soiling that goes beyond what is typical for the individual; signs that a young person is unusually sore or tender in the genital or rectal area; sexualised behaviour or language that is inappropriate to the young person's age or understanding; and significant or unexplained changes in behaviour during or after care.

If, during the provision of intimate or personal care, a young person appears distressed or refuses to receive care, staff must stop immediately. Care must never be forced or carried out against a young person's will. Staff should try again at a later point and, if the young person continues to refuse, must contact the parent or carer to discuss the situation. Refusal of care must always be recorded. Intimate care must never be used as a sanction or withheld as a form of punishment, nor must compliance with care be enforced through threats or negative consequences. Positive reinforcement strategies, agreed

with the parent or carer in advance, may be used to support young people who find care routines difficult.

All technology capable of audio or visual recording must be removed from the care environment during the delivery of intimate or personal care. This applies to both staff and, where appropriate, the young person's own devices.

Wherever possible, two members of staff should be present when intimate care is delivered during a short break placement. This protects both the young person and the staff member from harm and from the risk of unfounded allegation. Where it is not possible for two members of staff to be present, the staff member providing care must inform a colleague of what care is being provided, the reason for it and the location before care begins.

Every episode of intimate or personal care provided during a short break placement must be recorded. The record must include the date, time, nature of the care provided, the name of the staff member who provided it, the name of any second adult present or informed, and any relevant observations about the young person's behaviour or reaction. Parents and carers must be informed of all intimate care provided during a short break and this communication must also be recorded. Where safeguarding concerns arise, the PURE JOY ADVENTURES Safeguarding Policy must be followed without delay, and a full written record of concerns submitted to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Any concern about a member of staff's practice in relation to intimate or personal care — including failure to follow this policy — must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and recorded in writing.

11. Staff Training and Competency

No member of staff will be asked or expected to provide intimate or personal care to a child or young person during a short break placement unless they have received appropriate training and have been assessed as competent to do so. Prior personal experience of caring for a family member or child is not a substitute for formal training in the context of working with other people's children in a professional setting.

All staff who may be required to provide intimate or personal care during short break activities will receive training before they begin working with young people, and will receive regular refresher training thereafter. Training will cover the principles set out in this policy, practical techniques for specific care tasks relevant to the young people they support, infection control and the safe use of PPE, safeguarding awareness in the context of intimate care, and documentation requirements. Where a young person's care plan requires a specific clinical procedure — such as catheter management or the administration of medication — only staff who have been individually assessed as competent to carry out that procedure will be authorised to do so.

Line managers are responsible for ensuring that all staff working within their area of responsibility are appropriately trained, that their training is up to date, and that competency is reviewed regularly. All new staff joining PURE JOY ADVENTURES will receive an induction that includes this policy and associated training before they begin working with young people on short break placements. Training completion must be recorded and held on the staff member's personnel file.

12. Roles and Responsibilities

The Director / Manager of PURE JOY ADVENTURES is responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented effectively across all short break provision, that adequate trained staff are available to meet the intimate and personal care needs of all young people on placement, and that the policy is reviewed

and updated as required.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for overseeing all safeguarding matters arising from intimate and personal care, for ensuring that concerns are reported and recorded appropriately, and for liaising with external agencies where necessary.

Activity Leads are responsible for ensuring that the Short Break Care Plan for every young person in their group is read and understood by all relevant staff before a placement begins, that care is delivered consistently and in accordance with each individual's plan, that records are completed promptly and accurately, and that any concerns are escalated without delay.

All staff are responsible for delivering intimate and personal care in line with this policy and with each young person's Short Break Care Plan, for maintaining the dignity and privacy of every young person in their care, for completing records accurately, for informing parents and carers as required, and for reporting any concerns about a young person's welfare or about a colleague's practice to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately.

13. Legislation and Statutory Guidance

This policy has been developed in accordance with the following legislation and statutory guidance and will be reviewed in the event of any relevant changes to these frameworks.

- The Children Act 1989 and 2004
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Health and Social Care Act 2008
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) 1989
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 (where applicable)
- The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice 2015
- The Care Act 2014

This policy draws on guidance originally developed by the Chailey Heritage Child Protection Working Group (February 1991) and updated best practice in the delivery of intimate and personal care in children's services.

14. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the management team of PURE JOY ADVENTURES, or sooner if there is a change in legislation, a safeguarding incident involving intimate or personal care, or a significant change to the organisation's short break provision. All staff must be made aware of any updates to this policy and must confirm that they have read and understood the revised version.

Policy Agreement

Policy approved by (name)	
Role / designation	
Signature	
Date approved	
Next review date	

Appendix 1 – Practice Guidelines for Staff

The following guidelines must be followed by all staff providing intimate or personal care during PURE JOY ADVENTURES short break placements. The level of assistance required by each young person, their individual abilities and their expressed preferences must be set out in their Short Break Care Plan. All staff must read the relevant care plan before providing any care.

Verbal, visual or gestural prompts should always be used wherever possible to encourage the young person to carry out their own care. Where this is not possible, staff must adhere to the following guidance at all times.

- Read and familiarise yourself with the Short Break Care Plan for every young person you are working with, and adhere to the agreed approach for that individual.
- Always knock on a door and announce yourself before entering a bathroom, changing area or bedroom.
- Inform a colleague before providing intimate care: tell them what care you are providing, where you are, and what help you may need.
- Cover the young person with clothing, towels or a modesty sheet to maintain their privacy and dignity throughout the care interaction, and whenever another person enters or leaves the room.
- Always use a flannel, sponge or wash tool when washing intimate areas. Never use bare hands.
- Ask the young person who they would like to assist them with their personal care, wherever it is practicable to do so.
- Never carry out a procedure you have not been trained to perform. If you are uncertain how to do something safely, stop and ask your line manager or activity lead.
- Give the young person every opportunity to manage or contribute to their own care, however small. The aim is always to promote independence and empowerment.
- Do not administer suppositories, manage a catheter or carry out any other clinical procedure unless you have been individually trained and assessed as competent to do so.
- Report any concerns expressed by the young person about you or any other member of staff to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and your line manager immediately.
- Be mindful of your attitude throughout every care interaction. Your manner communicates powerful messages to the young person about how their body is valued. Always treat every young person with warmth, dignity and respect.
- Remove all devices capable of audio or visual recording from the care environment before providing intimate or personal care.

- Complete a record of care immediately after every episode of intimate or personal care, including the date, time, nature of care provided, staff present or informed, and any relevant observations. Inform the parent or carer and record that communication has taken place.

Appendix 2 – Short Break Care Plan Template

This care plan must be completed before a young person begins attending a PURE JOY ADVENTURES short break placement that involves intimate or personal care. It must be agreed with the young person (where possible), their parent or carer, and the relevant PURE JOY ADVENTURES staff. It must be reviewed annually or whenever the young person's needs change.

Full name of young person	
Date of birth	
Date of plan	
Review date	
Was this plan discussed with the young person?	YES / NO
If no, please state reason	
Does any care require additional staff training?	YES / NO
If yes, please specify	

Type of care required

Please describe in detail the intimate and/or personal care this young person requires during short break activities, including frequency and any specific requirements.

Location of care

Please state the specific location(s) where care will be provided during the short break.

Communication and preferences

How does the young person indicate they need assistance?	
Any dislikes, triggers or sensitivities related to care?	
Communication method / aids used	
Cultural or religious considerations	
Preferred gender of care giver (state reason if applicable)	
Any historical concerns relevant to care (e.g. past abuse — note sensitively)	

Equipment and resources

Equipment required (e.g. continence pads — specify size, hoisting equipment, adapted toilet seat)	
Who is responsible for supplying equipment?	
Storage location at venue	
Disposal arrangements	

What the young person can do independently

Record what the young person is able to do for themselves. Update regularly to reflect progress and to inform independence targets.

What the young person can do independently	Date noted
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Authorised staff

Staff name	Role	Training date / competency confirmed
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Any other comments

The information within this Short Break Care Plan is private and confidential and must only be shared with staff directly involved in providing care to this young person.

Agreed by parent/carer — print name	
Signature	
Date	
Agreed by PURE JOY ADVENTURES — print name	
Designation	
Signature	
Date	

Appendix 3 – Short Break Intimate & Personal Care Record

All episodes of intimate or personal care must be recorded here immediately after the care has been provided. Parents and carers must be informed after each episode and this must also be noted.

Young person's name	
Short break placement / date(s)	

Completed by (print name)	
Designation	
Signature	
Date	

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