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1. Introduction

Coláiste Muire is committed to developing a dynamic Christian School Community which fosters spiritual and student development. We strive for academic excellence and seek to nurture a sense of self-worth while having a particular concern for the needs of the academically and socially disadvantaged.

Colaiste Muire Mission Statement

In tandem with the spirit of the school's mission statement all students with intimate care needs will be treated with respect and their right to privacy upheld and actively promoted. To this end Colaiste Muire strives to maintain standards, develop a supportive professional environment and promote positive attitudes and behaviours based on student-centred care.

2. 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 feeding, oral care and hair care.

Guidance for Designated Centres, Intimate Care, HIQA 2014

Table 1: Examples of intimate care tasks

	Intimate Care Task
1.	Help with eating
2.	Oral Care
3.	Hair Care
4.	Dressing and undressing
5.	Assistance with toileting
6.	Menstrual care
7.	Changing soiled continence pads
8.	Catheter or stoma care
9.	Prompting to go to bathroom
10.	Supervision of an student involved in intimate care

3. The Key Principles of Intimate Care in our school

It is essential that every student 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 be provided as gently and sensitively as possible, while respecting their privacy and dignity at all times.

There are some basic principles to be borne in mind when providing intimate care:

- Students should give their consent prior to the provision of intimate care.
- Students have a right to feel safe and secure.
- All students have the right to personal privacy.
- All students receiving intimate care should be respected and valued as students. Students 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.
- Students have a right to be treated with dignity and respect and a professional approach from staff when meeting their needs.
- Students have the right to information and support to enable them to make appropriate choices.
- All students have the right to be involved and consulted in their own intimate care to the best of their abilities.
- Students have the right to be accepted for who they are, without regard to age, gender, ability, race, culture or beliefs.
- All students have the right to express their views on their own intimate care and to have such views taken into account.
- Students have the right to know how to complain and have their complaint dealt with.
- A student's student care plan should be designed to lead to independence.

4. Child Protection

People with disabilities and older people can be particularly vulnerable to abuse. The protection of people with disabilities is paramount. It is essential that all staff are familiar with intimate care policies and procedures and national guidance including Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017.

The following are factors that increase the vulnerability of a student with a disability:

- they may have less control over their lives than is normal
- they may often not recognise abuse
- they may have multiple carers
- differences in appearance may be attributed to an student's disability or medical condition rather than to abuse
- they may not always be able to communicate what is happening to them.

Intimate care may involve touching intimate parts of a student'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.

5. Planning

Where possible arrangements for intimate care should be informed by parents' and students' experiences of how this process can be made comfortable and appropriate for the in Plans for the provision of intimate care will be recorded in the student's Personalised Pupil Plan to ensure clarity of expectations, roles and responsibilities. Records should also reflect arrangements for ongoing monitoring and review of intimate care plans.

Some procedures may require two members of staff for health and safety reasons, for example, manual handling. This should be clearly stated in the student's individual plan.

6. SNA Role and Responsibilities *

In Colaiste Muire SNA staff are involved on a daily basis in providing intimate care to students who use services arising from learning difficulties, sensory impairments, medical needs and physical impairments. This places staff in a position of great trust and responsibility. They are required to attend to the safety and comfort of those students and to ensure that they are treated with dignity and respect.

Religious and cultural values must always be taken into account. Staff should demonstrate their respect for the dignity, modesty and privacy of all students

through their general demeanour, through the manner in which they address and communicate with each student, through their appearance and dress, by avoiding inappropriate comments or jokes and through discretion when discussing the student's medical condition or treatment needs. It is important for staff to understand that lapses are unacceptable, even when they are working under pressure.

*For a detailed description of the role of the SNA see appendix 1.

7. Positive Approaches to Intimate Care

- Assess students to determine how much care can be carried out independently and how support can be given to improve self-care skills.
- Plan intimate care using student-centred approaches at all times.
- Address each student by their given or preferred name.
- Address each student in an age-appropriate way.
- Provide explanations of what is happening or will happen in a straightforward and reassuring way so that students are aware of the focus of the activity and know what is happening or what will happen.
- Agree terminology for parts of the body and bodily functions that will be used by staff and encourage them to use these terms consistently and appropriately.
- Encourage the student to undertake as much of the procedure for themselves as possible, including washing intimate areas and dressing/undressing.
- Respect a student's preference for a particular sequence of care.
- Be aware of, and respect, any cultural or religious sensitivities related to aspects of intimate care.
- Seek the student's permission before undressing if she is unable to do this unaided.
- Provide facilities that afford privacy and modesty.
- Keep records noting responses to intimate care and any changes in behaviour.
- Be mindful of the psychological effect that a student might experience due to relying on others for support with intimate tasks.
- Students have the right to expect that information about them is only shared to enable care.

8. Training

Staff should receive training in good working practices which comply with Health and Safety regulations such as dealing with body fluids, wearing protective clothing, manual handling and child protection.

Staff should also receive training in intimate care and for very specific intimate care procedures (for example, stoma care) where relevant.

Intimate care plans should be recorded in a student's individual care plan. The intimate care plan must be reviewed on a regular basis at least annually.

9. Facilities

- There should be sufficient space, heating and ventilation to ensure the safety and comfort of students receiving intimate care.
- There should be hot and cold running water available in all facilities. Antibacterial hand wash facilities should be available. Hand hygiene should be carried out in accordance with national guidelines.
- Items of protective clothing, such as disposable gloves and aprons should be provided. There should be no re-use of disposable gloves.
- Wet and/or soiled continence pads should be disposed of in line with national guidelines.
- The arrangements for the disposal of any contaminated waste/clinical materials should be carried out in accordance with national guidelines. Supplies of suitable cleaning materials should be available. Anti-bacterial spray should be used to clean surfaces. The latest infection control advice should be followed, for example, for clearing blood spills or for cleaning specialist equipment.
- The correct storage and fitting of continence products should be adhered to.

10. Grievance procedure

- Issues of concern should be made know to the principal who will follow the standard procedure for dealing with a complaint or concern.

Appendix 1

The Role of the SNA

- To provide care assistance to named students who have special educational needs. They make a valuable contribution to the school's capacity to provide inclusive education to these students.
- To be made aware of the SEN plan, devised by the Special Needs Support Team, and given guidance on their role in the successful implementation of this plan.
- To recognise their role in the health and safety of the student and in their social, emotional and educational development, without developing a culture of dependency.
- Attending both Staff and Departmental meetings when appropriate.
- Assisting / escorting students on school trips.
- Giving special assistance as necessary for students with particular difficulties e.g. helping student with SEN with typing, writing or other use of equipment.
- Assisting with clothing, feeding, toileting and hygiene, being mindful of health and safety needs of the student.
- Assisting with house examinations (if appropriate).
- Assisting the teacher in the supervision of pupils during assembly, recreation and in movement from one classroom to another.
- Accompanying individual or small groups who may be withdrawn temporarily from the classroom. **An SNA should not be asked to withdraw a student from a classroom unless this is a strategy that has been agreed by the SEN department and Principal, where teachers and parents will have been informed.**
- Give general assistance to the subject teacher, under the direction of the Principal/Deputy Principal, of a non-teaching nature. **The SNA may not act as either substitute or temporary teachers. In no circumstances may they be left in sole charge of a class.**
- Participation with school development planning, where appropriate, and co-operation with any such changes with policies and practices arising from the school development process.
- Engagement with parents of students with SEN as required and directed by school management.
- Other appropriate duties as may be determined by the needs of the pupils and the school.
- The SNA may be re-assigned to other appropriate work when special needs students are absent or when particularly urgent work demands arise.
- To treat all matters relating to school business and their work, as strictly confidential.
- SNA's are expected to provide and update a timetable during the school year and furnish the Principal and SEN Co-ordinator with a copy.