

**Introduction**

In March 2019, Scoil Mhuire conducted a Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment. The need to implement a formal policy on Intimate Care as part of the procedures to be put in place to address the risks of harm identified in the risk assessment became clear.

**Definition of Intimate Care**

Intimate care involves care tasks associated with bodily functions, body products and personal hygiene which involve either direct or indirect contact with or exposure of private and/or non-private parts of the body.

Direct contact involves physical contact between the student and the staff member. It may involve touching of both intimate and non intimate body parts.

Indirect contact involves the supervision, observation and prompting of the student to complete personal and intimate care tasks.

Intimate care includes dressing and undressing, support with use of the toilet, changing of continence pads, washing intimate body parts, and menstrual care.

**Rationale**

The Board of Management has a responsibility to ensure that all staff engaging in the intimate care of pupils will carry out their duties in a professional manner at all times. This policy has been developed to safeguard children and staff. It applies to everyone involved in the intimate care of children.

**Relationship to School Ethos**

This policy is consistent with the Ethos Mission Statement of our school.

**Aims**

The aims of this policy are:

1. To give direction to staff with regard to supporting students in their intimate care needs in a way which promotes the dignity and privacy of the student while also protecting the integrity of the staff member.
2. To promote best practice throughout the school with regard to attending to the intimate care needs of children.

**Children with Specific Toileting/Intimate Care Needs****Pre-Enrolment**

- 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 staff are absent will be outlined (e.g. substitute SNAs will not generally be involved in intimate care. Any change of personnel will be discussed with the pupil, if appropriate)
- An Individual Intimate Care Plan for the pupil in question will be developed and kept in the pupil's file. (Attached as Appendix 1)

## **Principles and Procedures**

### **Intimate Care Plan**

- The pupil's teacher and assigned SNAs should be familiar with the student's particular needs and preferences as outlined in their intimate care plan.
- Any changes to the pupil's Intimate Care Plan will be discussed with parent/guardian and pupil and noted in writing to the pupil's file
- Parents will be notified of any changes to agreed procedures

### **Intimate Care Procedures**

- Two members of staff will be present when dealing with the pupil's intimate care needs
- At all times the dignity and privacy of the pupil will be paramount in addressing intimate care needs
- The pupils intimate care needs should only be discussed in a private setting where confidentiality can be maintained.
- Intimate care should be undertaken in an environment where the student's privacy can be maintained; only those who are involved in helping with the care task should be present.
- Staff will observe best practice in terms of hygiene and their own health and safety and that of the pupil in their care
- Staff members should use protective clothing i.e. disposable gloves when carrying out intimate care tasks.
- Physical contact during intimate care assistance should be affirmative and supportive.

### **Persons Excluded from Providing Intimate Care**

- Substitute SNAs will not usually be involved in intimate care
- Persons on work experience or teaching practice placement will not be involved in delivering intimate care to pupils
- Staff will check in advance that suitable facilities exist for intimate care procedures when on outings.

### **Reporting Concerns**

- In the event of an unexpected and unavoidable change in the way intimate care is delivered to that outlined the pupil's intimate care plan, the staff member must inform the Principal as soon as possible.

- Where an issue of concern arises while carrying out an intimate care task, the staff member should report this concern immediately to the Principal
- A report must be made directly to the Designated Liaison Person if any of the following occurs in the course of intimate care provision:
  - ❖ The staff member notices that the pupil seems unusually sore, tender or bruised in a private area
  - ❖ The pupil seems to misinterpret what is said or done during direct contact
  - ❖ The pupil has a very emotional reaction without apparent cause
  - ❖ The pupil makes a disclosure of a Child Protection nature

.....the staff member involved in the intimate care assistance should immediately report such incident to the Designated Liaison Person. The Children First Guidelines will be followed at all times.

## **General Toileting Accidents :**

- At the Junior Infant induction meetings, the school procedures as outlined below will be explained to parents. If parents have specific requirements, they will be asked to submit these in writing to the school
- A supply of clean underwear, wipes, track-suit bottoms etc. will be kept in the secretary's office

### **Procedure**

- Occasions of pupils wetting/soiling themselves will be dealt with as discretely and sensitively as possible. Care will be taken not to draw undue attention to the pupil in question. If other pupils are aware of what has happened, every effort will be made to distract them and downplay the incident
- If the incident occurs in the yard, the teacher on duty will first bring the child to the office and then locate the pupil's class teacher. The teacher on duty will then return to the yard and the pupil's class teacher, along with another teacher or SNA, will collect the pupil from the office
- If the incident occurs in class, the class teacher will ask the teacher next door to supervise his/her class while he/she attends to the pupil. The class teacher will then bring the pupils to the office. Another staff member will assist the class teacher in attending to the pupil
- The staff members attending must be teachers or SNA and at least one of them must be a female. Neither may be ancillary staff members or individuals on work experience or teaching practice placements
- The pupil will be brought to the toilet
- The staff members will comfort and reassure the pupil
- In the first instance, the pupil will be given wipes, two plastic bags and fresh clothing. He/she will be asked to go into one of the cubicles, close and lock the door and:

1. remove his/her wet/soiled clothes and place in a plastic bag
2. clean himself/herself with wipes, placing the soiled wipes in the other plastic bag
3. dress himself/herself in fresh clothes

The attending staff members will wait at the door of the toilet in question

- When the child exits the cubicle, he/she will be supervised in washing and drying his/her hands
- The staff members attending will assess whether the pupil should return to the yard, to class or wait at the office
- If, for any reason, the pupil is unable to clean or change himself/herself, the procedure outlined by parents will be followed
- When the pupil has dressed, the staff members attending will dispose of the soiled wipes and tie the bag containing the soiled clothes, placing it in another plastic bag. This will then be sent to the office for collection by the pupil's parent/guardian/minder
- Parents/Guardians of the child will be notified immediately of these accidents. The decision as to whether the child is to remain in school or go home will rest with the parent
- A record of the incident should be kept by the pupil's class teacher

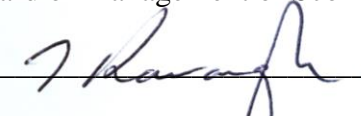
### **Roles and Responsibilities**

- The Principal will oversee the implementation of this policy
- All staff members involved in providing intimate care to pupils are required to familiarise themselves with this policy and abide by it
- The Board of Management undertakes to ensure that staff members involved in providing intimate care to pupils are given the opportunity to engage in CPD in this area
- Staff members must ensure that they are appropriately trained in any specific procedures which need to be undertaken in the delivery of intimate care for an individual

### **Implementations, Review and Evaluation.**

This policy will be implemented from the date of ratification and will be reviewed when necessary, in light of experience. The policy will be deemed to have been successful by positive pupil, parent and staff feedback.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2019

Signed: T. Kavanagh, Principal: 

Signed: P Ó Ceallaigh, Chairperson, Board of Management 

## APPENDIX 1

## Intimate Care Plan

Name:		
Class:		
Teacher:		
Staff Members providing care:		
Setting(s) where care will be provided:		
Time(s) when care will be provided:		
Nature of care:		
Steps involved in providing care:		
Specific instructions from Parents/Guardians:		
Equipment to be used:		
Consumables to be used:		
Agreed by:	_____	_____
	Signed: Parent/Guardian	Signed: Staff Member
Date:		