

Bohermore National School

Intimate Care Needs Policy

Introduction

Intimate care is any caring procedure which involves attending to a pupil when he/she is undressed or partially dressed, washing (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 pupil, or any procedure carried out while the pupil is in a state of whole or partial undress. The supervision of pupils while they are dressing and undressing will also be considered as intimate care.

This policy and related procedures have been developed bearing in mind that all physical contact between staff and pupil:

- Should be aimed at meeting the needs of pupils
- Should respect the dignity of each pupil
- Should be consistent with professional integrity of staff members.

Policy Rationale

The aim of the policy is to increase knowledge, enhance skills and promote good practice in this sensitive area. All staff will be made aware of the standards expected of them. Intimate care will be carried out only by regular school employees.

Relationship to the School Ethos

All pupils and staff members have the right to feel safe and be treated with dignity and respect.

Aims and Objectives

The aims of this policy are:

- To ensure that the dignity and privacy of the pupil involved is paramount
- To develop a framework of procedures whereby intimate care requirements are dealt with in an appropriate manner.

Staffing Levels

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 pupil. The teacher should encourage the pupil 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 pupils in the class when assisting a pupil with toileting.

The teacher/Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) will provide the pupil with a change of underwear, which the pupil uses to change his/herself. If necessary, the school will provide a complete change of clothes. The teacher/SNA will assist with pupil with dressing only if absolutely necessary. If the pupil has soiled him/herself, the parents will be contacted in order to take the pupil home. In the event that a parent cannot be contacted, the teacher/SNA will do all that is necessary to make the pupil comfortable. Wet/soiled clothes will be put in a plastic bag and parents will be informed of what has happened when they collect their child. Parents are asked to return the clothes given to their child, washed and folded.

A record of such incidents will be kept in the Incident Book in the classroom.

Parents are informed on this procedure in the Junior Infants Induction meeting prior to their pupil starting school.

Changes of clothes and underwear are kept in the school. Parents of children with toileting needs are asked to provide spare clothes in the case of accidents. Staff are required to wear protective gloves while changing a pupil.

Toileting of pupils in the Special Classes

It is school policy that:

- The personnel involved in intimate care needs of pupils are usually SNA's but teachers may be involved.
- There should be a minimum of two staff members present if at all possible. In an emergency situation, the teacher/SNA may have to act alone. Additional support will be provided by mainstream SNAs if needed.
- Substitute SNAs are not generally involved in intimate care but if unavoidable the change in personnel will be discussed with the pupil.

Parent Responsibilities

Parents/Guardians need to identify any toileting needs in their application form. They should supply the school with the resources 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
- Sanitary pads

Sanitary Towels

There is an adequate supply of sanitary bins in appropriate classroom toilets. This will be kept under review and updated by school management as necessary. Spare towels will be kept in classrooms as necessary.

Mainstream classes:

Senior classes will be taught about menstrual periods as part of the RSE programme (with parental consent). They will also be informed about where they can get a sanitary towel if they need it.

SEN Classes:

Senior classes will be taught about periods as part of the RSE programme (with parental consent). They will also be informed about where they can get a sanitary towel if they need it (class teacher, SNA or secretary).

Measures will be taken on a case by case basis, according to the level of support needed by individual pupils.

Strategies may include:

- RSE lessons (with parental consent).
- Social stories – See (green) book *Taking Care of Myself* Mary Wrobel-available From SENCO and in Senior ASD Room.
- Visual step by step charts for removal, application and disposal of sanitary towel (e.g. twinkl.co.uk)
- A private and discreet space for training will be provided. Teachers will liaise with home re. progress and practice and support at home.

With parental consent, pupils will be supported if necessary in the following ways:

- Reminders to change sanitary towel.
- Discreet verbal support/prompting from outside toilet door.
- If pupil is unable to change sanitary towel, staff member/s may need to go into the toilet with the pupil to assist. The pupil's dignity and privacy will be paramount at all times. The visual charts listed above may be employed to promote independence.

Intimate Care/Toileting Plan

In the event that a specific toileting need has been identified for a pupil, an Intimate Care/Toileting Plan will be developed in partnership with the pupil's class teacher, designated SNA's and the pupil's parents/guardians.

The Care Plan may include:

- Specific care need
- Number of staff required to meet the needs of the pupil
- Identification of the staff members involved
- Additional equipment required
- Pupil's preferred means of communication to include agreed terminology for body parts and bodily functions.
- Pupil's level of ability
- Cultural and/or religious sensitivities
- Signature of Class Teacher
- Signature of Principal
- Date of Care Plan

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 pupil has an Intimate Care Plan, relevant staff must be completely familiar with the plan.
- Staff will address the pupil by name and ensure he/she is aware of the focus of the activity.
- Staff will verbalise their actions to the pupil in a reassuring way to prepare them for each procedure.
- For pupils with limited communication, staff will use visual supports e.g. pointing at a wipe or picture board.
- Appropriate and professional language will be used. Specific language may be detailed in a care plan.
- In intimate care, the touch should be affirmative and supportive, not rough or insensitive.
- Dignity and privacy of the pupil will be respected at all times.
- Staff will have all equipment and materials to hand before commencing.
- Staff will use discreet observation to check if a nappy/pad needs changing.
- Staff will use protective gloves provided.
- All precautions will be taken when disposing of soiled material in the bin provided.
- Intimate care procedures will be carried out in a manner which treats the pupils in a dignified and respectful way and allows the pupil the maximum level of privacy.
- The pupil's independence will be encouraged.

Reporting

All toileting “accidents” involving pupils with no Care Plan must be reported to the pupils’ parents.

If during the intimate care of a pupil;

- a staff member accidentally hurts/injures the pupil
- observes something which raises pupil protection concerns
- the pupil seems to misinterpret what is said or done
- the pupil has an emotional reaction without apparent cause

The incident must be reported to the Special Class Teacher/Principal or the DLP or Deputy DLP as appropriate.

Staff Roles and Responsibilities

Teachers and school management assume shared responsibility, participate in and contribute 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 pupils in our school
3. Feedback from all staff
4. Feedback from relevant parents/guardians

Ratification and Implementation

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on _____

Signed: _____

Chairperson BOM

Date: _____

Review

It will be reviewed every three years, with next review due in 2023.