

## INTIMATE CARE NEEDS POLICY FOR ST.ANTHONY'S SCHOOL

This policy is designed to ensure that all children attending the school, their families and school staff feel that pupils are treated with respect and that their right to privacy and dignity is upheld and actively promoted, while also ensuring that staff feel supported and safe while working with pupils. This is particularly important when dealing with the issue of Intimate Care needs.

*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". (HIQA 2013) In addition to this, intimate care may also include tasks such as: help with feeding, oral care and hair care.

### **In St. Anthony's School the following Principles guide all Intimate Care Procedures:**

- ✓ It is essential that every pupil with a disability is treated as an individual when intimate care is being provided and that appropriate time is taken for intimate care.
- ✓ It should enhance the quality of life of the individual receiving care and should be provided as gently and sensitively as possible, while respecting their privacy and dignity at all times.

St. Anthony's School will adhere to the basic principles which should be borne in mind when providing intimate care: (taken from HIQA Guidance 2013)

1. Individuals should give their consent prior to the provision of intimate care. (In St. Anthony's Parents/Guardians permission and co-operation is always sought)
2. Individuals have a right to feel safe and secure.
3. All individuals have the right to personal privacy.
4. All individuals receiving intimate care should be respected and valued as individuals. Individuals should be listened to and their views taken into account. They should be treated courteously at all times and know who is looking after them.
5. Individuals have a right to be treated with dignity and respect and a professional approach from staff when meeting their needs.
6. Individuals have the right to information and support to enable them to make appropriate choices.
7. All individuals have the right to be involved and consulted in their own intimate care to the best of their abilities.
8. Individuals have the right to be accepted for who they are, without regard to age, gender, ability, race, culture or beliefs.

9. All individuals have the right to express their views on their own intimate care and to have such views taken into account.
10. Individuals have the right to know how to complain and have their complaint dealt with.
11. An individual's personal care plan should be designed to lead to independence.

Intimate care may involve touching intimate parts of an individual's body and may leave staff vulnerable to accusations of abuse. It is unrealistic to eliminate all risk but this vulnerability places an important responsibility on staff to act in accordance with agreed policies and procedures which protects all parties involved.

### **Good Practice Procedures in St. Anthony's School:**

1. Establishing effective working relationships with families, parents and carers is a key task to ensure each individual's needs are properly identified, understood and met.
2. Plans for the provision of intimate care will be clearly recorded to ensure clarity of expectations, roles and responsibilities.
3. Records will also reflect arrangements for ongoing monitoring and review of intimate care plans.
4. The procedure for dealing with concerns arising from the intimate care processes will be clearly stated and understood by all those involved.
5. Monitoring of plans will take place at least annually or at times of significant change.
6. Wherever possible, staff will work with individuals of the same sex in providing intimate care. However when setting up a personal care plan, it may be acceptable to all parties for a carer to be of the opposite sex and at times this may be an option.
7. Religious and cultural values will always be taken into account.
8. Staff will demonstrate their respect for the dignity, modesty and privacy of all individuals through their general demeanour, through the manner in which they address and communicate with each individual, through their appearance and dress, by avoiding ageist, racist, sexist or other inappropriate comments or jokes and through discretion when discussing the individual's medical condition or treatment needs. Staff understand that lapses are unacceptable, even when they are working under pressure.

## Practical Procedures Reviewed March 2015:

### 1. Children with Specific Toileting/Intimate Care Needs

- ✓ 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, School Nurse 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.
- ✓ Any possible training needs will be identified and training sought. E.g. catheter/peg fed
- ✓ Provision for occasions when usual staff are absent will be outlined. Any change of personnel will be discussed with the pupil, if appropriate. As far as practicable and possible staff will be known to the pupil.
- ✓ Two members of staff will be present in the same area when dealing with intimate care needs.
- ✓ **Any changes will be discussed with parent/guardian and pupil and noted in writing to the pupil's file.**
- ✓ As far as possible the pupil will be involved in identification of his/her personal requirements, wishes, changes etc. Independence is encouraged as much as possible.
- ✓ A written copy of the agreement will be kept on the pupil's file.
- ✓ Parents will be notified of any changes from agreed procedures.
- ✓ At all times the dignity and privacy of the pupil will be paramount in addressing intimate care needs, staff will focus on the procedures and carry out procedures as efficiently and quickly as possible.
- ✓ Staff will wear protective gloves.

### 2. Toileting Accidents:

- ✓ At the School Admissions Meetings, the school procedures will be outlined to parents and they will be asked to submit in writing specific wishes regarding Toileting Accidents.
- ✓ A supply of clean underwear, wipes, track- suit bottoms etc provided by the parents will be kept in the school.
- ✓ 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 by parents will be followed.
- ✓ If staff must clean /change the child, two members of staff, familiar to the child will attend to him/her.
- ✓ Parents will be notified of these accidents.
- ✓ Two records of the incident should be kept: one with nurse and one with class teacher.

Good practice where the dignity and safety of the pupil is of central importance will determine all Intimate Care Procedures in St. Anthony's School.

These procedures will be reviewed regularly or as each individual case changes.

This policy was reviewed and amended January 2008 and ratified by the Board of Management at a meeting on Thursday 10/1/2008. Following review by School Nurse, Staff and Principal it was agreed that this policy continues to be effective and it was reviewed and ratified by the BOM at a meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2015.