

St Joseph's National School Cong

Intimate Care Policy

2023

Implementation of this policy is effective immediately.

Ratification and Communication:

This policy was ratified by the Chairperson of the Board of Management and will be reviewed each year and amended as necessary by means of a whole school collaborative process that is monitored on an ongoing basis.

Signed:

Date:

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1. Introduction

St Joseph's National School Cong seeks to be a warm and welcoming place respectful and accommodating of diversity in race, culture, religion, gender and ability. We strive to provide an inclusive environment responsive to the needs of all. We aim to promote equity in all areas and to provide extra support for any child with a learning disability, difficulty or problem through our resource allocation.

Cong NS Mission Statement

In tandem with the spirit of the school's mission statement all pupils with intimate care needs will be treated with respect and their right to privacy upheld and actively promoted. To this end Cong NS strives to maintain standards, develop a supportive professional environment and promote positive attitudes and behaviours based on student-centred care.

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.

This policy should 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.

2. Definition of Intimate Care

Intimate care is defined as "care tasks associated with bodily functions, body products and personal hygiene which demand direct or indirect contact with or exposure of the sexual parts of the body". In addition to this, intimate care may also include tasks such as: help with feeding, oral care and hair care.

Guidance for Designated Centres, Intimate Care, HIQA 2014

Table 1: Examples of intimate care tasks

INTIMATE CARE TASK	
1.	HELP WITH EATING
2.	ORAL CARE
3.	HAIR CARE
4.	SUPERVISION OF PUPILS WHILE THEY ARE DRESSING AND UNDRRESSING
5.	ASSISTANCE WITH TOILETING
6.	MENSTRUAL CARE
7.	CHANGING SOILED CONTINENCE PADS
8.	CATHETER OR STOMA CARE **
9.	PROMPTING TO GO TO BATHROOM
10	SUPERVISION OF A PUPIL INVOLVED IN INTIMATE CARE
11	CARE AND SUPERVISION WITH RESPECT TO PERSONAL HYGIENE
**	NOTE: SNA'S WHO OPT FOR THIS SPECIALIST TRAINING MUST ALSO BE CONFIRMED (IN WRITING BY THE B.O.M.) AS HAVING RECEIVED TRAINING FROM A HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL AND HAVE THEIR PERMISSION OR THE PERMISSION OF THE PRINCIPAL TO CARRY IT OUT.

3. The Key Principles of Intimate Care in our school

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

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

There are some basic principles to be borne in mind when providing intimate care:

- Pupils/Parents should give their consent prior to the provision of intimate care.
- Pupils/Parents have a right to feel secure with respect to this provision.
- All pupils have the right to personal privacy.
- All pupils receiving this care should be respected and valued as pupils.
- All pupils have the right to express their views on their own intimate care and to have such views taken into account.
- All pupils have the right to be involved and consulted in their own intimate care to the best of their abilities.
- Pupils have the right to information and support to enable them to make appropriate choices.
- Pupils should be treated courteously at all times and know who is looking after them.
- Pupils have a right to be treated with dignity and respect and a professional approach from staff when meeting their needs.
- Pupils have the right to be accepted for who they are, without regard to age, gender, ability, race, culture or beliefs.
- Pupils have the right to know how to complain and have their complaint dealt with.
- A pupil's Personal Care Plan (PPP) should be designed to lead to independence.

It is essential that every pupil with a disability is treated as an individual when intimate care is being provided and that appropriate time is taken for intimate care. It should be provided as gently and sensitively as possible, while respecting their privacy and dignity at all times.

4. Child Protection

People with disabilities and older people can be particularly vulnerable to abuse. The protection of people with disabilities is paramount. It is essential that all staff are familiar with intimate care policies and procedures and national guidance including Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017.

The following are factors that increase the vulnerability of a pupil with a disability:

- they may have less control over their lives than is normal
- they may often not recognise abuse
- they may have multiple carers
- differences in appearance may be attributed to a pupil's disability or medical condition rather than to abuse
- they may not always be able to communicate what is happening to them.

Intimate care may involve touching intimate parts of a pupil's body and may leave staff vulnerable to accusations of abuse. It is unrealistic to eliminate all risk but this vulnerability places an important responsibility on staff to act in accordance with agreed policies and procedures.

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

- Accidentally hurts/injures the student
- The staff member observes something which raises child protection concerns
- The pupil seems to misinterpret what is said or done
- The pupil has a very emotional reaction without apparent cause and the incident must be reported to the Teacher/Principal/DLP as appropriate.

It is school policy that:

The personnel involved in intimate care needs of pupils are usually SNA's but teachers may be involved.

Good practice dictates that there should be a minimum of two staff members present at all times in accordance with Child Protection and staff safety – however there also exceptional circumstances where this may not always apply:

(See notes 1,2,3 & 4 below)

Additional support will be provided by mainstream SNA's if needed.

No substitute SNA should ordinarily be involved in the toileting of a pupil unless sanctioned by the Principal.

Note 1: This policy guideline refers to the importance of the school's Child Protection Policy and the safety of both pupils and staff. Where the usual SNA is unavailable and is replaced by a less experienced SNA, the school reserves the right to allow the new SNA to support the more experienced SNA and in certain exceptional cases where it maybe a necessity, to take a lead in the area of Intimate Care.

Note 2: In a small number of cases, pupils may need just one SNA to facilitate intimate care needs with a view to being respectful of their dignity, building their sense of responsibility and becoming more independent. These situations may only occur with the consent of the parents and the permission of the B.O.M. or principal.

Note:3 Parents are respectfully requested to be available to support teachers and SNAs when the school class goes swimming or goes on a school outing. In such circumstances parental help can really help facilitate intimate care and other needs.

Deputy Mattie McGrath / Minister Joe McHugh
Re: The need for two SNA's for Intimate Care
Date: 26th Feb 2019 - Q199

The Minister responded as follows:

With regard to the management of the intimate care needs of children in schools, my Department is of the view that there is a need to strike a balance between adequately protecting the child on the one hand and preserving the child's dignity on the other.

In general therefore, there is no requirement for two SNAs to be present in the management of intimate care needs situations. Schools are required to have a care plan for each student for whom SNA support is provided and the SNA role in supporting the student should be agreed with parents as part of the care plan.

5. Planning

Where possible arrangements for intimate care should be informed by parents' and pupils' experiences of how this process can be made comfortable and appropriate. Plans for the provision of intimate care will be recorded in the pupil's Personalised Pupil Plan (PPP) to ensure clarity of expectations, roles and responsibilities. Records should also reflect arrangements for ongoing monitoring and review of intimate care plans. Some procedures may require two members of staff for health and safety reasons, for example, manual handling. This should be clearly stated in the Pupil's Personal Plan (PPP)

Elements of Good Practice for all 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 ensure you are completely familiar with the plan.
- Address the pupil by name and ensure he/she is aware of the focus of the activity.
- Verbalise your actions to the pupil in a reassuring way to prepare them for each procedure.
- Use visual cues for pupils 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.
- Respect the dignity and allows the pupil the maximum level of privacy at all times.
- 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 pupil in a respectful way. Religious and cultural values must always be taken into account.
- The pupil's independence will be encouraged.
- Staff should demonstrate their respect for the dignity, modesty and privacy of all pupils through their general demeanour, the manner in which they communicate with each pupil, avoiding inappropriate comments and through discretion when discussing the pupil's medical condition or treatment needs. The dignity of each child is respected where they leave the school clean and dry with respect to Intimate Care.

Children with Specific Toileting/Intimate Care Needs:

- In all situations where a pupil needs assistance with Toileting/intimate care, a meeting will be convened, after enrolment and before the child starts school
- Parents, Guardians, Principal, Class Teacher, SNA, and if appropriate, the pupil, will attend
- The specific care needs of the child, and how the school will meet them, will be clarified
- Personnel involved in this care will be identified
- Provision for occasions when staffs are absent will be outlined (e.g. Substitute SNA's will not generally be involved in intimate care. Any change of personnel will be discussed with the pupil, if appropriate)
- Although not a necessity, good practice and child safety dictates that ordinarily two members of staff will be present when dealing with intimate care needs; Eg. one member of staff assists/changes/cleans while the other maintains a presence and assists as needed. (See clarification Notes 1-3 on the previous page.)
- Any changes will be discussed with parent/guardian and pupil and noted in writing to the pupil's file
- As far as possible the pupil will be involved in identification of his/her personal requirements, wishes, changes etc
- A written copy of the agreement will be kept on the pupil's file (PPP)
- Parents will be notified of any changes from agreed procedures
- At all times the dignity and privacy of the pupil will be paramount in addressing intimate care needs
- Staff will wear protective gloves, aprons, etc. as required.

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

The Care Plan must include:

- Specific Care Need
- Number of staff required to meet the needs of the pupil
- Identification of the staff members involved
- Additional equipment required
- Childs preferred means of communication to include agreed terminology for body parts and bodily functions.
- Childs level of ability

- Cultural and/or religious sensitivities
- Signature of Class Teacher Intimate Care Policy- Signature of SENCO/Principal
- Date of Care Plan

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 & Sport Shoes

Toileting Accidents:

As teachers we act 'in loco parentis' for all pupils 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 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.

- At the junior infant induction meetings, the school procedures will be outlined to parents, and they will be asked to submit in writing specific wishes regarding toileting accidents
- A supply of clean underwear, wipes, track-suit bottoms etc will be kept in the school
- In the first instance, the pupil will be offered fresh clothing to clean and change themselves
- If, for any reason, the child is unable to clean or change themselves, the procedure outlined by parents will be followed where given, where no instructions from parents have been given, staff will closely follow the elements of Good Practice for all Staff outlined above.
- If staff must clean /change the child, two members of staff, familiar to the child will attend to him/her
- **Parents will be notified of these accidents**
- **A record of the incident should be kept.**

6. SNA Role and Responsibilities *

In St Joseph's National School Cong, SNA staff are involved on a daily basis in providing intimate care to pupils who use services arising from learning difficulties, sensory impairments, medical needs and physical impairments. This places staff in a position of great trust and responsibility. They are required to attend to the safety and comfort of those pupils and to ensure that they are treated with dignity and respect.

*For a detailed description of the role of the SNA see appendix 1.

7. Positive Approaches to Intimate Care

- Assess pupils to determine how much care can be carried out independently and how support can be given to improve self-care skills.
- Plan intimate care using student-centred approaches at all times.
- Address each pupil by their given or preferred name.
- Address each pupil in an age-appropriate way.
- Provide explanations of what is happening or will happen in a straightforward and reassuring way so that pupils are aware of the focus of the activity and know what is happening or what will happen.
- Agree terminology for parts of the body and bodily functions that will be used by staff and encourage them to use these terms consistently and appropriately.
- Encourage the pupil to undertake as much of the procedure for themselves as possible, including washing intimate areas and dressing/undressing.
- Respect a pupil's preference for a particular sequence of care.
- Be aware of, and respect, any cultural or religious sensitivities related to aspects of intimate care.
- Seek the pupil's permission before undressing if she is unable to do this unaided.
- Provide facilities that afford privacy and modesty.
- Keep records noting responses to intimate care and any changes in behaviour.
- Be mindful of the psychological effect that a pupil might experience due to relying on others for support with intimate tasks.
- Pupils have the right to expect that information about them is only shared to enable care.

8. Training

Staff should receive training in good working practices which comply with Health and Safety regulations such as dealing with body fluids, wearing protective clothing, manual handling and child protection.

Staff can also receive training in intimate care and for very specific intimate care procedures (for example, stoma care) where relevant.

Intimate care plans should be recorded in a student's individual care plan. The intimate care plan must be reviewed on a regular basis at least annually.

Staff Roles and Responsibilities:

Teachers, and the Principal 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 pupils in our school
3. Feedback from all staff
4. Feedback from relevant parents/guardians.

9. Facilities

- There should be sufficient space, heating and ventilation to ensure the safety and comfort of pupils receiving intimate care.
- There should be hot and cold running water available in all facilities. Antibacterial hand wash facilities should be available. Hand hygiene should be carried out in accordance with national guidelines.
- Items of protective clothing, such as disposable gloves and aprons should be provided. There should be no re-use of disposable gloves.
- Wet and/or soiled continence pads should be disposed of in line with national guidelines.
- The arrangements for the disposal of any contaminated waste/clinical materials should be carried out in accordance with national guidelines. Supplies of suitable cleaning materials should be available. Anti-bacterial spray should be used to clean surfaces. The latest infection control advice should be followed, for example, for clearing blood spills or for cleaning specialist equipment.
- The correct storage and fitting of continence products should be adhered to.

10. Grievance procedure

Issues of concern should be made known to the principal who will follow the standard procedure for dealing with a complaint or concern

Appendix 1

The Role of the SNA

- To provide care assistance to named pupils who have special educational needs. They make a valuable contribution to the school's capacity to provide inclusive education to these pupils.
- To be made aware of the SEN plan, devised by the Special Needs Support Team, and given guidance on their role in the successful implementation of this plan.
- To recognise their role in the health and safety of the pupil and in their social, emotional and educational development, without developing a culture of dependency.
- Attending both Staff and Departmental meetings when appropriate.
- Assisting / escorting pupils on school trips.
- Giving special assistance as necessary for pupils with particular difficulties e.g. helping pupil with SEN with typing, writing or other use of equipment.
- Assisting with clothing, feeding, toileting and hygiene. being mindful of health and safety needs of the student.
- Assisting with house examinations (if appropriate).
- Assisting the teacher in the supervision of pupils during assembly, recreation and in movement from one classroom to another.
- Accompanying individual or small groups who may be withdrawn temporarily from the classroom. **An SNA should not be asked to withdraw a pupil from a classroom unless this is a strategy that has been agreed by the SEN department and Principal, where teachers and parents will have been informed.**
- Give general assistance to the subject teacher, under the direction of the Principal/Deputy Principal, of a non-teaching nature. **The SNA may not act as either substitute or temporary teachers. In no circumstances may they be left in sole charge of a class.**
- Participation with school development planning, where appropriate, and co-operation with any such changes with policies and practices arising from the school development process.
- Engagement with parents of pupils with SEN as required and directed by school management.
- Other appropriate duties as may be determined by the needs of the pupils and the school.
- The SNA may be re-assigned to other appropriate work when special needs pupils are absent or when particularly urgent work demands arise.
- To treat all matters relating to school business and their work, as strictly confidential.
- SNA's are expected to provide and update a timetable during the school year and furnish the Principal and SEN Co-ordinator with a copy.

St Josephs National School Cong Special Educational Needs Policy 20....