St. Joseph’s Special School,

Thomas Hynes Rd, Newcastle, Galway.

Telephone 091 521895.

Email theoffice@stjosephspns.ie

Chairperson of the Board of Management: Audrey Pidgeon

Principal: Sarah McGinley

# Timetable for Review

As necessary

Policy on Intimate Care

7.14

Introduction

This Intimate Care policy has been developed by the staff of St. Joseph’s Special School in consultation with the relevant stakeholders to ensure that the needs and rights of pupils and staff are maintained and that the highest standards of best practice are ensured at all times in the area of intimate personal assistance.

Each pupil has the right to physical care assistance in order for him or her to participate fully in school life. The level of assistance required will reflect the needs of each individual pupil at any given time.

This policy should be read in conjunction with policies on

Code of Behaviour

Challenging Behaviour

Physical Interventions and Restrictive Practice

Swimming

Substance misuse

Anti-bullying

Enrolment and Participation

Data Protection

Communication

Health & Safety

Equal Opportunity and Gender Equality

Confidentiality

RSE

Aims

The aim of this policy is to ensure that:

* the dignity and welfare of pupils and staff is respected and maintained
* the rights of pupils and staff are protected
* best practice is promoted throughout the school within the framework of the current policy.

Definition of Intimate Care

Intimate care is the support provided by staff to pupils while involved in personal care routines such as dressing and undressing, toileting, showering/bathing and attending to menstrual needs. Where necessary such support will involve varying levels of supervision and assistance and may involve physical contact with a pupil when they are partially or fully undressed.

Content

The policy document is laid out as follows: Roles and Responsibilities, Practice of Intimate Care, Reporting and Parental Consent.

Roles and Responsibilities

* Parents are consulted at enrolment and on an ongoing basis about the intimate care needs of their children. The SNAs are involved in the provision of intimate care but in an emergency situation the teachers may have to provide this care.
* Levels of staffing for the provision of intimate care assistance is based on the individual needs of the pupils in each classroom. Staffing levels are reviewed with parents should the need arises.
* St. Joseph’s School accepts that in general intimate care support is provided by one staff member on their own with an individual pupil. While this practice can place staff in a vulnerable position, the need for privacy for the pupils must also be acknowledged.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, before commencing a procedure involving intimate care.
* Pupils are treated with dignity and have their privacy respected at all times. To achieve this, staff adopt the least invasive approach to the provision of intimate care using, where possible verbal/visual prompts in preference to physical contact.Staff should remain at a discreet distance from the pupil if this is appropriate.

Practice in intimate care

* Before commencing to assist the person, explain what is happening in a straightforward and reassuring way. In this way the person is prepared for and can anticipate your assistance. Initially approach the person from the front, make eye-contact and use their name.
* Address the person by name so that she/he is aware of being the focus of the activity.
* Use actions, comments and remarks that are normal in the circumstances.
* Intimate care must not be undertaken if a student is presenting with challenging behaviours. Staff should follow individual behaviour management strategies/programmes in this instance.
* As a general guideline physical contact will not be undertaken while a pupil is sexually aroused.
* In intimate care, the touch will be affirmative and supportive, not rough or insensitive.
* Where the person has very limited communication, give a visual clue such as pointing to a sponge or pad, use a picture board or other aid to signal intention to wash or change.
* Provide facilities which afford privacy and modesty, e.g., adequate screening. Have towels, clothing and toiletries to hand before commencing.
* Have a knowledge and understanding of any religious or cultural sensitivity related to aspects of intimate care for this individual.
* Use discreet observation to see if a pad needs changing.
* Bathe, change, or toilet people, one at a time. Ensure supplies of fresh clothes are to hand so that the person is not left unattended while items are found.
* Provide sufficient space, heating and ventilation to ensure the person’s safety and comfort.
* Access protective clothing, such as gloves and disposable aprons, and ensure they are used where necessary.
* Take special precautions when disposing of soiled material.
* Check in advance where possible, that suitable facilities exist for intimate care procedures when on outings, holiday camps, etc.
* Do not allow a pupil assist another pupil with his or her intimate care needs.
* Internal sanitary protection must not be used except in situations where the pupil can independently to attend to their own menstrual needs.
* Pupils are assisted where necessary to dress and undress for PE and swimming. In Leisureland Junior pupils are assisted to undress and dress in communal changing rooms. As pupils grow and become more independent private cubicles are used. In keeping with the least invasive approach verbal direction is given, if required, to these pupils. Some pupils may need physical assistance. In this instance staff may step inside the cubicle to assist the pupil while keeping the door slightly ajar. Volunteers and persons on placement are never asked to provide intimate care to pupils.
* The pupil’s dignity will be respected when wetting/soiling incidents take place in the school or on outings. When dealing with such incidents the pupil’s stage of development is taken into consideration, a toilet training programme is in place, nappies are changed if and when needed, times are allocated daily for toileting but pupils are changed immediately if an accident occurs.

NOTE 1

Wherever possible, staff should work with individuals of the same sex in providing intimate care. However, when setting up a personal care plan, it may be acceptable for a carer to be of the opposite sex.

Reporting

If during the provision of intimate care assistance a pupil:

* is accidentally hurt
* seems unusually sore, tender or bruised (a body chart is used to pinpoint location of injuries)
* appears to misunderstand or misinterpret what is said or done
* has a very emotional reaction without apparent cause the staff member should furnish a report as soon as possible to the principal who can indicate an appropriate response.

Parental Consent

* Parents are given a copy of the intimate care policy on enrolment. Parental concerns and suggestions regarding the intimate care needs of their child are addressed at parent/teacher meeting and reviews. Parents are required to sign and return a parental consent form. Addition of note 1, 11.September. 2020 (continued consent implied if no contact to the contrary is made)

Review

The policy will be reviewed as necessary

Ratification and Communication

* All staff will be provided with a copy of the policy.
* All parents will be provided with a copy of the policy together with a parental consent form
* The plan was ratified by the Board of Management on January 23rd, 2018
* Addition of note 1, 11.September. 2020

The Board of Management is aware that this plan was reviewed and updated by staff in September 2020. A copy was emailed to parents. The amended document was presented for ratification.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

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(Principal)