

INTIMATE PHYSICAL CARE OF STUDENTS POLICY

Enable Ireland Sandymount School is committed to ensuring that all staff responsible for the intimate care of children and adults will undertake their duties in a professional manner at all times. We acknowledge that there is a need to treat all people with dignity respect when intimate care is given. No person should be attended to in a way that causes distress or pain. The student's dignity and wellbeing are of paramount importance. The right to privacy will be respected. The individual/parents' views will be sought and listened to with regard to every part of this policy.

Introduction

This Intimate Care policy has been developed by the staff of Enable Ireland Sandymount School in consultation with the Board of Management and Parents Association to ensure that the needs and rights of students and staff are maintained and that the highest standards of best practice are ensured at all times in the area of intimate personal assistance. The policy was reviewed in 2020 to ensure compliance with Covid 19 Guidelines.

Each student 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 student at any given time. Specific instructions about intimate care will be discussed with parents during the IEP formulation consultation time each year.

Reference to other policies

- Child Protection Policy
- Manual Handling Policy
- Communication's Policy
- Infectious Diseases in School 2013 HSE
- <https://www2.hse.ie/coronavirus/>

Aims

The aims of the policy and associated guidelines are:

- To safeguard the dignity, rights and well-being of all student's
- To ensure a consistency of care among pupils when they experience intimate personal care in two or more settings.
- To provide guidance and reassurance to staff.
- To ensure that parents are involved in planning the intimate care of their child and are confident that their concerns and the individual needs of their son/ daughter are taken into account.
- To reassure parents that the individual that staff members are knowledgeable about intimate care.

Definition of Intimate Care

Intimate care is the support provided by staff to students while involved in personal care routines such as dressing and undressing, toileting, showering/bathing, swimming and attending to menstrual

needs. Where necessary, such support will involve varying levels of supervision and assistance and may involve physical contact with a student when they are partially or fully undressed.

Protecting students and Staff Members

All Intimate Care must be carried out with two adults, One staff member should never attend to a child in an intimate care setting.

Students

When delivering personal care to a student staff members and other carers should explain what they propose to do and ask the individual if it is in order to proceed. If it is not, the individual must be asked whether s/he would like someone else to help him/her e.g. a staff member of the same gender.

The staff member must refer to the individual's care plan (if appropriate) Manual handling profile's and current risk assessment(s).

Staff members and other carers must recognise the right of the individual to privacy and deliver care in such a way that the dignity and safety of the service users are protected.

Staff members and other carers should protect themselves from allegations and must endeavour to deliver care in a manner and an environment that is not open to misinterpretation

Before delivering intimate care of students, staff must seek permission of the student. No intimate care is carried out without two staff present.

Every effort should be made by staff to explain what aspect of intimate care is being delivered in appropriate language so that the individual can understand where possible and make an informed choice. Communication is always what is heard and not what is said.

Communication

The delivery of personal care should be directed and guided by the individual and staff should continually explain to the individual what they are doing and why. It is therefore essential that staff are aware of how to appropriately communicate with the people they support, are self-critical of their communication skills both verbal and non-verbal. People need to be able to communicate in order to have their needs met. The ability to communicate well helps to build good relationships with people we support. The means of communication for the individual will be identified in their support plan.

Some of the essential principles of communication are:

- Politeness
- Patience
- Listening
- Courtesy
- Respect
- Helpfulness
- Cultural awareness

Non-Verbal Communication

Some examples of non-verbal communication are:

- Touch
- Space and Positioning
- Hand Movement
- Gestures
- Eye Contact
- Physical Contact
- Facial Expressions
- Posture
- Sign Language
- Picture Cards
- Communication Boards

It is important that non-verbal communication and body language gives the same message as verbal communication. Individuals will be able to pick up feelings by observing behaviour.

It is therefore important to:

- Keep eye contact without staring at pupils.
- Stay in the same position – don't shuffle or fidget.
- Hold their hand or arm, but only if you know that they find this reassuring and are comfortable with this.
- Not engage in personal conversations with other staff that will exclude the child.

Good Record Keeping and Report Writing

An important part of communication is record keeping and report writing. This may involve anything from a signature to writing a detailed report. It is necessary to understand the purpose of each report so it can be written in the most appropriate way. Staff are encouraged to maintain personal "intimate care" notebooks which can be shared with parents.

Staff Guidelines

Intimate care procedures will be carried out in a manner which treats the pupil in a dignified and respectful way and allows the pupil the maximum level of privacy. The pupil's independence will be encouraged at all times.

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

Short term substitute staff/work experience personnel will not be involved in intimate care needs of pupils unless full training is provided.

Levels of staffing for the provision of intimate care assistance will be organised based on the individual needs of the students and availability of staff, however no intimate care will be undertaken unless two staff are present. In all cases two staff members are required.

The Principal will establish good working practices regarding physical transfer of pupils. All manual handling profiles will be available on the school IT server and staff should consult on a regular basis. Clarifications should be sought from the Child's assigned Occupational Therapist. Risk Assessment may be required for some pupils and will be carried out by school and Multi-Disciplinary Clinical Team staff. Staff should at all times follow best practice in relation to Manual Handling and consult each student's Manual Handling Profile before undertaking any intimate care.

Staff should never carry out an intimate care procedure unless they know how to do so correctly and will ask for the relevant advice when required.

Wearing of personal protective clothing is mandatory to ensure the safety of all. Disposable gloves, aprons, masks, face visors and wipes are available to all staff. Staff are expected to complete the training on the wear of PPE available at www.hseland.ie every year.

Change of clothing is stored in school for pupils.

Within current resources, staff of either gender may be required as part of their duties to attend to the intimate care needs of students both male and female. Students may choose the gender of staff who provide intimate care.

Female staff only will attend to students requiring assistance with menstrual needs. Staff will not be involved in any way in the use by students of internal sanitary protection.

Staff should ensure the correct supplies of toiletries, towels and fresh clothes etc. are to hand prior to any intimate care procedure so that the student is not left unattended in the bathroom or changing areas. Staff are required to communicate with parents to ensure that there is a regular supply of intimate care supplies and change of clothes at School.

Staff should at all times follow best practice in relation to infection control.

Staff should always be discreet in the use of intimate care items and these should not be visible outside of designated areas.

Intimate care assistance will at all times take place in the designated area.

Dressing/Undressing (including after swimming)

Ensure facilities provide privacy and modesty e.g. separate toileting and changing facilities for male and female or at least adequate screening. Separate changing cubicles should be available for swimming sessions.

People should be encouraged to dress/undress themselves independently.

When using public facilities staff should be aware in advance of the nature of the facilities to ensure the dignity of each participant in the activity.

Dressing/Undressing people who require full support (swimming or when soiled)

Ensure privacy before the procedure:

- Remove clothing from lower body first.
- Put on swimming costume or wash as required.

- Ensure lower regions are covered before removing garments from upper body.
- Encourage the individual to assist in whatever way possible.
- Refer to moving and handling procedures for safe movement of the person and safety of staff.
- Refer to swimming pool procedures for further information.

Hand Hygiene

Good hand hygiene is the single most effective way of stopping germs from getting into our bodies and causing infection. Liquid soap is better than solid soap because it is less likely to become contaminated. Staff are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the school hand hygiene policy and undertake hand hygiene training every year on www.hseland.ie

In some circumstances it may be necessary to disinfect with an alcohol disinfectant solution e.g. when a person has an infectious disease. Disposable paper towels are the best option for drying hands because damp towels can harbour germs. All disposal items should be stored in a sealed bin.

Don't assume people know how to wash their hands.

Hand Washing Procedure:

- Wet hands under warm running water.
- Apply a small amount of liquid soap.
- Rub hands vigorously ensuring soap and water is applied to all surfaces of the hands. Be sure to rub between fingers, the palms and the back of the hands. This should take about 30/40 seconds.
- Rinse hands under running water.
- Dry hands, preferably using paper towels.

Aftercare of Equipment

Staff need to ensure the bathroom is cleaned with an anti-bacterial solution after use and must ensure the person's clothes and toiletries are taken care of. Toilet cleaning supplies are available and staff are requested to ensure there is a constant supply in all bathroom areas before beginning toileting.

Observation

If during the provision of intimate care assistance:

- A student is accidentally hurt
- A student seems unusually sore, tender or bruised
- A student appears to misinterpret what is said or done the student has a very emotional reaction without apparent cause

The staff member(s) involved in the intimate care assistance should **immediately** report any such incident to the class teacher who will note the occurrence in the child's notebook. Staff may wish to consult the Nursing Department for their view. The incident should also be reported **as soon as possible** to the Principal/Deputy Principal. Parents may be contacted and an incident report may be completed if child Protection Guidelines indicate that this step is necessary. Follow up will take place as required.

Parental Consent

Parents are the primary educators of their children and full partners in the delivery of education and care at our school. Parents will always be consulted about the intimate care procedures about their children. Specific meeting will be conducted by the classroom teacher and SNA involved in the child's care prior to starting school for the first time. Specific discussions about intimate care should form part of the IEP meeting with parent's each year. Parents can request a meeting with staff about intimate care at any time.

Implementation and Dissemination

This policy has been ratified by the Board of Management and will be circulated to parents' representatives on the BOM.

CONSENT FORM IN RELATION TO INTIMATE CARE

To be completed by parent/carer and shared with all staff who are involved in supporting the person receiving intimate care.

Name of Person Receiving Intimate Care:	Date of Birth:
Nature of Intimate Care e.g.: Washing Dressing and Undressing Supported Eating (including tube feeding) Administering Medicines (e.g. rectal Diazepam) Toileting and Menstruation Dental Hygiene Shaving Massage/Intensive Interaction Application of Topical Medicines (e.g. sunscreen, eczema cream) Other	
Special arrangements for changing (if applicable):	
Special arrangements for toileting (if applicable):	
Other special arrangements (if any):	