



St Michael's House Special National School

Raheny

POLICY AND PROCEDURE IN RELATION TO INTIMATE PHYSICAL CARE OF PUPILS

Introduction

St. Michael's House SNS, Raheny is a co-educational school for pupils with Moderate learning disabilities where the pupils are treated with dignity and respect.

In our school, it is inevitable that staff members will be involved to varying degrees in physical and intimate physical care of pupils.

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 pupil
- should be consistent with professional integrity of staff members.

Each pupil has the right to physical care as is required to meet their care needs without unnecessarily impinging on their privacy or dignity.

Physical assistance should be provided as is necessary for the student's participation in school activities in a manner appropriate to their needs and abilities without unnecessarily impinging on their privacy or self reliance.

Appropriate Physical Contact / Definition of Intimate Care.

The appropriateness of various forms of physical contact will vary according to such factors as age of the pupil, maturity and independence of the pupil, role of the particular staff member. Intimate care is defined as any caring procedure that involves contact with genitalia, breasts, buttocks or involves attending to the pupil when they are partially or fully undressed.

Aims

All staff will be issued with this policy. 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 as much as is possible, as sometimes substitute classroom staff are required to assist.

The principal will establish good working practices regarding physical transfer of pupils, wearing of protective clothing and ensure safe practice in relation to procedures carried out.

Events requiring physical/intimate care assistance will be identified in advance as per class routines and identified in the pupils Personal Pupil Plan (PPP).

Elements of Good Practice

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

- There should always be two staff members present whilst performing intimate care procedures.
- Encourage the pupil to have a positive image of their own body and ensure their dignity and privacy is maintained.
- Get to know the pupil and gain an appreciation of his/her moods, likes/dislikes and verbal and non-verbal communication.
- Have a knowledge and understanding of any religious or cultural sensitivity related to aspects of intimate care for this individual.
- Address the pupil 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 and keep conversation between staff to a minimum.
- Encourage the pupil's independence during the process.
- Before commencing to assist the pupil, explain what is happening in a straightforward and reassuring way.
- Where the pupil has very limited communication, give a visual clue such as pointing to a sponge or pad, use a picture or other aid to signal intention to wash or change.
- In intimate care, the touch will be affirmative, gentle and supportive, not rough or insensitive.
- Inform the pupil of the use of warm or cold items on their skin, for instance baby wipes.
- Provide facilities which afford privacy and modesty, e.g., adequate screening. Have towels, clothing and toiletries to hand before commencing.
- Use discreet observation to see if a pad needs changing.
- Change, toilet or shower (if necessary) pupils, one at a time. Ensure supplies of fresh clothes are to hand so that the pupil is not left unattended while items are found.
- 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. Bring necessary items with you on trips out of the school.
- Never carry out an intimate care procedure unless the staff member knows how to carry it out correctly. If in doubt, staff will seek help or advice before commencing.
- Do not allow a pupil to assist another pupil with his or her intimate care needs.
- If a pupil presents with challenging behaviour, then further advice is to be sought. Intimate care must not be undertaken, no matter how necessary, until the pupil is calm.
- If a hoist is required, then staff must be competent in its use and be adequately trained to operate it.
- If necessary, develop an intimate care/toileting plan with input from all involved, parents, teacher, SNAs and if appropriate, the pupil concerned. This should contain information relating to the child's ability, their care needs, means of communication, equipment required and the action to be taken. This is to be agreed by all involved.
- It is the responsibility of the parents to supply the school with the resources required to carry out intimate physical care procedures. These can include but are not limited to nappies, wipes, creams, and spare clothes including underwear.

Touch / Massage

Massage by staff will be confined to the hands, feet and face, and undertaken with the express permission of the Principal. When using massage, staff must recognise the pupil's vulnerability. Approaching a pupil through touch in this way will be done within a relationship of trust built up gradually with staff who know the person well and who can sensitively interpret and respond to the person's reactions.

Massage must be discontinued at the first indication of the pupil's wishes to do so.

Menstruation

Menstruation is a normal physical function, but the person may sometimes require extra reassurance and guidance. The pupil may need instruction, verbal prompts, or assistance to cope with the practical aspects of menstruation. Such assistance will always be provided by female staff.

Internal sanitary protection is not recommended for pupils attending school except in situations where the person can independently attend to their own menstrual needs. Staff will not be involved in any way in the use by pupils of internal sanitary protection.

Sexual Aspects of Intimate Care:

As part of normal development, interest in one's own body and other people's bodies may be evident.

Masturbation is normal sexual behaviour, but it may take place in an inappropriate context. The pupil will be directed to a private area and afforded privacy.

If the pupil shows signs of becoming sexually aroused during the carrying out of intimate care procedures, staff should discuss this matter with the Principal.

As a general guideline, physical contact will not be undertaken while someone is sexually aroused.

Staff

St. Michael's House Special National School, Raheny recognises that there should always be two staff members present when assisting pupils with intimate physical care. Staff should ensure that the privacy and dignity of the pupils concerned is maintained at all times.

Staff of either gender may be required as part of their duties to attend to the intimate care needs of pupils both male and female. Intimate physical care of pupils will normally be undertaken by Special Needs Assistant staff. Best practice in relation to Back Care and Manual Handling should at all times be used by staff, during intimate care procedures. If necessary, training in the use of hoist will be provided.

Reporting

If during the intimate care of a person you...

- accidentally hurt the pupil;
- notice the pupil seems unusually sore, tender or bruised in the genital area;
- observe that the pupil appears to misunderstand or misinterpret what is said or done;
- note that the pupil has a very emotional reaction without apparent cause;

you should report any such incident as soon as possible to the Designated Liaison Person (DLP)/Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDL) as per Child Safeguarding Guidelines who can indicate an appropriate response.

Any of these might later become a cause for concern if not reported. The use of a body chart may be used to record any unusual bruises or markings which might be of concern.

Consent:

Intimate care procedures, no matter how frequently they occur, are personal in nature. It is therefore important that individuals are encouraged to give consent to the best of their ability. The manner of this consent will differ according to each pupil. For some it will be by use of language while for the others it may be by means of physical expression or behaviour. Staff should familiarise themselves with how individuals convey this consent. Staff must at all times respond with understanding.

It is good practice to consult with parents/guardians who may have valuable guidance in relation to the personal care needs of their daughter / son. If a toileting programme is to be developed, then consultation with parents/guardians should take place and a consistent approach should be taken.

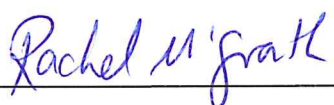
The Board of Management is committed to taking every precaution to protect pupils and staff from any form of abuse or harm. All parents and New Parents will be given a copy of this policy. The attached intimate care form will be given to pupils when admitted to the school for the first time and used to inform class staff of any pupils requiring intimate physical care which will then be recorded on the pupil's PPP.

Ratification & Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed after every two years.

This plan was ratified by the Board of Management at a meeting on:

Signed:  Date: 6/12/22
(Chairperson)

Signed:  Date: 6/12/22
(Principal)



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INTIMATE CARE FORM FOR NEW ENTRANTS

Name of Pupil: _____ Date of Birth: _____

The intimate care procedures for this pupil are:

Please tick as appropriate

	Supervision	Assistance	Full Assistance
Toileting			
Dressing			
Menstrual Care			
Other e.g Showering			

As parent/Guardian I have been made aware of the consents of this policy.

Signature of Parent/ Guardian: _____

Please sign and return to the school.