



Intimate Care Policy

Introduction

All Staff involved in the intimate care of pupils in St Vincent's School must. Follow this policy. The documentation supports staff that provide intimate care to our pupils. It acknowledges the responsibilities and protects the rights of everyone involved. This Policy is based on national guidance- Children First, accepted good practice and practical experience working with children and young people requiring intimate care.

Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to set out procedures that safeguard both pupils and staff by providing a consistent approach within a framework, and that recognise the rights and responsibilities of all those involved in providing intimate care for our pupils.

Relationship to School Ethos

In keeping with the school's mission statement, pupils are supported to reach their full potential in contributing to or managing their own intimate care needs. St Vincent's Special National School is committed to ensuring that all staff responsible for the intimate care of the pupils will undertake their duties in a professional manner at all times. The School recognises that there is a need to treat all children with respect when intimate care is given. No pupil should be attended to in a way that causes distress or pain. The child's welfare and dignity is of paramount importance. Every child's right to privacy will be respected.

Definition of Intimate Care

Intimate care refers to all aspects of support to a student, whether by direct or indirect contact, which are associated with bodily functions, body products and personal hygiene involving intimate parts of the body.

Direct contact involves physical contact between the student and the staff member. It may involve touching of both intimate and non-intimate body parts.

Indirect contact involves the supervision, observation and prompting of the student to complete personal and intimate care tasks.

Intimate care includes; dressing and undressing (underwear), support with using the toilet, changing of continence pads, washing intimate body parts, feeding and menstrual care

Aims

The aim of this policy is:

- To safeguard the dignity, rights and wellbeing of the pupils
- To ensure that the pupils are treated consistently when they experience intimate personal care
- To provide guidance and reassurance to staff
- To ensure that parents are involved in planning the intimate care of their child and are confident that their concerns and the individual needs of their child are taken into account
- To reassure parents that staff are knowledgeable about intimate care.

Principles

This Policy embraces the following principles

- Every child has the right to feel safe and secure
- Every child has the right to be treated as an individual
- Every child has the right to remain healthy
- Every child has the right to privacy, dignity and a professional approach from all staff when meeting his or her needs
- Every child has the right to information and support that will enable him or her to make informed and appropriate choices
- Every child has the right to be accepted for who they are, without regard to age, gender, ability, race, culture or beliefs
- Every child has the right to information and procedures for any complaint or queries he or she may have regarding intimate care.



Partnership and participation

Much of the information required to make the process of intimate care as comfortable as possible for the child is available from parents and/or carers. They must be closely involved in the preparation of intimate care protocols. The importance of regular consultation and information sharing with parents/carers and professionals working with the child is emphasised throughout the policy and guidance. An intimate care plan will be drawn up for students who have support needs in regard to intimate care. The class teacher will assign an SNA to co-ordinate the plan. When a copy finalised by the class teacher will be sent to parents.

Daily Home/School Communication

It is good practice to maintain a regular diary system to pass information between the school and home. This diary may include information such as:

- How well a child or young person has eaten/or what she/he ate
- Particular achievements
- Seizures
- Toileting

Staff Communication with the Child or Young Person

- Appropriate use of language, signs, symbols, photographs or objects should be used as appropriate at all times.
- Staff should work in a reassuring, supportive and focused manner with the child or young person when involved in intimate care

Maintaining the integrity of the staff

- Staff members who are required to provide intimate care support should be familiar with and comply with this policy.
- Teachers should ensure that staff members carrying out intimate care receive the appropriate advice/training prior to supporting a pupil in intimate care.
- Where possible staff should work with the same sex in providing intimate care.
- All staff assisting with intimate care should be employees.
- Some procedures may require two members of staff for health and safety reasons, for example, manual handling. This should be clearly stated in the personal plan.
- Where an issue of concern arises the staff member involved in the intimate care assistance should immediately report such incident to the Designated Liaison Person

Ratification, Communication and Review:

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management 9th June 2022 and communicated to the school community thereafter. This policy will be reviewed in 2 years' time and amended as necessary by means of a whole school collaborative process.

Appendix: 1 Hand Hygiene

Good hand washing is the single most effective way of stopping germs from getting into our bodies and causing infection.

Liquid soap is better than solid soap because it is less likely to become contaminated.

Disposable paper towels are the best option for drying hands because damp towels can harbour germs.

Don't assume children know how to wash their hands.



Hand washing procedure

1. Wet hands under warm running water.
2. Apply a small amount of liquid soap.
3. Rub hands together vigorously ensuring soap and water is applied to all surfaces of the hands. Be sure to rub between fingers, the palms and the back of the hands.
4. Rinse hands under running water.
5. Dry hands, preferably using paper towels.

Never allow children to eat without showing you their washed hands

Appendix 2.

Dressing

(Including swimming)

Ensure facilities provide privacy and modesty e.g. separate toileting and changing for boys and girls or at least adequate screening. Separate changing cubicles should be available for swimming sessions.

Pupils should be encouraged to dress/undress themselves independently.

There should be a clear plan, appropriate to each individual for (un)dressing for those who require supervision.

When using Public Facilities e.g. staff should be aware in advance of the nature of the facilities, and to ensure the dignity of each participant in the activity.

Procedure for undressing and dressing pupils who require full support: (swimming or when soiled)

Ensure privacy before procedure

1. Remove clothing from lower body first
2. Put on swimming costume/or wash as required
3. Ensure lower regions are covered before removing garments from upper body
4. Encourage pupil to assist whatever way possible
5. Refer to moving and handling procedure for safe movement of pupil and safety of staff
6. Refer to swimming pool procedures for further information.



Appendix 3. Supported Eating

Eating is a social occasion

Positioning: - a clear description, agreed by the staff involved as to where the pupil will eat meals

Object of reference PECS's symbol: - individually chosen for each pupil where appropriate to indicate to them that it is time to eat

Pupils should be encouraged to eat as independently as possible and make choices where appropriate. Unless directed from home staff will not dictate the order in which the pupils eat the food in their snack/lunch box.

Pupils are expected to manage their snack lunch time as independently as possible with minimal support from staff.

Pupils tidy up after their snack/ lunch as independently as possible with minimal support from staff.

Procedure for supported eating

1. Ensure pupil is well positioned in chair in a stable upright position
2. If protection for clothing is required it should be appropriate to the age of pupil i.e. disposable paper napkin
3. Use object of reference at this point
4. Follow each pupil's guidelines for feeding. Any pupils who have attended feeding clinic must have their feeding protocol accessible to staff to follow at all times.

Appendix 4. Dental Hygiene

The Mighty Mouth tooth-brushing programme has developed National Standards for Tooth brushing during Early Years and Childhood.

The website www.dentalhealth.ie contains much useful information.

Appendix 5. Toileting and Menstruation

Guidelines

- Provide facilities, which afford privacy and modesty, with a separate toilet for girls and boys. These should be clearly marked. Screening where necessary.
- There should be sufficient space, heating and ventilation to ensure the individual's safety and comfort.



- There should be appropriate and specialised toilet seats provided for the size and physical needs of the child or young person. A step may be necessary for younger children.
- Staff must receive training in good working practices, which comply with health and safety regulation, such as wearing of appropriate disposable gloves for certain procedures and methods of dealing with body fluids.
- Ensure that there are adequate supplies, such as toilet paper, liquid soap, paper towels bin for disposal of soiled pads.
- Supplies of suitable cleaning materials for cleaning and disinfecting areas.
- Items of protective clothing such as disposable gloves and aprons must be provided and readily accessible.
- Supplies of fresh clothes should be available when required.

It may be necessary, however, to have more than one member of staff to help while toileting a child or young person because of health and safety or other considerations. Children who are heavier and with physical disabilities may require hoists and a hydraulic changing table. Staff are trained in the use of these aids and equipment.

Let another staff member know that you are assisting a child to a toilet area.

Do not lock yourself into a toilet alone with a child under any circumstances. It is good practice to have a second adult in the vicinity when attending to a child's intimate care needs. The adult may not actually be in the cubicle but is readily available for support if necessary. In the event that a child has soiled heavily and requires intensive cleaning two staff may be required in the room. Assist only as much as is necessary. Allow the child to do as much as possible for him/herself. Talk through your actions with the child in a quiet manner, allowing the child as much dignity as possible.