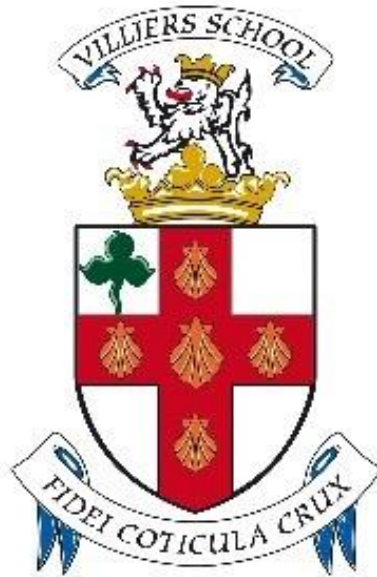


Villiers School



Intimate Care Needs (ICN) Policy

2024

Introduction

This ICN Policy (this “**Policy**”) has been developed to safeguard students and staff of Villiers School (the “**School**”). Intimate care is a key area of a person’s self-image and respect and as such it is vital that it is practised in a sensitive manner. Given the invasive nature of intimate care, it is essential that the rights of all involved are protected.

Objective

The objective of this Policy is to give direction to School staff (“**staff**”) with regard to supporting students with their ICN in a way which promotes the dignity and privacy of the students attending the School (“**students**”), while also protecting the integrity of the staff involved.

It is important that staff ensure that students with ICN are treated with respect and that their right to privacy and dignity is upheld.

Aim

The aims of this Policy and associated guidance are:

- To safeguard the dignity, rights and well-being of students.
- To provide guidance and reassurance to staff, students and parents.
- To assure parents that staff are knowledgeable about intimate care and that students’ individual needs and concerns are taken into account.

Scope

This Policy applies to all staff involved in the provision of intimate care to students.

Other Policies and Guidelines

This Policy should be read in conjunction with other School policies including:

- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Staff Disciplinary Procedures
- Acceptable Use Policy

Parents/guardians (“**parents**”) are asked to familiarise themselves with the School’s Child Safeguarding Statement which is in conformity with the 2017 Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools published by the Department of Education and Skills (“**DES Child Protection Procedures**”). Copies of these documents are available to staff and parents through the School Office and the website.

All staff in the School, including those who provide intimate care to students, are required to familiarise themselves with the School’s Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment and the DE Child Protection Procedures.

This guidance is based on good practice and practical experience of those working with children and young people requiring intimate care.

Definition of Intimate Care

Intimate care is defined as care tasks associated with bodily functions, body products and personal hygiene which demand direct or indirect contact with or exposure of the sexual parts of the body. In addition to this, intimate care may also include tasks such as: help with dressing, undressing, feeding, oral care and hair care ¹.

Thus, it includes any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an intimate care procedure that most students carry out for themselves but which some are unable to do, due to physical disability, additional educational needs, medical needs or needs arising from the student’s stage of development.

Direct contact involves physical contact between the student and the staff member. It may involve the touching of both intimate and non-intimate body parts. Intimate body parts include the student’s breasts, buttocks and genitals.

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

Table 1: Examples of intimate care tasks, this list is not intended to be exhaustive.

	Intimate Care Task
1	Help with eating
2	Oral care (brushing teeth)
3	Shaving
4	Skin care or applying external medication
5	Hair care
6	Dressing and undressing (underwear and clothing)
7	Helping someone to use the toilet
8	Changing soiled continence pads
9	Bathing or showering

¹ The Health Information and Quality Authority (GDE4)

10	Washing intimate parts of the body i.e. genitalia
11	Menstrual care
12	Administering enemas
13	Administering rectal medication
14	Catheter or stoma care
15	Prompting to go to the toilet or bathroom
16	Supervision of an individual involved in intimate self-care

Approach to Best Practice

Staff, following consultation with parents, will support the students to achieve the highest level of autonomy that is possible and appropriate, given their age and abilities in accordance with the ethos of the School. Staff will encourage each individual student to do as much for themselves as possible.

While SNAs are the main carers for students with ICN during the school day, circumstances may arise where the School nurses carry out procedures. It is acknowledged that these staff are in a position of great trust.

Careful consideration will be given to each student's situation to determine how many staff members might need to be present when carrying out duties in relation to intimate care. An intimate care plan, using the template at Appendix A, will be created for each student who requires assistance with their ICN. The Intimate Care Plan will set out information such as what tasks the student requires assistance with, what resources are required and how many staff members should assist the student at the same time. The Intimate Care Plan will be developed in consultation with parents and/or the student in light of the resources available to the School.

Staff should always wear an apron and gloves when attending to a student's toileting needs and additional protective clothing/equipment, as may be required by circumstance.

ICN should always be carried out in facilities, which are both appropriate and within the remit of the School to provide. Facilities should be reviewed regularly.

Students with ICN are encouraged to participate in trips outside School, provided that suitable facilities are available to allow for proper and safe care. While every effort will be made to use venues with suitable facilities, this may not always be possible due to the constraints of the facilities being used or due to the whole school programme requirements. The safety and welfare of the student will be the paramount consideration in such circumstances.

Staff will not carry cameras or similar devices whilst providing intimate care.

Staff may carry a mobile phone whilst providing intimate care, however, it is only to be used in an emergency situation and a failure to abide by this and by all other

provisions of this Policy will be considered a serious disciplinary offence and will be subject to disciplinary action, which could lead to dismissal.

Basic principles when providing intimate care

1. Parents and (where age and cognitively appropriate) students should give their consent prior to the provision of intimate care.
2. Students have a right to feel safe and secure.
3. Students have the right to personal privacy.
4. Students have a right to be treated with dignity and respect and a professional approach from staff when meeting their needs.
5. Students should be listened to and their views taken into account.
6. Students should be treated courteously at all times and in so far as possible know who is assisting them.
7. Students (where age and cognitively appropriate) have the right to information and support to enable them to make appropriate choices.
8. Students have the right to be involved and consulted in their own intimate care to the best of their abilities.
9. Students have the right to know how to complain and have their complaint dealt with.
10. A student's intimate care plan should be designed to lead to independence (where possible).

Student Voice

The School will allow the student, subject to their age and understanding, to express a preference regarding the choice of their carer, number of carers attending to ICN and sequence of care.

Where there is any doubt that a student is able to make an informed choice on these issues, a member of staff will consult with the student's parents and a decision will be reached between the parents and the staff member. In a case where the student withholds consent for essential care and places their health at risk, parents will be notified.

It is the responsibility of all staff assisting with a student's ICN to ensure that they are aware of the student's method and level of communication. Communication methods may include words, signs, symbols, body movements and eye pointing.

Parents

Partnership with parents is an important principle in the School and is particularly necessary in relation to students with ICN. Much of the information required to make the process of intimate care as comfortable as possible is available from parents, including knowledge and understanding of any religious/cultural sensitivities.

Parents are encouraged to work with staff to ensure their child's needs are identified, understood and met as much as this is practicable. A good relationship between staff and parents is vital for the wellbeing of the student and both parties are asked to be supportive of each other.

Exchanging information with parents is essential through arranged in-person contact or by school telephone or email. Information concerning intimate care procedures should not be recorded in home/school liaison books.

Parents are expected to provide all relevant information to the school as early as possible prior to the child commencing in Villiers School. This is to ensure that a care plan is developed and in place for the student on their commencement in Villiers.

School Management

School management will ensure that:

- Staff are aware of the Intimate Care Plans as well as all School policies including the Child Safeguarding Statement and the Health & Safety Policy etc.
- Staff have adequate training to provide for the intimate Care Plans in place for various students.
- Staff understand the needs of refugee students, asylum seekers and students from different racial and cultural backgrounds and ensure that specialist advice is sought when necessary.
- Staff know who to ask for advice if they are unsure or uncomfortable about a particular situation.
- Staff know of the whole school approach to intimate care.
- Staff have access to other procedures and policies regarding the welfare of the student.

In addition, identified staff members should be able to:

- Identify and use a communication system that the student is most comfortable with.
- 'Read' messages a student is trying to convey.
- Communicate with and involve the student in the intimate care process.
- Offer choices, wherever possible.
- Develop, where possible, greater independence with the procedure of intimate care.
- Maintain confidentiality with students who discuss elements of their intimate care unless it is a child protection issue when the DE Child Protection Procedures must be followed.

Staff Development

Relevant staff should receive training in good working practices, which comply with the School's Health & Safety policy requirements.

Relevant staff must be informed of the specific types of intimate care that they may be required to carry out and should fully understand this Policy within the context of their work.

Whole staff awareness should foster a culture of good practice and a positive approach to intimate care.

It is imperative for the School and individual staff to keep a dated record of all training undertaken.

The following guidelines should be used in training staff and those identified to support intimate care.

Staff should:

- Ensure that sensitive information about a student is only shared with those who need to know, such as parents, members of staff specifically involved with the student and statutory agencies if appropriate. Other personnel should only be given information necessary to keep the student safe.
- Consult parents/students (where age-appropriate) about arrangements for intimate care.

Environmental Advice

Where possible and within reason and available resourcing, the School will endeavour to ensure that a student operates within an appropriate environment.

Trips outside School – participation in trips will only be considered when both the School and parents are fully satisfied that appropriate conditions are available to meet the specific requirements of the individual. At no time should a student's health and safety be knowingly placed at risk.

Vulnerability to Abuse

Students are encouraged to recognise and challenge inappropriate assistance and behaviour that erodes their dignity and self-worth. Staff are encouraged to listen.

Allegations of Abuse

Personnel working in intimate situations with students can feel particularly vulnerable. Parents are asked to be cognisant, patient and respectful of this. This Policy can help to reassure both staff involved and the parents of students with ICN.

Action should be taken immediately should there be a discrepancy of reports between a student and a staff member, particularly with reference to time spent alone together.

Where there is an allegation of abuse, the School's Child Safeguarding Statement and the DE Child Protection Procedures will be followed.

Links with other Agencies

Positive links with other agencies will enable School based plans to take account of the knowledge, skills and expertise of other professionals and will ensure the student's well-being and development remains paramount.

Ratification and Communication

This Policy was reviewed by the Board of Management on 8th May 2024. A copy of this Policy is stored electronically in the School plan, which is available to all staff. A copy of this Policy is also published on the School website.

Review

The effectiveness of this Policy will be monitored on an ongoing basis by management and staff and will be reviewed regularly at the end of academic years. It may be reviewed at other times of the school year depending on the needs of the School.

Signed: _____
Headmistress

Signed: _____
Chairperson of the Board of Management

Appendix A -
TEMPLATE INTIMATE CARE PLAN

Name: _____

Date Plan Developed: _____

Plan to be reviewed: _____

People involved in development of plan: _____

Care Task	Support needs (support required for specific steps of task)	Resources Required (number of staff, equipment etc)	Risk Management (Manual Handling, Behavioural issues, Staff Protection)

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