

Intimate Care Policy – Coláiste Cholmcille’s ASD Special Class

Introduction

Coláiste Cholmcille, Ballyshannon aims to ensure that students who require assistance with intimate care receive appropriate support at school. We appreciate that students may feel especially vulnerable when being helped with intimate care and the staff involved need to be particularly sensitive to their individual needs. The individual child’s safety, dignity and privacy are of paramount importance.

Intimate care can be 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 feeding, oral care and hair care. (Health Information and Quality Authority, 2014)

Principles of Intimate Care

The following are the fundamental principles of intimate care upon which our policy guidelines are based:

- every student has the right to be safe;
- every student has the right to personal privacy;
- every student has the right to be valued as an individual;
- every student has the right to be treated with dignity and respect;
- all students have the right to be involved and consulted in their own intimate care to the best of their abilities;
- all students have the right to express their views on their own intimate care and to have such views taken into account;
- every student has the right to have levels of intimate care that are appropriate and consistent.

Aim

The Board of Management of Coláiste Cholmcille is committed to taking every precaution to protect students and staff from any form of abuse or harm. The staff at Coláiste Cholmcille are responsible for reading and understanding this policy.

It is the policy of Coláiste Cholmcille to ensure that our policies are in accordance with the ethos and values of Coláiste Cholmcille and in accordance with the Child Protection and D.E.S. Guidelines.

All students we work with have the right to be safe and to be treated with dignity and respect. This policy is designed to safeguard both our students and staff and applies to all staff involved with the intimate care of students at Coláiste Cholmcille. It aims to support best practice in intimate care.

Induction & Training

The Board of Management will make every effort to ensure that all designated staff are trained and supported in the area of intimate care. All designated members of staff at Coláiste Cholmcille are expected to familiarise themselves with the Intimate Care Policy and be aware of the standards expected of them. The staff involved will establish good working practices regarding physical transfer (manual handling), wearing of protective clothing (eg. gloves) and ensure safe practice in relation to procedures carried out.

Staff who provide intimate care will be required to familiarise themselves with Child Protection Procedures for Post-Primary Schools published by the DES. Coláiste Cholmcille is committed to ensuring that all staff responsible for the intimate care of children will undertake their duties in a professional manner and strictly adhere to Child Protection procedures at all times.

Where possible, events requiring intimate care assistance will be identified in advance. Each student that requires intimate care assistance will have a specific care plan in place. Should an emergency arise where assistance is required and where surroundings are not ideal, the principles of privacy and dignity will be respected.

Intimate Care of Students in the ASD Classes

It is school policy that:

- The personnel involved in the intimate care needs of students will be SNAs;
- There should be a minimum of two staff members present at all times. Additional support will be provided by mainstream SNA's if needed;
- No substitute SNA should be involved in the toileting of a student unless sanctioned by the Principal or Deputy Principal.

Parent Responsibilities

Parents/Guardians need to identify any toileting needs in school enrolment form. They should supply the school with the resources required to carry out the toileting or other care needs, which may include, but not be limited to:

- Nappies;
- Wipes;
- Creams;
- Nappy Sacks;
- Spare underwear;
- Spare Clothes;

Personal Care Form

The ASD Teacher will ensure the Personal Intimate Care Form (Appendix 1) is completed for each student who requires such assistance. They will further ensure that the form is readily accessible and that all designated SNAs are familiar with its contents. Each form will be reviewed as necessary.

The Personal Care Form will indicate:

- The intimate care procedures/interventions for each person;
- That parents/guardians have been made aware of these procedures.

Consent

The ASD Teacher along with all relevant personnel will agree an Intimate Care Plan with parents and child and other relevant health professionals (if appropriate). The plan will require parental consent; staff should not undertake any aspect of intimate care that has not been agreed in the Intimate Care Plan.

Intimate Care/Toileting Plan

In the event that a specific toileting need has been identified for a student, an Intimate Care/Toileting Plan will be developed in partnership with the ASD teacher, designated SNAs and the student's parents/guardians. The Care Plan must include:

- Specific Care Need;
- Number of staff members involved;
- Identification of the staff members involved;
- Additional equipment required;
- Child's preferred means of communication to include agreed terminology for body parts and bodily functions;
- Child's level of ability;
- Signature of Class Teacher;
- Signature of Principal.

Elements of Good Practice for Staff:

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

- In the case that a student has an Intimate Care Plan staff must be completely familiar with the plan;
- Address the student by name and ensure he/she is aware of the focus of the activity;

- Verbalise all actions to the student in a reassuring way to prepare them for each procedure;
- Use visual cues for students with limited communication, e.g. pointing at a wipe or picture board;
- Use appropriate and professional language. Specific language may be detailed in a care plan;
- In intimate care, the touch should be affirmative and supportive, not rough or insensitive;
- Respect the dignity and privacy of the student at all times;
- Have all equipment and materials to hand before commencing;
- Use discreet observation if checking to see if a nappy needs changing;
- Use protective gloves provided;
- Take all precautions when disposing of soiled material in the bin provided;
- Intimate care procedures will be carried out in a manner which treats the student in a dignified and respectful way and allows the student the maximum level of privacy;
- If student appears distressed or uncomfortable when personal care tasks are being carried out, the care should stop immediately. Try to ascertain why the child is distressed and provide reassurance;
- The student will be supported to achieve the highest level of autonomy that is possible given their age and abilities;
- Staff will encourage each child/young person to do as much for themselves as they can.

Self-Stimulation

As part of normal development, interest in one's own body and other people's bodies may be evident. People with autism or learning disabilities develop the same feelings and needs as others, though understanding and expressing these may be difficult.

Personal behaviours, such as touching private body parts, are a fact of life-learning, knowing when and where it is appropriate to touch private body parts can be more challenging for young people with autism or learning disabilities.

If a student is displaying self-stimulation behaviours, and no child protection issues are raised or noted, the student will be redirected to an appropriate task or activity. All instances of self-stimulation or inappropriate sexualised behaviours should be brought to the class teacher's attention as soon as possible. If the behaviour continues, an intervention programme, aimed at decreasing the behaviour, will be devised involving the parents, class teacher, behaviour analyst, Principal, and multi-disciplinary support staff (where relevant). No child will ever be reprimanded for self-stimulation or inappropriate sexual behaviour.

It is preferable to develop a proactive rather than reactive approach to managing behaviours. Any behaviour intervention will be reviewed frequently and in consultation with parents. Coláiste Cholmcille recognises that some parents may find it difficult to discuss

their son or daughter's sexualised behaviours in a public forum and may prefer to conduct such conversations in a meeting with only two staff members present.

Coláiste Cholmcille recognises that a sudden increase in sexualised behaviours may, very occasionally, be the result of sexual abuse and as such, we will monitor record and report any significant changes in sexual behaviour in accordance with Child Protection Guidelines.

Reporting

All toileting & self-stimulation 'accidents' involving students must be reported to the students' parents/guardians. If during the intimate care of a student a staff member:

- Accidentally hurts/injures the student;
- The staff member observes something which raises child protection concerns;
- The student seems to misinterpret what is said or done;
- The student has a very emotional reaction without apparent cause the incident must be reported to the ASD Teacher/Principal/SENCO or the DLP or Deputy DLP as appropriate;
- The student becomes distressed or unhappy about being cared for by a particular member of staff, the matter will be reported to the Principal. The Principal will look into the matter and the outcomes will be recorded. Parent/carers will be contacted at the earliest opportunity as part of this process in order to reach a resolution. Staffing schedules will be altered until the issue(s) are resolved so that the child's needs remain paramount. Further advice will be taken from outside agencies if necessary.

Implementation

This policy is effective immediately.

Ratification

This policy was ratified by the Chairperson of the Board of Management 23/8/2022

Review

This policy will be reviewed 2024 and amended as necessary by means of a whole school collaborative process.

Evaluation

This policy is monitored on an ongoing basis.

Appendix 1: Personal Intimate Care Form

STUDENT'S NAME		
ADDRESS		
D.O.B.		
DATE OF INTIMATE CARE		
PRESENT		

Taking account of the person's and parents/guardian's preferences and wishes,
the intimate care procedures/interventions for this person are:

Toileting:
Dressing:
Menstrual Care:
Other:

Any other things to note:

APPENDIX 2: Intimate Care Plan

Student Name		Plan Prepared by	
Date of Birth		Level of Ability	
Medical Diagnosis		Designated Staff	
Specific Care Need		Additional Equipment	
Date		Means of communication	

Contact 1		Contact 2	
Name		Name	
Home No.		Home No.	
Mobile No.		Mobile No.	
Work No.		Work No.	
Relationship to Student		Relationship to Student	

GP Contact Details		Hospital Contact Details (if relevant)	
GP Name		Named Contact	
Surgery Name		Hospital Name	
Phone No.		Phone No.	

1	Please give details of your son/daughter's condition
2	Outline his/her specific intimate care needs
3	How independent is he/she in regards to these needs?
4	Outline any likes or dislikes when your son is helped with intimate care
5	Are there any issues the school needs to know about?

6	The school will name 4 designated members of staff to assist with your son/daughter's intimate care needs. 1. 2. 3. 4.

I agree that the information contained in this form may be shared with the designated members of staff who assist with the intimate care of _____ (Student's name)

Staff Member Signature: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Principal/Deputy Principal Signature _____