



Toileting

Reasonable adjustments in toileting for children with additional needs

Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) have a right to education regardless of their difficulties with toileting. Under the Equality Act¹, settings and schools are required to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that children with a disability are treated equally, including provision for toileting.

Gaining bowel and bladder control, and achieving independence in a toileting self care routine takes longer for some children than others, and is not necessarily an indication of SEN/D. It is helpful for parents to alert the school as early as possible, if they know their child will need toileting support or if they suffer from specific conditions such as constipation or urgency. The school can then prepare, for example, by providing additional training for staff or creating provision for changing and storage of spare clothing. It is good practice for schools and settings to have a nappy changing and toileting policy, to ensure that children's personal care needs are met in a safe, respectful and hygienic manner, in compliant with legal and statutory requirements.

Children with SEND may have difficulties developing control of their bladder and bowel movements. Children may have communication needs which can impact on their ability to ask for help; they may experience anxiety around transitions; there may be sensory issues (for example smell, lighting and noise) which impact on a child's anxiety around using toilets outside the home. Children with restricted mobility may also find using the toilet more challenging and reasonable adjustments will need to be considered.

Some children who enter Nursery or Reception, with special educational needs and/or medical conditions, will require individual toileting arrangements or toilet training. Liaising with parents/carers and health care professionals is vital to ensure that individual needs are understood and met.

All children who require additional support with gaining bladder and/or bowel continence and control or personal hygiene in school should have a care plan, agreed with the parents, the child (where possible) and any healthcare professionals involved. All care plans should be reviewed at least annually or sooner if the child's needs change. See here for a care plan template: [Individual health care plan - ERIC](#).

ERIC (The Children's Bowel & Bladder Charity) and Bladder & Bowel UK states that²:

- Children must not be refused admission to school due to continence needs
- Staff should not assume every child with a bladder or bowel condition requires the same support

¹ The Equality Act 2010 defines a disabled person as someone who has "a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities".

² [Managing-Bowel-and-Bladder-issues-in-nurseries-colleges-and-schools-2022.pdf](#)



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- Children who are known to have continence difficulties should be offered a care plan to ensure their individual needs are met in school
- Parents should not be expected to come to school to change their children
- Staff should not require parents, or otherwise make them feel obliged, to attend the education setting, or off-site activity to provide support to the child for issues related to their continence needs
- Staff should not send children with continence needs home frequently or prevent them from staying for normal activities, including lunch, unless this is specified as part of their care plan
- Staff should not expect or cause a parent to give up work or other commitments because the education setting is failing to support a child's continence needs
- Staff should not create unnecessary barriers to a child's participation in any aspect of their education, including trips, e.g. by requiring a parent to accompany the child.

Legal responsibilities

A setting / school cannot deny admission to a child who is still in nappies. [The Equality Act 2010](#) states that schools must not discriminate against or disadvantage disabled children or those with special educational needs. A delay in controlling the bladder or bowel/ or not being toilet trained is a disability. Therefore, it is against the law to refuse or delay admission to children who are not yet continent. [The Children and Families Act 2014](#) places a statutory duty on schools to support pupils with medical conditions, including bladder and bowel problems. If a child has an identified continence issue which won't be resolved before they start school (whether related to toilet training or not), the school cannot refuse entry.

It is not acceptable to ask parents to come into school to change their child after they've wet or soiled themselves. Setting/school staff should use their discretion and judge each case on its merits with reference to a child's individual healthcare plan. It is considered abusive to force/allow a child to sit in wet or soiled underwear until their parent or guardian can come in to change them.

There is no legal requirement for two adults to be present when changing a child. Accidents are inevitable and children will need to be changed. Staff should alert another adult that they are undertaking intimate care and should ensure that others are in the vicinity and that they are visible or audible when changing the child. Many schools have an 'intimate care' or nappy changing and toileting policy outlining expectations.



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Useful resources:

www.eric.org.uk

[School toilet policy: rules and regulations - ERIC](#)

National Autistic Society: [Toileting - a guide for parents and carers](#)

Camden MOSAIC Child Development Team toileting information:

[Pre toileting Skills.pdf \(cnwl.nhs.uk\)](#)

[5 Steps to Toilet Training.pdf \(cnwl.nhs.uk\)](#)

[Toileting games to aid relaxation.pdf \(cnwl.nhs.uk\)](#)