

Patrician Academy Intimate Care Policy

Introductory Statement

Intimate Care can have a major impact on a person's self-image and as such it is vital that it is practised in a respectful and sensitive manner. 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.

It is essential that the rights of staff and students are protected and that the highest standards of best practice are ensured at all times.

This policy was collaboratively devised in Sept- Nov 2018 by all of the school stakeholders in accordance with the school's agreed policy on policy formation as published on the school's website.

Rationale

The policy was devised to document agreed intimate care procedures to ensure appropriate safe-guards were in place to protect the welfare and dignity of children who require intimate care at school or during school activities.

Scope of this Policy

This policy applies to all staff involved in supporting students attending the Patrician Academy. It does not apply to personal care i.e. tasks associated with outer appearance which are by nature less intrusive such as skin care, hair care, washing face, hands and teeth.

Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School

Respect, empathy, trust and integrity are the four core values central to all relationships between all people in our school community. It is agreed that, in order to adhere to these core values with respect to the delivery of intimate care, children receiving this care must always feel comfortable and confident that their privacy and dignity will be appropriately preserved and protected at all times.

Policy Content

Definition of Intimate Care

Intimate care refers to all aspects of support given to students (by direct or indirect contact) which are associated with bodily functions, body products and personal hygiene involving intimate 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 can include: dressing and undressing; support with using the toilet; changing of continence pads; washing intimate body parts and showering.

Practices and Procedures

1. Delivering Intimate Care

- The plan will identify:
 1. Intimate Care tasks required by the pupil
 2. Support needs to carry out each task
 3. Resources required to carry out each task
 4. Risk management in relation to each task

In drawing up the plan consideration should be given to the wishes of the individual concerned and where relevant the preferences of their parents/carers.

- Support needs should include the staff requirements to carry out each intimate care task. Staffing levels should be reviewed with the relevant staff and parent/carer as the needs arise during the course of the school year. For those students whose Intimate Care requires direct contact there should be two staff present. For students whose care requires indirect contact one staff member may be sufficient.
- Swimming/Changing Rooms – If students need support or supervision with changing or dressing there should be at least two staff present in the changing room at any time.
- In case of a student requiring manual handling as part of meeting their intimate care needs, the manual handling procedure should be defined in the pupil's file. The intimate care plan should indicate that the students manual handling guidelines be followed with regard to the specific lift/transfer.
- The intimate care plan will detail procedures which maximise the dignity and privacy of the student.
- The plan should ensure that the student is involved to the greatest possible extent in preparation for and carrying out of the task.
- The intimate care plan should be reviewed as required.

Toileting Accidents

- A supply of clean underwear, wipes, track-suit bottoms etc. will be kept in the school or classroom
- 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 below will be followed
- If staff must clean /change the child, two members of staff, familiar to the child will attend to him. It may be necessary to ask assistance from an SNA from another class to assist, as the classroom teacher cannot leave the other students unattended.
- Parents will be notified of these accidents
- A record of the incident will be kept – document in their journal/note home.

2. Maintaining the dignity and privacy of a student.

- The staff member should be familiar with the student's particular needs and preferences as outlined in their intimate care plan and should have knowledge and understanding of any religious or cultural sensitivity related to aspects of intimate care for this individual.

- 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 in the room.
- Persons on placement should NOT be involved in supporting pupils intimate care needs.
- While it is preferable that familiar staff support students intimate care needs it may be necessary for substitute staff to help with a care task (e.g. if to not involve substitute staff would mean the student could not be changed)
- The pupils intimate care needs should only be discussed in a private setting where confidentiality can be maintained.
- Before commencing an intimate care task, the staff member should explain to the pupil, using an appropriate method of communication, what they are about to do and how they will do it.
- Where the pupil 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
- Address the pupil by name so that he/she is aware of being the focus of the activity
- Physical contact during intimate care assistance should be affirmative and supportive.
- Staff will check in advance that suitable facilities exist for intimate care procedures when on outings.
- 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.
- For pupils who present with challenging behaviour, intimate care must not be undertaken, no matter how necessary, until the patient is calm.

3. Ensuring the safety of the student and staff members.

- The environment should support the implementation of the pupils in a safe and dignified way.
- Staff members should ensure that they are fully trained in any specific procedures which need to be undertaken in the delivery of intimate care for an individual.
- Staff members should use protective clothing such as disposable gloves and aprons as appropriate when carrying out intimate care tasks.

4. Maintaining the integrity of the staff.

- Staff members who are required to provide intimate care support to pupils attending the Patrician Academy should ensure they are familiar with and comply with this policy.
- Management should ensure that any staff member who is required to provide intimate care is made aware of this policy and receives the appropriate advice/training prior to supporting a pupil in intimate care.
- Management should ensure that staff members carrying out intimate care fully understand the delicacy of the situation and the potential for misinterpretation.
- Management should ensure staff members involved in providing intimate care support are given the opportunity to advance their skills and expertise in the area.
- In a situation where lack of resources result in intimate care being delivered in a way which contravenes a pupils intimate care plan, the staff member concerned should inform the teacher at the first opportunity.

- 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 member, before commencing an intimate care task.
- In a situation where an issue of concern arises while carrying out an intimate care task, the staff member should report this concern immediately to the teacher or in their absence the Principal.

Reporting

If, during the provision of intimate care assistance

- The pupil seems unusually sore, tender or bruised
- The pupil seems to misinterpret what is said or done
- The pupil has a very emotional reaction without apparent cause 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 through the schools Child safeguarding Statement.

Roles and Responsibilities

The overall responsibility for the day-to-day management of the school rests with the Principal. This policy belongs to the Board of Management and it is the responsibility of the Board to delegate and support the Principal in its implementation. All staff have a responsibility to follow through on all the guidelines within the policy. It is the responsibility of the class teacher to oversee the implementation of this policy within individual classes.

Evaluation

The policy will be deemed to have been successful by positive pupil, parent and staff feedback.

Ratification and Communication

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on_____. A copy of the policy is stored electronically in the school plan which is available to all staff. A copy of the policy is also published on the school website.

Implementation

This policy will take effect from_____.

Review

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored on an ongoing basis by management and staff. The policy will be reviewed along with the child protection policy at the first board of management meeting of each school

year. It may be reviewed at other times of the school-year if a review is requested by one of the school stakeholders.

Signed: _____

Mr. Ed O' Donovan, Chairperson of the BOM

Signed: _____

Ms. Elaine O' Regan, Principal