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**St. Ciaran’s & St. Manchan’s National School**

**Boher, Ballycumber, Co. Offaly. R35 P448**

**Intimate Care Policy**

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Intimate care is any caring procedure which involves attending to a student when he/she is: undressed or partially dressed, washing or drying (including intimate parts), helping to use the toilet, changing nappies or carrying out a procedure that requires direct or indirect contact with an intimate area of a student, or any procedure carried out while the student is in a state of whole or partial undress. (All school activities on or off site).

The supervision of students while they are dressing and undressing will also be considered as intimate care. This policy and related procedures have been developed to ensure that all physical contact between staff and students:

* Should be aimed at meeting the needs of students.
* Should respect the dignity of each student.
* Should be consistent with professional integrity of staff members.

**Policy Rationale:**

To increase knowledge, enhance skills and promote good practice in this sensitive area. To encourage each child to be as independent as possible, based on their individual needs.

**Aims and Objectives:**

The aims of this policy are:

* To ensure the dignity and privacy of each student.
* To develop a framework of procedures whereby intimate care requirements are provided in an appropriate manner.
* To draw on parent’s knowledge as the child’s primary carer to support children with their toileting needs.
* Training where necessary.

**Procedure:**

**Toileting Accidents:**

As teachers we act ‘in loco parentis’ and can deal with a toileting accident without assistance. It is good practice to only provide help that is required by the student. The teacher should encourage the student to do as much for themselves as possible. A teacher must always be cognisant of his/her duty of care regarding effective supervision of all the students in the class when assisting a student with toileting.

**Gathering Information:**

Where a pupil needs assistance with intimate care, a meeting will be convened with parents prior to a child beginning school with the principal if possible, class teacher (special or mainstream) and SNA(s) (where necessary). If appropriate the pupil will attend.

If significant intimate care needs are identified procedures will be outlined in a pupil plan.

Should intimate care needs become apparent following commencement of school, which were not initially identified, a meeting as outlined above will be convened as soon as possible.

**Procedure:**

The adults involved in intimate care needs of students are usually SNA’s but teachers may be involved.

The supporting adult ensures there has been a communication between child and adult regarding the intimate care task being undertaken. E.g. changing nappy, checking for soiling, adjusting underwear etc.

This can be child led. Alternatively, the adult can support the communication by choosing a method most suited to child-PECS visual, gesture, spoken phrase, classroom visual etc.

Parents should be notified where further support with an intimate care task was required than set out in care plan and plan adjusted accordingly.

**Parent Responsibilities:**

Parents/Guardians need to identify any toileting needs in their application form. They should supply the school with the resources required to carry out the toileting or other care needs, which may include, but not be limited to:

Nappies, Wipes, Creams, Nappy Sacks, Spare underwear, Spare clothes , Medical supplies.

**Elements of Good Practice for Staff:**

While it is not possible to prescribe guidelines that will apply in all situations, it is important the elements of good practice be followed:

* In the case that a student has an Intimate Care Plan ensure you are completely familiar with the plan.
* Address the student by name and ensure he/she is aware of the focus of the activity.
* Verbalise your actions to the student in a reassuring way to prepare them for each procedure.
* Use visual cues for students with limited communication, e.g. pointing at a wipe or picture board.
* Use appropriate and professional language. Specific language may be detailed in a care plan. In intimate care, the touch should be affirmative and supportive, not rough or insensitive subject to best practice and child welfare.
* Have all equipment and materials to hand before commencing.
* Use discreet observation if checking to see if a nappy needs changing.
* Use protective gloves provided.
* Take all precautions when disposing of soiled material in the bin provided.
* Intimate care procedures will be carried out in a manner which treats the student in a dignified and respectful way and allows the student the maximum level of privacy.
* The student’s independence will be encouraged.

**Reporting:**

* All toileting ‘accidents’ involving students with no Care Plan must be reported to the students’ parents.

If during the intimate care of a student a staff member:

* Accidently hurts/injures the student
* The staff member observes something which raises child protection concerns
* The student seems to misinterpret what is said or done.
* The student has a very emotional reaction without apparent cause

It must be reported to the ASD Teacher/Principal/SENCO or the DLP or Deputy DLP as appropriate.

**Staff Roles and Responsibilities:**

Teachers, Principal and all staff members assume shared responsibility, participates in, and contributes to the implementation of an effective and equitable ‘Intimate Care and Toileting Policy’.

**Success Criteria:**

The school evaluates the success of the policy through: **1.** Participation of all staff in the policy. **2.** Safe and effective care of all students in our school. **3.** Feedback from all staff. **4.** Feedback from relevant parents/guardians.

**Implementation:**

This policy is effective immediately

**Ratification & Communication:**

This policy was ratified by the Chairperson of the Board of Management in June 2019.

**Review Timetable:**

This policy will be reviewed regularly and amended as necessary by means of a whole school collaborative process.

**Evaluation:**

This policy is monitored on an ongoing basis.