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Intimate Care Policy

1. Introduction

The need for this policy was highlighted by staff that is anxious to have clear direction with regard to their intervention with students who attend this school in aspects of intimate care.

Intimate care is a key area of a person's self image and respect and as such it is vital that it is practised in a sensitive manner. It is essential that the needs and rights of students and staff are protected and that the highest standards of best practise are ensured at all times in the area of intimate personal assistance.

The level of assistance required will reflect the needs of each individual student at any given time.

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, showering (if required) and menstrual care.

2. Rationale

The formulation of this policy is to give direction to staff with regard to supporting students in their intimate care needs in a way which promotes the dignity and privacy of the student while also protecting the integrity of the staff involved.

Scope of this Policy

This policy applies to all staff involved in supporting students attending this school with regard to their intimate care needs. It does not apply to Personal Care i.e. tasks associated with outer appearance which are by nature less intrusive such as skin care, hair care, washing face, hands and teeth.

3. Relationship to School Ethos

This policy supports the school mission statement in providing appropriately to meet each child's individual needs. In keeping with Coill Dubh N.S mission statement, students will be supported to become as independent as possible in managing their own intimate care needs.

4. Aims

The aim of this policy is

- To give direction to staff with regard to supporting students in their intimate care needs in a way which promotes the dignity and privacy of the student while also protecting the integrity of the staff member.
- To promote best practise throughout the school within the frame work of the current policy.

5. Procedures

1) Delivering Intimate Care

- An intimate care plan will be drawn up for students who have significant support needs with regards to intimate care. The class teacher will assign a member of staff to co-ordinate the plan.
- The intimate care plan will be drawn up by a team of people including the student, the staff working with the student and, if relevant, a family member. This plan will be circulated to the staff prior to implementation.
- The plan will identify:
 - Intimate Care tasks required by the pupil

- Support needs to carry out each task
- Resources required to carry out each task
- Risk management in relation to each task

In drawing up the plan consideration should be given to the wishes of the individual concerned and where relevant the preferences of their parents/guardians.

Support needs should include the staff requirements to carry out each intimate care task. Staffing levels should be reviewed with the relevant staff and parents as the needs arise during the course of the school year.

In a situation where a staff member is obliged to undertake intimate care assistance on his/her own, that staff member will notify another staff member before assisting the student that their assistance may be required.

- In case of a student requiring manual handling as part of meeting their intimate care needs, the manual handling procedure should be defined in the Pupils File. The intimate care plan should indicate that the student's manual handling guidelines be followed with regard to the specific lift/transfer.
- The intimate care plan will detail procedures which maximise the dignity and privacy of the student.
- The plan should ensure that the student is involved to the greatest possible extent in preparation for and carrying out of the task.
- The intimate care plan should be reviewed as required

2) Maintaining the dignity and privacy of a student.

- The staff member should be familiar with the student's particular needs and preferences as outlined in their intimate care plan.
- Intimate care should be undertaken in an environment where the student's privacy can be maintained; only those who are involved in helping with the care task should be present in the room.
- Persons on placement should NOT be involved in supporting pupils' intimate care needs.
- The pupils' intimate care needs should only be discussed in a private setting where confidentiality can be maintained.

- Before commencing an intimate care task, the staff member should explain to the pupil, using an appropriate method of communication, what they are about to do and how they will do it.
- Physical contact during intimate care assistance should be affirmative and supportive.
- Staff will check in advance that suitable facilities exist for intimate care procedures when on outings.

3) Ensuring the safety of the student and staff members.

- The environment should support the implementation of the pupils Intimate Care Plan in a safe and dignified way.
- Staff members should ensure that they are fully trained in any specific procedures which need to be undertaken in the delivery of intimate care for an individual.
- Staff members should use protective clothing such as disposable gloves and aprons as appropriate when carrying out intimate care tasks.

4) Maintaining the integrity of the staff.

- Staff members who are required to provide intimate care support to pupils attending Coill Dubh N.S should ensure they are familiar with and comply with this policy. .
- Teachers should ensure that any staff member who is required to provide intimate care is made aware of this policy and receives the appropriate advice/training prior to supporting a pupil in intimate care.
- Teachers should ensure that staff members carrying out intimate care fully understand the delicacy of the situation and the potential for misinterpretation.
- Teachers should ensure staff members involved in providing intimate care support are given the opportunity to advance their skills and expertise in the area.
- In a situation where lack of resources result in intimate care being delivered in a way which contravenes a pupils intimate care plan, the staff member concerned should inform the teacher at the first opportunity.
- As a reasonable precaution and in keeping with best practice, a staff member will, where possible, make their intention and purpose known to another staff member, before commencing an intimate care task.
- In a situation where an issue of concern arises while carrying out an intimate care task, the staff member should report this concern immediately to the teacher or in their absence the Principal.

5) Reporting.

If, during the provision of intimate care assistance.....

- The pupil seems unusually sore, tender or bruised
- The pupil seems to misinterpret what is said or done
- The pupil has a very emotional reaction without apparent cause

.....the staff member involved in the intimate care assistance should immediately report such incident to the Designated Liaison Person. The Children First Guidelines will be followed at all times.

6) Roles and Responsibilities.

The overall responsibility for the day-to-day management of the school rests with the Principal. This policy belongs to the Board of Management and it is the responsibility of the Board to delegate and support the Principal in its implementation. All staff have a responsibility to follow through on all the guidelines within the policy. It is the responsibility of the class teacher to oversee the implementation of this policy within individual classes.

7) Implementations and Review

This policy will be implemented from the date of ratification and will be reviewed annually.

8) Evaluation

The policy will be deemed to have been successful by positive pupil, parent and staff feedback.