



Bishop Milner Catholic College

Intimate Care Policy

(Pastoral Care)

“We owe God service, that we may serve Him as Lord,
not with an eye to the glory.
He will give those who serve Him but for His goodness alone”
St John of God.

Approved by Academy Committee: November 2019

Review Date: November 2021

The pastoral care of our Students is central to the aims, ethos and teaching at Bishop Milner Catholic College and we are committed to developing positive and caring attitudes in our students. Our Intimate Care Policy is part of our collective SEN and Pastoral policies.

It is our intention to develop independence in each student, however there will be occasions when help is required. The principles and procedures apply to everyone involved in the intimate care of students within College. In College this may occur on a regular basis or during a one-off incident.

Bishop Milner Catholic College is committed to ensuring that all staff responsible for the intimate care of students will undertake their duties in a professional manner, and preserve the dignity of any individual, at all times. We recognise that there is a need to treat all our students with respect when intimate care is given.

No student should be attended to in a way that causes distress or pain and adults and staff must be sensitive to each student's individual needs, and with reference to safeguarding procedures for both staff and students.

Intimate care is any care which involves one of the following:

- Assisting a student to **change his/her clothes**
- **Changing or washing a student** who has soiled him/herself
- Assisting with **toileting** issues
- Supervising a student involved in **intimate self-care**
- Providing **first aid** assistance
- Providing **comfort to an upset or distressed** student
- **Feeding** a student
- Providing **oral care** to a student
- Assisting a student who requires a **specific medical procedure** and who is unable to carry this out unaided. *

**In the case of a specific procedure only a person suitably trained and assessed as competent should undertake the procedure, (e.g. the administration of insulin.) Parents have the responsibility to advise the College of any known intimate care needs relating to their child.*

Principles of Intimate Care

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

- ✓ Every student has a 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 their views taken into account; and
- ✓ Every student has the right to have levels of intimate care that are appropriate and consistent.

Assisting a student to change his / her clothes

On occasions an individual student may require some assistance with changing if, for example, he/she has an accident at the toilet, gets wet outside, or has vomit on his/her clothes, etc.

Staff will always encourage Students to attempt undressing and dressing unaided. However, if assistance is required this will be given.

Staff will always ensure that they have a colleague in attendance when supporting dressing/undressing and will always give the student the opportunity to change in private, unless the student is in such distress that it is not possible to do so. If staff are concerned in any way parents will be contacted and asked to attend College to assist their child, and informed if the student becomes distressed.

Changing a student who has soiled him/herself

If a student soils him/herself in College a professional judgement has to be made whether it is appropriate to change the student in College, or request the parent/carer to collect their child to be taken home. In either circumstance the student's needs are paramount and he/she should be comforted and reassured throughout. The following guidelines outline our procedures but we will also seek to make age-appropriate responses.

- The student will be given the opportunity to change his/her underwear in private and carry out this process themselves.
- College will have a supply of wipes and spare uniform for this purpose. (A supply of spare uniforms are available at request via reception).
- If a student is not able to complete this task unaided, College staff will attempt to call the emergency contact to inform them of the situation.
- If the emergency contact is able to come to College within an appropriate time frame, the student will be accompanied and supported by a staff member until they arrive. This avoids any further distress and preserves dignity.
- If the emergency contact cannot attend, College will seek verbal permission for staff to change the student. If none of the contacts can be reached the Principal is to be consulted and the decision taken on the basis of loco-parentis and our duty of care to meet the needs of the student.

- The member of Staff who has assisted a pupil with intimate care will complete:
 1. **Child Protection/Safeguarding Guidelines**
 - ✓ Ensure that the action you are taking is necessary. Get verbal agreement to proceed –
CARE – CONCERN – COMMUNICATE.
 2. **Pastoral Care Procedures**
 - ✓ Ensure the Student is happy with who is changing him/her.
 - ✓ Be responsive to any distress shown.
 3. **Basic hygiene routines**
 - ✓ Always wear protective disposable gloves.
 - ✓ Seal any soiled clothing in a plastic bag for return to parents.

Providing comfort or support to a child:

There are situations and circumstances where a student might seek physical comfort from staff (particularly younger or more vulnerable students). Where this happens staff need to be aware that any **physical contact must be kept to a minimum.**

When comforting a student or giving reassurance, **staff must ensure that at no time can the act be considered intimate.**

If physical contact is deemed to be appropriate, staff must provide care which is **professionally appropriate to the age and context.**

If a student touches a member of staff in a way that makes him/her feel uncomfortable this can be gently but firmly discouraged in a way which communicates that the touch, rather than the student, is unacceptable. If a student touches a member of staff, as noted above, this should be discussed, in confidence with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Assisting a child who requires a specific medical procedure and who is not able to carry this out unaided.

Our Administration of Medications Policy outlines arrangements for the management of the majority of medications in College.

Parental permission must be given before any medication is dispensed in College - this form is available from reception.

A small number of students may have significant medical needs and in addition to the arrangements included in our Administration of Medications Policy will have an Individual 'Care Plan', PEEP and Risk Assessments. This Care Plan will be formulated by with reference to advice from PIMIS. If required, College staff will receive appropriate training.

Residential Trips

Residential educational visits are an important part of our student's holistic development and College experience. Particular care is required when supervising pupils in this less formal setting.

As with Extra-Curricular Activities, although more informal relationships in such circumstances tend to be usual, staff are still guided by our Safeguarding Procedures, Pastoral Care and Behaviour Policies. Some specific Intimate Care issues may arise in a residential context.

Showering

Students are entitled to respect and privacy when changing their clothes or taking a shower, should the need arise. However, there must be the required level of supervision to safeguard young people with regard to health and safety considerations, and to ensure that bullying, teasing or other unacceptable behaviour does not occur.

This means that staff should announce their intention of entering care rooms or changing rooms, avoid remaining in changing rooms unless pupil needs require it, avoid any physical contact when students are in a state of undress and avoid any visually intrusive behaviour.

Given the vulnerabilities of the situation, it is ***strongly recommended*** that when supervising children in a state of undress, another member of staff is present. However, this may not always be possible and therefore Staff need to be vigilant about their own conduct, e.g. adults must not change in the same place as students or shower with students.

It is best practice in our College that when an incident has taken place that has necessitated a member of staff to be present when children are changing that an incident report is made.

Night Time Routines

It is established practice that the student's bedrooms are private spaces and anyone else wanting to enter the room should knock and announce their intention to enter.

At bedtime, students are given a set amount of time to change and prepare for bed and will be told when the supervising teachers will visit the rooms to check all is okay and ensure lights are switched off. A reciprocal arrangement is in place in the mornings.

There may be occasions when incidents take place during the night and the need arises to:

- Assist a student to change his/her clothes
- Change a student who has soiled him/herself
- Provide comfort to an upset or distressed student
- Assist a student who requires a specific medical procedure and who is not able to carry this out unaided. Guidance as above will be followed with the support of an additional member of staff in attendance.

College Responsibilities

All members of staff working with students complete an Enhanced DBS Clearance. This includes students on work placement and volunteers who may be left alone with students. Vetting includes criminal record checks and two references.

Only those members of staff who are familiar with the intimate care policy and other Pastoral Care Policies of the College are involved in the intimate care of children.

Where anticipated, intimate care arrangements are agreed between the College and parents and, when appropriate and possible, by the Student. Consent forms are signed by the parent and stored in the Student's file. **Only in emergency would staff undertake any aspect of intimate care that has not been agreed by parents and College.** Parents would then be contacted immediately.

The views of all relevant parties should be sought and considered to inform future arrangements.

If a staff member has concerns about a colleague's intimate care practice he or she must report this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Guidelines for Good Practice

All Students have the right to be safe and to be treated with dignity and respect. These guidelines are designed to safeguard children and staff. They apply to every member of staff involved with the intimate care of children.

Younger students and students with SEN can be especially vulnerable. Staff involved with their intimate care need to be particularly sensitive to their individual needs.

Members of staff also need to be aware that some adults may use intimate care as an opportunity to abuse children. It is important to bear in mind that some forms of assistance can be open to misinterpretation. Adhering to the following guidelines of good practice should safeguard both children and staff.

1. Involve the student in the intimate care.

Try to encourage a student's independence as far as possible in his/her intimate care. Where a situation renders a student fully dependent, talk about what is going to be done and, where possible, give choices. Check your practice by asking the student or parent about any preferences while carrying out the intimate care.

2. Treat every student with dignity and respect and ensure privacy appropriate to the student's age and situation.

Care should not be carried out by a member of staff working alone with a child.

3. Make sure practice in intimate care is consistent.

As a student may have multiple carers a consistent approach to care is essential. Effective communication between all parties ensures that practice is consistent.

4. Be aware of your own limitations.

Only carry out activities you understand and feel competent with. **If in doubt, ask.** Some procedures must only be carried out by members of staff who have been formally trained and assessed.

5. Promote positive self-esteem and body image.

Confident, self-assured students who feel their bodies belong to them are less vulnerable to sexual abuse. The approach you take to intimate care can convey lots of messages to a student about their body worth. Your attitude to a student's intimate care is important. Keeping in mind the student's age, routine care can be both efficient and relaxed.

6. If you have any concerns you must report them.

If you observe any unusual markings, discolouration or swelling report it immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

If a student is accidentally hurt during intimate care or misunderstands or misinterprets something, reassure the student, ensure their safety and report the incident immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Report and record any unusual emotional or behavioural response by the student. A written record of concerns must be made available to parents and kept in the student's personal file.

Working with Children of the Opposite Sex

There is positive value in both male and female staff being involved with students. Ideally, every student should have the choice for intimate care but the current ratio of female to male staff means that assistance will more often be given by a woman. The intimate care of boys and girls can be carried out by a member of staff of the opposite sex with the following provisions:

- ✓ When intimate care is being carried out, all students have the right to dignity and privacy, i.e. they should be appropriately covered, the door closed or screens/curtains put in place;
- ✓ If the student appears distressed or uncomfortable when personal tasks are being carried out, the care should stop immediately. Try to ascertain why the student is distressed and provide reassurance;
- ✓ Report any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and make a written record;
- ✓ Parents must be informed about any concerns.

Communication with Children

It is the responsibility of all staff caring for a student to ensure that they are aware of the student's level of communication. Depending on their maturity and levels of stress Students may communicate using different methods - words, signs, symbols, body movements, eye pointing, etc. To ensure effective communication:

- Make eye contact (at the student's level if necessary);
- Use simple language and repeat if necessary;
- Wait for response;
- Continue to explain to the student what is happening even if there is no response; and
- Treat the student as an individual with dignity and respect.



Parental permission for Intimate Care

Should it be necessary, I hereby give permission for: _____
to receive intimate care (e.g. help with changing or following toileting).

I understand that staff will endeavour to encourage my child to be independent. I understand that I will be informed discretely should the occasion arise.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Adult with parental responsibility for: _____

