

Guidance on Toileting Needs in Schools and Early Years Settings

Introduction

The majority of children are appropriately toilet trained and able to manage their own needs competently before they start school. This policy will apply to pupils who, for whatever reason, require toilet training or special arrangements with toileting in preschool or school settings.

This policy statement:

- Identifies the importance of working in partnership with parents/carers
- Sets out the principles of good practice
- Provides practical guidance for preschool and starting school
- Clarifies the implications of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001
- Sets guidance for children with special educational needs and disabilities
- Emphasises the employer's duty to safeguard the health and safety of pupils and staff
- Provides Child Protection advice
- Raises awareness of the need to protect the dignity of the child

Partnership with Parents

Open and supportive communication with parents is fundamental to planning for and meeting the child's toileting needs effectively and sensitively. Many parents may feel anxious that their child is not able to use the toilet independently and may have already experienced some difficulties with toilet training and/or experienced negative attitudes from others towards the issue. For some children, their toileting needs may be relatively short term and related to initial toilet training, whereas others may require a long-term toileting programme. Parents will need to feel confident that the setting is able to support their child's toileting needs and is positive about doing so.

Partnership with Children and Young People

The active involvement of the child in their toileting programme is vital to make sure they have ownership and understanding of their targets.

Principles of Good Practice

Children who have difficulties in controlling their bladder/bowels have sometimes had a difficult start on the road to personal independence. It is possible to understand why early training has been missed, ineffective or not yet possible. **These children have an educational entitlement irrespective of their difficulties with toileting.**

- Children or young people who need assistance with toilet training or special toileting arrangements must be treated with respect, dignity and sensitivity
- Educational establishments should ensure that they work in partnership with parents and carers in planning for toileting needs and effective toilet training
- It is important to adopt consistent approaches at home and at school
- The setting, in partnership with parents or carers, child and any other professionals involved, should make and review care plans working towards achieving maximum independence of the child with toileting over time
- The setting, supported by head teachers, governors, and senior managers, should positively address issues raised by toileting needs in a constructive and problem-solving way
- Preschool and school staff should be provided with access to appropriate resources and facilities and be supported by clear plans, policy guidelines and training. All staff supporting pupils with toileting difficulties must receive appropriate information and specific training as required
- Head Teachers and Managers should be aware of, and ensure implementation of, appropriate health and safety procedures and risk assessments
- Head Teachers, Governors and Senior Managers should be aware of their duties to comply with the SEN and Disability Act 2001, The Equality Act 2010 and The Children and Families Act 2014
- Schools must consult the Social Worker whenever planning toilet training or special toileting arrangements for children on the Child Protection Register or whenever any Social Care Teams are involved

- It is important to alert the Locality Team if any school attendance difficulties develop because of toileting concerns

Attending preschool settings and starting school

The Children's Services Department believes that children with toileting difficulties should be admitted into nursery and reception classes with their friends in the same way as any other child.

At this stage it is not possible to assume that failure to achieve independence with toileting is in itself an indication of special educational needs. However, there are some children who enter pre-school or reception with special educational needs and/or medical conditions which indicate the need for special toileting arrangements or toileting training. These children fall within the terms of the SEN and Disability Act 2001 and the pre-school or school setting must take "reasonable steps" to support them.

Definition of Disability in the Equality Act (2010)

The Equality Act provides protection for anyone who has a physical, sensory or mental impairment that has an adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. The effect must be substantial and long-term. It is clear therefore that anyone with a named condition that affects aspects of personal development must not be discriminated against. However, it is also unacceptable to refuse admission to other children who are delayed in achieving continence. Delayed continence is not necessarily linked with learning difficulties. However, children with global developmental delay, which may not have been identified by the time they enter nursery or school, are likely to be late achieving independence with toileting.

Education providers have an obligation to meet the needs of children with delayed personal development in the same way as they would meet the individual needs of children with delayed language, or any other kind of delayed development. Children should not be excluded from normal pre-school or school activities solely because of incontinence.

Any admissions policy that sets a blanket standard of continence, or any other aspect of development, for all children is discriminatory and therefore unlawful under the Act. All such issues should be dealt with on an individual basis, and settings are expected to make reasonable adjustments to meet the needs of each child.

Before the child begins it is important to:

- Gather information from parents, child and any professionals involved
- Establish effective partnership with parents, child and any professionals involved

- Focus on health and safety implications and determine whether a risk assessment is required
- Decide, in consultation with parents/carers, whether you need further advice from Health or Children's Services (Services for Young Children SfYC)
- Arrange for any specialist advice, training, resources to be in place before the child begins attendance
- Agree a plan with parents/carers and child and make a written note of your agreement
- Make sure that all staff are informed and clear about their responsibilities

It is important for all parties to monitor and review the plan regularly to ensure it is still appropriate and meeting the changing needs of the child.

It is reasonable to discuss the level of independence with toileting before a child starts school. However, it is not acceptable to deny, delay or reduce attendance at pre-school or reception simply because a child has special toilet requirements. It is important to agree a plan which will work towards maximum independence and support the child's attendance in the educational setting.

Good Practice Guidance

Each child and situation is unique. However, the Head Teachers may find the following guidance helpful in deciding what "reasonable steps" should be taken to support pupils who require toilet training.

It is anticipated that existing staff will volunteer to support pupils with toilet training or special toileting arrangements in school and preschool. Where incontinence is caused by an underlying impairment, it is a necessary reasonable adjustment for staff to carry out personal care. When recruiting new staff, it is important that duties relating to personal care are specified in the contract of employment. Managers should ensure that staff carrying out such procedures feel confident and supported to ensure the dignity of the pupil and protection of the staff.

If the child is not able to use the toilet independently on entry, schools have found a variation on the following procedures usually addresses the difficulty.

- Gather as much information as possible from the parents and carers and child. How have they tried to introduce toilet training at home? What happens at home? Has the child any regular routines or daily patterns

which could inform the routine set-up by the school? Have the parents/carers noticed any particular difficulties, or phobias which the school should be aware of? Can the parents/carers suggest a strategy or procedure for dealing with the problem?

- An appropriate toileting programme will need to be discussed and agreed so that the child, parents/carers and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities. The plan must state regular monitoring and review strategies. The plan should give careful consideration to choosing which adults should be involved in toileting care. Schools and pre-school settings should give a written copy of the programme to the parents/carers.
- Clothes should be easy for the child to pull up and down. Wherever possible it is better to train the child with appropriate clothing rather than continuing to rely on the nappy or training pants.
- Staff should ask parents/carers to provide the school with a couple of appropriate changes of pants/trousers etc in case of accidents.
- It is the responsibility of parents/carers to deal with wet/soiled clothing. Staff should liaise accordingly and make the necessary arrangements.
- Organise that a member of staff familiar with the child is given the responsibility of taking the child to the toilet at fixed appropriate intervals throughout the morning/day. Whenever possible arrange toilet visits during "break" time in the child's day to day routine. Careful observations and discussions with the child may identify when the child "needs to go".
- Ensure that the routine established in school is strictly maintained from the start and try hard to avoid accidents. If necessary, shorten the time between visits to the toilet so that the child gets into the habit of being dry.
- Children may be anxious and pre-occupied by toilet difficulties but usually respond to praise, encouragement and confidence building. It is important to promote self-esteem in other areas.
- Make drinking water easily accessible for all children and encourage them to have "little and often" rather than in huge amounts at a time.
- Reminders to use the toilet should be discreet and staff may consider the use of signs, pictures or code words.
- Make little fuss over accidents that do occur and ensure that they are dealt with swiftly, appropriately, sympathetically and in a calm low-key way. Give extra attention when they have made the effort to go to the toilet independently.
- No child should be left wet or dirty for a parent/carer to change later.

- It is not reasonable to expect parents or carers to be on emergency stand-by to change children during the school day.
- After a period of training it may be sufficient to remind the child to go to the toilet on their own. Be positive and patient and praise the child for effort.

Where difficulties persist, there may be more complex issues to consider and further guidance and support may be needed from other professionals. It is important to discuss your continuing concerns with parents/carers and seek their agreement before involving further professional guidance and support.

Children with special educational needs and disabilities

In addition to the good practice guidance described above the following considerations may apply:

- It may be appropriate to consult the Specialist Teacher Adviser for Children with Physical Disabilities for health and safety guidance, training for staff supporting children who are non-weight bearing and who require manual assistance to use the toilet and guidance on future toilet facilities in school
- It is important to anticipate toileting needs for these pupils before planning off site activities

Health and Safety considerations

The LA, Head Teachers and Governors have a duty to safeguard the Health and Safety of pupils and staff. Schools and other settings registered to provide education will already have hygiene or infection control policies as part of their health and safety policy and will follow these when managing a child with toileting needs. Ensure all known allergies are considered when planning and carrying out each child's toileting programme.

Child Protection concerns

The normal process of changing a nappy should not raise child protection concerns, and there are no regulations that indicate that a second member of staff must be available to supervise the nappy changing process to ensure that abuse does not take place. Few settings will have the staffing resources to provide two members of staff for nappy changing and DBS checks are carried out to ensure the safety of children with staff employed in childcare or education settings. Where there are concerns the usual child protection procedures should be followed.

Further information and advice

For general help or advice about this guidance please contact:

Services for Young Children (SfYC) Inclusion Team
Tel: 01962 847070

The Team Leader, Specialist Teacher Adviser for Children with Physical Disabilities
Tel: 01252 814777

Managing Bladder and Bowel Issues in Nurseries, Schools and Colleges –
see School Communications Ref: SC017186 dated 04.11.19

Acknowledgements

This guidance is adapted and developed from 'Guidance on Special Toileting Needs in Schools and Early Years Settings' produced by Warwickshire County Council and 'Promoting personal development in foundation and key stage 1 – continence'
Leicester City Council

Resources

Enuresis Resource and Information Centre (ERIC)
34, Old School House, Britannia Road, Kingswood, Bristol, BS15 8BD
Tel: 0117 960 3060
www.eric.org.uk

Helpline Mon – Thurs 10am – 2pm Tel: 0808 1699949
Provides education and resources for improving childhood continence

Bladder and Bowel UK
Burrows House, Priestly Road, Worsley, Manchester M28 2LY
www.bbuk.org.uk

Good practice in continence services, 2000. Available free from Department of Health, PO Box 777, London SE1 6XH or
http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4005851

Including me: Managing complex health needs in schools and early years settings Jeanne Carlin (2005) Council for Disabled Children and Department for Education and Skills
<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/idoc.ashx?docid=bd9e675d-7c1c-4369-8722-dbb2b3aca35a&version=-1>

The following are available upon request from the Specialist Teacher Advisory Service for Children with Physical Disabilities:

The legal aspects of undressing children in cases of suspected abuse
Child Protection guidelines for support staff carrying out toileting procedures with pupils with physical disabilities
Good practice for helping pupils with continence needs

References

The Equality Act (2010) <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Act (2001)
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2001/10/contents>

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