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Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúnaí Dúblain agus Dún Laoghaire
Atha Cliath agus Dhún Laoghaire Education and Training Board

Intimate Care Policy

DONABATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE



This Intimate Care Policy is to be reviewed by the Board of Management every three years.

This Policy was agreed on:

29/4/2025

Signature:

[Handwritten Signature]

(Chairperson to the Board of Management)

Donabate Community College

Donabate Community College is a post primary college, which opened in August 2008 under the Patronage of Dublin and Dun Laoghaire Education and Training Board (DDLETB). The college is co-educational and aspires towards excellence in a caring and supportive environment.

The Board of Management is committed to the successful implementation of recent legislation, in particular the Education Act (1998), the Education (Welfare) Act (2000) and the Equal Status Act (2000). The Board fully subscribes to the principles of partnership, accountability, transparency, inclusion and respect for diversity, parental choice and equality.

College Mission

The Board of Management will promote Excellence. Our aim will be to create, with the assistance of parents/guardians, responsible citizens with pride in their community. The development of the whole person will be based on personal responsibility, inter dependence, respect for people and respect for property. Our college will seek to instill integrity, value discipline and punctuality and facilitate the best in academic and non-academic areas. We will value our culture, our tradition, be inclusive of religious beliefs and will seek to be a caring and compassionate community where justice and truth will be the central elements.

Policy Review and Ratification

Donabate Community College is committed to ongoing policy review to ensure clarity, relevance, and compliance with current legislation and best practices. Where amendments to a policy are of a minor or administrative nature and do not alter its overall meaning, purpose, or intent, the school may proceed to seek ratification from the Board of Management without further consultation with stakeholders. However, where substantive changes are proposed that impact the policy's intent, scope, or application, appropriate consultation with relevant stakeholders will be undertaken before submission to the Board of Management for ratification.

Rationale

Donabate Community College 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. This policy has been developed to safeguard both students and staff and should be read in conjunction with the school's Child Safeguarding Policy. We recognise that there is a need to treat all pupils, whatever their age, gender, disability, religion, ethnicity or sexual orientation with respect and dignity when intimate care is given. The child's welfare is of paramount importance and his/her/their experience of intimate and personal care should be a positive one. It is essential that every pupil is treated as an individual and that care is given gently and sensitively; no pupil should be attended to in a way that causes distress or pain.

This Intimate Care Policy has been developed to safeguard children and staff. It applies to everyone involved in the intimate care of children.

Definition

Intimate care can be defined as any care which involves washing or carrying out a procedure to intimate personal areas which most people usually carry out themselves but some pupils are unable to do because of their young age, physical difficulties or other special needs.

Examples can include:

Feeding

Oral Care

Washing/ Showering

Dressing/ Undressing

Toileting/ Incontinence Pads

Menstrual Care

Catheter and stoma care

Supervision of a student involved in intimate care.

Principles of Intimate Care

The following fundamental principles upon which this policy and guidelines are based on/pay due regard to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

Every student has the right:

- To be safe

- To have privacy
- To be valued as an individual
- To be treated with dignity and respect
- To be consulted on his/her own intimate care
- To have levels of intimate care that are as consistent as possible

School Responsibilities

Donabate Community college is committed to working in partnership with parents/guardians, health professionals and other agencies to provide a supportive environment for students who require assistance with intimate care. All staff working in Donabate Community College are vetted in line with the school's Child Safeguarding Policy.

The SNA team will agree an Intimate Care Plan with the parents/guardians and child and other relevant health professionals (if appropriate). This plan will be signed by a parent/guardian and reviewed at the end of each academic year to inform them of future arrangements. A written copy of the agreement will be kept on the pupils file and parents will be notified of any changes from agreed procedures.

Relevant staff will be trained in the specific types of intimate care that they carry out and should also receive training in good working practices which comply with Health and Safety Regulations such as dealing with bodily fluids, wearing protective clothing, manual handling and child protection. Only the named staff identified in a student's Intimate Care Plan should undertake the intimate care of that student so that consistency is ensured. Staff should not undertake any aspect of intimate care that has not been agreed in the Intimate Care Plan or for which adequate training has not been provided.

There should be sufficient space, heating and ventilation to ensure the safety and comfort of all students receiving intimate care. Hand hygiene should be practiced in accordance with national guidelines. Hot running water, soap and sanitiser will be provided. Items of protective clothing, such as disposable gloves (and aprons where appropriate), will be provided. Wet and/or soiled incontinence pads should be disposed of in line with national guidelines. The correct storage and fitting of incontinence products should be adhered to. Anti bacterial sprays and wipes will be provided to clean surfaces. The latest infection control advice should be followed, for example spilled bodily fluids or blood.

Working with Children of the Opposite Sex

The school may be unable to offer the choice of a same sex carer to children who require assistance with intimate care. The intimate care of a student may therefore be carried out

by a designated member of staff of the opposite sex as identified in a student's Intimate Care Plan.

Activities and Overnight Trips

This policy is applicable for students going on school activities and overnight school trips. However, it may be necessary to arrange a separate Intimate care Plan for Activities/ Overnight Trips with the parents/guardian and student in advance of the activity/ overnight trip. This will include an agreement of the additional intimate care needs that the student may or will require that are outside of the normal intimate care duties carried out during mainstream school times. This plan will include the names of the staff who will be carrying out the intimate care on the activity or overnight trip. It will be signed by a parent/guardian and a written copy of the agreement will be kept on the pupil's file and parents will be notified of any changes from agreed procedures during the time away.

Guidelines for Good Practice

All students have the right to be safe and to be treated with dignity and respect. Students with disabilities can be especially vulnerable. Staff involved with their intimate care need to be sensitive to their individual needs. Guidelines for Good Practice (Appendix 1) are designed to safeguard children and staff. They apply to every member of staff involved in the intimate care of children.

Concerns

Any concern about the conduct of a staff member who is assisting a child with intimate care practice must be reported to the Designated Liaison Person for Child Protection in accordance with the schools child Safeguarding Policy.

Appendix 1

Guidelines for Good Practice

- Involve the student in his/her/their intimate care. Try to encourage the student's independence as far as possible in their own intimate care. Where the student is fully dependent talk with them about what is going to be done and where possible offer choice. Check your practice by asking the student or parent/guardian of any changes needed in carrying out intimate care for the student.
- Treat the student with dignity and respect and ensure privacy appropriate to the student's age and situation.
- Make sure practice in intimate care is consistent and only carried out by the named staff identified in a student's Intimate Care Plan.
- Sensitive information about a child's intimate care is confidential.
- If the child 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.
- Promote positive self-esteem and body image. Confident self-assured children who feel their body belongs to them are less vulnerable. The approach you take to intimate care can convey lots of messages to a child about their body's worth. Your attitude towards intimate care is important. Keeping in mind the student's age, routine care can be relaxed and enjoyable.
- If you observe any unusual marks, bruises or swelling including the genital area report this immediately to the Designated Liaison Person and complete a written Record of Concern.
- If during the intimate care of a student you accidentally hurt the student or the student misinterprets something, reassure them, ensure safety and report the incident immediately to the Designated Liaison Person.