

Request to improve/refurbish the school toilets at our school

Information which may be helpful to the Head Teacher,
Teachers & School Governors,
compiled by Nicola Maybury (parent) December 2013



Outline

A number of parents and pupils are concerned with the condition of the toilets at Christ Church Junior School. We would be grateful if the head teacher and school governors would consider a complete refurbishment of the toilets to make them a safer & healthier place for all pupils to be. There are numerous benefits to improving the school toilets, both for staff and pupils. The following helpful information has been compiled for your consideration. It would be great if refurbishment could take place (if possible) before the next academic year, possibly over the 2014 summer holidays.

Thank you for your time.

Toilets are vital.

They might be the smallest rooms in the school but they can have one of the biggest impacts on pupil health, education and happiness.

Benefits to school of renewing the school toilets and keeping them clean and well maintained:

- Save money on water bills because toilets/urinals don't flush unnecessarily (including in school holidays!) & taps are automatic so can't be left on by mistake
- Children are happy to use the toilets, meaning less bladder problems, less accidental wetting & better concentration in class because they don't desperately need the toilet in class
- Less school days lost due to illnesses picked up in the toilets
- Toilets are easy to clean because of the good design
- Toilets are easier to maintain because they are new

Benefits to pupils of renewing the school toilets and keeping them clean and well maintained:

- Pupils feel happy to use the toilets at the appropriate time
- Less illness because toilets are clean & well maintained
- Able to concentrate properly in class & learn more because they aren't desperate for the toilet
- More incentive to help keep the toilets clean because they are new

Other comments:

"You can tell a school by its toilets: they say an awful lot about a school and tell you about the value the school places on its environment – and they can help improve pupils' behaviour."

Susan Lewis, Chief Inspector for Wales

"Every pupil deserves a good toilet and the chance to use it when they need to. Schools teach life skills and how to be responsible. Children and young people should be helped to become more responsible and given the opportunity to show that they can be responsible. If we fail to do so, we are setting up resentment for now and the future."

Speaker at the World Toilet Summit (held in Belfast 2005)

"School toilets were the first place I would visit. If a school can't get the toilets right, it can make you wonder how much they care about their pupils and what else is deficient."

Former Ofsted inspector

"The very fact that some [toilets] are adequate – or even fantastic – proves the point that there is really no excuse for the nasty school loos I so regularly hear about. It's just a question of taking responsibility, making it a priority and involving children and young people."

The late Peter Clarke, Children's Commissioner for Wales

Facts and Figures from the Bog-Standard Campaign

A 2011 survey carried out by Netmums and ERIC of parents and children (with and without existing continence problems) found:

- A quarter of all school children avoid using the school toilets as they find them dirty, smelly and missing soap, toilet paper or even locks on the doors.
- Fluid intake was a concern with over half of all parents who took the survey saying they were concerned that their child didn't drink enough during a school day.
- 80% of parents who took part said they believed that there should be a legal framework in place to ensure a good standard of privacy, hygiene and cleanliness is maintained in school toilets.

An Ipsos Mori survey of 2,154 S1-S6 pupils from 59 schools across Scotland in late 2012 found that:

- 56% of secondary school pupils in Scotland avoid using school toilets – including one in ten who 'never' use them and 46% who report avoiding using them unless they 'really have to' and 10% say they never use their school toilets.
- 33% rate standards of cleanliness as poor or very poor.
- one quarter (24%) report supplies of toilet paper being inadequate, while 37% complain of a lack of soap, and 30% report a lack of working locks on cubicles.
- although around half of pupils who use school toilets report always or usually feeling safe in them, 16% say they rarely or never feel safe in them, and a similar proportion (15%) that they only sometimes feel safe.
- Among pupils who have to seek permission to go to the toilet during class, only around a third of pupils say they are always or usually allowed to go, 16% report rarely being allowed to go, and 2% say their teachers never let them go to the toilet during class.

According to summer 2013 surveys by ERIC of 105 children with continence problems and 1,127 parents of children with these issues revealed that:

- Almost half of the children and a fifth of parents believe that poor school toilet facilities contribute to the continence problem.

The Importance of Good Toilets

Toilets are important. Everybody uses them. Access to decent toilets is a fundamental human right and necessary for good health and well being.

For children and young people to stay healthy, they need to drink water regularly throughout the day. They also need to empty their bladder and bowels regularly and fully when they need to. During term time, time spent at school is the bulk of any child's day so how much they drink and how often they go to the toilet are important. The extension of the school day and breakfast clubs make this even more critical.

School toilets may languish low on the list of a school's budget and priorities for improvement. While school toilets may not be high on teachers' agendas, the state of the school toilets is often the most concerning issue for pupils. **As a basic requirement for life, school toilets not only influence health and wellbeing, but also pupils' attainment, behaviour, morale, and attendance levels.**

Horrible toilets and restricted access mean pupils drink less during the day in order to avoid going to the toilet. **The resulting dehydration can cause constipation, headaches, fatigue and lack of concentration. When pupils avoid going to the toilet at school or are told they cannot go to the toilet, they are unable to concentrate fully in lessons.**

Restricting access to the toilet to set times can cause 'going just in case' practices which means the bladder doesn't get used to holding on until it's full. Over time, the bladder capacity can reduce, increasing the need to visit the toilet more frequently. At the same time, the amount of fluid a child can drink before needing to go to the toilet is reduced.

Benefits to schools of improving the state of the toilets and trusting pupils to go to the toilet when they need to (from the Bog-Standard website)

- Pupils achieve most at school when both their health and learning needs are met
- Going to the toilet when pupils need to is an important way of protecting their health and wellbeing. This has positive knock-on effects for teachers
- Pupils are more receptive to learning when they are not distracted by an uncomfortable bladder or bowel
- Going to the toilet when pupils need to promotes good bladder and bowel practices, which can help avoid health problems
- Pupils are encouraged to drink adequate levels of water before and during school. This results in fewer headaches and better concentration. Being able to use good quality toilets when they need to is intrinsically linked to good drinking habits
- Pupils are more energetic (constipation and dehydration sap energy)
- Stress levels are lowered when pupils have control over responding to their bodily needs
- Attendance is improved through improved standards of cleanliness resulting in fewer illnesses (such as gastroenteritis or flu) and fewer health problems (such as urine infections or constipation)
- A feeling of greater equality and less division of "us and them" results when the environment is closer to the comforts of adult working environments
- This feeling is also created when teachers and pupils work in partnership to improve the toilets
- Develops a school environment for pupils that is humane and conducive to learning
- The school environment will be more attractive to existing and prospective staff and pupils
- More positive school ethos and atmosphere
- More respect from pupils, if pupils feel that teachers care for their health and well being
- Being allowed to go to a decent toilet when the need arises results in greater self-esteem amongst pupils
- Pupils feel valued and respected by teachers, which improves their behaviour
- Better behaviour is enhanced if pupils feel teachers are willing to trust them (such as by allowing pupils to decide when they need to go to the toilet)

- Parents, visitors, staff and pupils can feel proud of the school when they see improvements in the toilets
- Attractive and hygienic pupils' toilets project a positive image of the school
- Pupils are encouraged to feel ownership of their toilets if involved in their management. Ofsted now expects schools to demonstrate how they are contributing to the five national outcomes for children stipulated by Every Child Matters and the Children Act 2004 – being healthy; staying safe, enjoying and achieving; making a positive contribution; and economic well-being. Easy access to clean and well-maintained toilet facilities access can be incorporated into the first four criteria.
- The promotion of easy access to clean and well-maintained toilets is part of a whole school approach to promoting physical and mental health and provides excellent opportunities to use a school-approach involving the whole school community. School toilets can be incorporated into all the Healthy School criteria of:
 - Personal, social and health education
 - Healthy eating
 - Physical activity
 - Emotional health and well-being (including bullying).
 - Toilet issues link naturally to the curriculum, and can be discussed in PSHE and Citizenship classes
 - Links can be forged with local businesses (by requesting sponsorship, discounted products, or help with fundraising)
 - Positive media coverage can be generated by improvements to the school toilets

Why the big deal about school toilets?

Many adults don't realise how bad some school toilets are. Problems experienced by pupils include:

- Dirty, smelly toilets
- Toilets in a bad state of repair
- Broken seats, doors and toilet roll holders
- No or inadequate supplies of toilet paper, soap and hot water
- Lack of privacy – doors that don't lock, cubicles that can be peered over or under easily, and/or urinals that can be viewed from outside the toilet area
- Bullies hanging out in the toilets
- Restricted access to toilets – only being allowed to go at break or not enough time allowed to go
- Toilets inconveniently located and/or not accessible to pupils, including those with special needs

Does it really affect children's health?

Yes. Unpleasant toilets mean pupils won't use them. Often, they aren't allowed to go to the toilet when they need to. Not visiting the toilet can lead to bad bowel and bladder habits, which in turn can cause short-term and long-term health problems. It also means they will avoid drinking water during the day, which results in dehydration. This can cause tiredness, lack of concentration and constipation, and can lead to other health problems. Children might drink most of their drinks when they get home, which increases the risk of bedwetting.

How can things be improved?

In several ways, including:

- Raising awareness
- Improving school toilet design
- Improving cleanliness and maintenance of school toilets
- Monitoring and inspecting the standard of pupils' toilets
- Allowing pupils to go to the toilet when they need to
- Having laws that set out the same standards for pupils' toilets as already exist for adults' toilets
- Involving pupils in any refurbishments and management.
- Making low-cost initial improvements that help make the toilets nicer to use e.g. funky toilet seats; soft absorbent toilet paper; colourful murals.

Cleaning and Hygiene

Schools are required) to ensure the health, safety and welfare of pupils (Education (School Premises Regulations, 1999, England & Wales)). The provision of clean and well maintained toilets and hand washing facilities is a basic requirement in any workplace or educational setting but takes on an added importance in the close confinement of schools.

Find welcoming, bright, fresh and clean toilets with toilet paper, soap and hand drying facilities, and there's likely to be a high degree of school pride, as well as a general feeling among pupils that they're being looked after and feel safe.

But if a smell hits you as you open the door or you discover dirty, messy or poorly maintained facilities, chances are pupils feel threatened and try to avoid using the toilets. Such toilets can deteriorate into a haven for bullies and vandals.

Clean and hygienic toilets are children's number one priority. Encouraged by media coverage, parents are increasingly realising that good quality toilets, hygienically cleaned and maintained, are an important indicator of how good a school is. School nurses and continence advisors have long recognised the importance of ensuring clean and comfortable toilets.

How schools can benefit from focusing on good hygiene standards

The potential benefits to schools of clean and hygienic toilets, properly equipped with hand washing and drying facilities, include:

- Fewer infections and illness for children, especially diarrhoea, vomiting and respiratory
- Fewer school days missed by pupils and staff and days off work for parents
- Lower rate of absenteeism due to school toilet avoidance (pupils staying off school to avoid having to use the school toilets)
- Addresses a priority concern for pupils and parents and helps pupils feel valued
- Clean and hygienic toilets are inseparable not only from the health and well-being of pupils and their attendance levels, but also their morale, attitude and behaviour.
- A more conducive learning environment
- Projects a positive impression and image of a school which helps promote the school to potential parents and pupils
- Helps schools meet statutory guidelines and creates a more favourable Ofsted judgement about the school
- Cleaning the toilets to a high standard is cost effective as it extends the life of the toilets
- Keeping on top of cleaning reduces the need for costly remedial cleaning and maintenance
- When the school toilets are pleasant, clean, safe and well-stocked, the overall school is perceived by pupils as cleaner and more appealing.

Barriers to clean and hygienic toilets

The main hurdles to adequate cleaning of school toilets include:

- No clear direction – lack of legislation or guidance to schools on the provision of suitable and hygienic toilet facilities or how toilets should be cleaned, maintained or inspected
- Low priority – school management and site managers may put cleaning or supervision of cleaning of pupils' toilets low on their list of priorities
- No one person of authority within a school responsible for cleaning and maintenance standards
- Budget - insufficient funds are allocated or the school is squeezed for funding
- Inadequate training - cleaning staff may be poorly trained and lack motivation
- Time pressure - cleaning staff may be under pressure to clean the toilets quickly
- Poor cleaning standards - toilet facilities that have not been cleaned sufficiently often or thoroughly over a period of time so that dirt and smells have become engrained
- Some school toilets are not cleaned with cleaning products – only water!
- Poor design - this impedes effective and efficient cleaning
- Toilets past their sell by date – old, cracked and more porous building materials and surfaces absorb urine

Why school toilets are breeding grounds for infectious diseases

Toilet areas in schools are the primary source of infection for pupils and can spread infection from person to person. School toilets are ideal breeding grounds for pathogens ('pathogen' means harmful micro-organisms) that can be harmful to health, as toilets are damp and humid – and sometimes warm. Viruses, in particular, can be excreted in large numbers in respiratory secretions and faeces. In toilets they are most commonly spread during flushing and touching contaminated surfaces. e.g. frequent hand contact surfaces such as toilet flush handles, door handles, locks, light switches, washbasins, taps, hand dryers and waste bins - or drinking water facilities in the vicinity of washrooms. Infection can then spread from person to person and throughout the school.

Infections and illnesses that can spread in washrooms

Rotavirus – these are transferred from hand to hand and live on hard surfaces in toilets and washrooms and cause fever, vomiting and diarrhoea

Faecal Coliforms – these are found in faeces and contain germs that thrive in unclean toilets and washrooms. Some of these can be very serious such as:

- E.coli – can cause severe food poisoning symptoms and even death
- Pseudomonis – can cause skin infections
- Streptococcus – can cause severe sore throats & blood poisoning

Parasites – such as protozoa and parasitic worms that can be transferred in toilets and washroom by hand contact. Parasitic worms grow in the gut and can cause liver, lung, brain & lymphatic damage

Illnesses such as norovirus, swine flu and hepatitis A can spread rapidly through a school community.

Community Acquired MRSA where it has been hospitalising school-aged children with pneumonia or bloodstream infections in the USA

Common communicable infections such as colds and flu

In schools the younger the child the higher the risk. There will also be pupils of all ages who are more vulnerable than others to infection due to health conditions and weakened immune systems.

Pupils' days lost from school are related to transmissible infection. Pupils with a tummy bug with diarrhoea or vomiting are likely to leave behind pathogen organisms in the toilet itself, in the air and on surfaces. For some harmful bacteria, and particularly viruses, the dose needed to cause infection can be very small. Whilst a healthy adult may be resistant to quite a large dose of salmonella, to take just one example, the risk to vulnerable groups such as children can be much greater.

Schools may not always know when a child has a tummy upset or diarrhoea. Pupils and parents may be embarrassed to reveal the real cause of absence. It is also important to know that pathogens are often shed before children have symptoms of illness. Furthermore, children can still be excreting pathogens after they have apparently recovered and returned to school – for at least two weeks after the symptoms have subsided. Some people carry gut pathogens around with them without even knowing. To leave facilities hygienically clean, it is advisable to use toilet cleaning products that disinfect.

Plugholes and U-bends in washbasins and showers constitute major reservoirs, which will routinely support large bacterial populations which are difficult to remove and so require regular disinfection.

Damp cleaning cloths, utensils and mops used in toilet areas can become contaminated with harmful bacteria and become a breeding ground where bacteria can multiply rapidly and during cleaning can spread bacteria to other sites and surfaces. The same applies to non-disposable hand drying towels which is why their use in schools is discouraged.

A hygiene audit of 20 independent schools in England by Albany Healthy Schools in 2010 found that:

- 70% of schools had urinal blockages
- 65% of schools toilets had lime scale build up
- 30% of schools do not ensure colour coded cloths to avoid cross- contamination across areas
- 35% of schools do not regularly deep clean their washrooms
- 35% of schools do not have written infection control procedures in place
- 30% of schools had not conducted a legionella risk assessment in the last 24 months
- 40% of schools had no soap at the wash basins
- 60% of schools do not proactively encourage and educate hand washing

A lesson from the E. coli outbreak in Wales

The report into the September 2005 E-Coli outbreak in South Wales that affected 42 schools, left 28 children hospitalised and killed 5 year-old school boy Mason Jones, found that hygiene standards were 'below what was required to prevent disease transmission.'

During the period after the outbreak it was confirmed that standards in schools were variable. There was a lack of focus and leadership in many schools – no one took sufficient interest in or responsibility for the toilets. In some instances:

- Facilities were found to be defective with hot water supplies absent, supplies of toilet paper, soap or hand drying facilities insufficient or absent and facilities damaged or not working.
- Cleaning was ineffective due to lack of training, clarity, chemical cleaning products or human resources.
- Secondary schools toilets that did not contract with the authority-appointed contractor particularly revealed "extremely poor practices that needed to be challenged". For example, there was no colour coding of buckets, cloths and cleaning equipment to differentiate uses such as toilets, sinks, and floors.

Among the recommendations was one to local authorities that all school Governing Bodies should review their regimes for cleaning toilet facilities for pupils. The Welsh Assembly Government has now produced a Best Practice Guidance for Primary and Secondary Schools in Wales. Welsh school inspectors (Estyn) also reported that toilets in half of secondary schools and a quarter of primary schools inspected in Wales were dirty or unacceptable.

A 10 point hygiene improvement plan for schools

Concentrate on high risk communal areas, starting with the toilet and washroom areas, and educate children to clean and dry their hands effectively and particularly after visiting the toilet and before eating. These measures will go a long way towards preventing the person-to-person spread of infections and keeping pupils and staff healthy.

Viruses, germs and bacteria also cause the bad smells associated with unhygienic toilets and washrooms. Our perception of cleanliness is largely through smell.

The Bog-Standard 10 point plan for schools is based on the essential elements of proactive hygiene education, effective management and whole school involvement:

1. Appoint a named and committed person responsible for the upkeep and hygiene of the toilets, ideally from the senior management team or board of governors
2. Ensure toilet standards, hygiene and management are reported and discussed at relevant meetings e.g. Governors' meetings with a statement included in the School Governors Annual Report; staff, school council, PTA meetings; include toilets in newsletters
3. Ensure a healthy budget allocation for toilet repairs, maintenance and cleaning and a rolling programme of toilet renovations and upgrades. Eliminate potential hot spots for germs by upgrading to touch-free, sensor-operated flushes, soap dispensers, taps and toilet lids
4. Ensure daily supervision of cleaning and maintenance and ensure cleaning staff are trained, motivated and their cleaning is visible to pupils during the day
5. Establish a simple procedure for pupils to report deficiencies or problems with the toilets and act on these promptly
6. Keep hand washing and drying facilities in good working order and re-stocked throughout the day
7. Clean toilets thoroughly at the end of each day, and similarly at least one additional clean during the day in between peak periods of use
8. Regularly provide education and visual reminders for pupils and staff to wash and dry their hands properly
9. Remind parents of incubation periods for ill children
10. Ensure no drinking water supplies are located within toilet areas

School nurses are increasingly stretched and often have responsibilities over several schools, but might be well-placed to offer advice or support on these matters.

Hand hygiene

Hand hygiene is massively important in reducing rates of contracting and spreading infections. We talk about hand hygiene to mean both washing and drying the hands because just washing your hands is not enough. But to wash their hands, pupils first need the right facilities and we provide a checklist and guidelines on hand drying facilities and hand sanitizing gels/foams.

Given that E.Coli 0157 causes diarrhoea and can be spread by person-to-person by faecal/oral contact, the importance of schools having in place adequate toilet and hand washing facilities and hygienic practices for pupils and staff is obvious.

The Public Inquiry into the September 2005 E.coli outbreak in South Wales that affected 42 schools, left 28 children hospitalised and killed 5 year-old school boy Mason Jones

Schools have an important role to play in teaching and encouraging proper hand washing from an early age. Handwashing habits learnt at school can last a lifetime.

Inadequate provision of hand hygiene facilities does nothing to encourage children to follow good practice. In many cases, the spread of infections in schools is thought to be related to the poor conditions of the toilet and washroom facilities. Lack of adequate handwashing and drying facilities or lack of time is cited by most children as a reason for not washing their hands.

That's why schools need to review their toilets and wash hand areas in terms of layout and design, the right fixtures and fittings, and making them safer and easier to use and clean while reducing the potential for contracting and spreading germs.

Hand washing

Handwashing is one of the most important ways of preventing contracting and spreading diseases and common infections like food poisoning and diarrhoea.

Our hands may look clean but that doesn't mean they are. As they touch people, surfaces and objects throughout the day, they pick up a lot of dirt and germs (bacteria, fungi and viruses) which we spread to other places and people. In turn, we can infect ourselves and make ourselves ill with these germs by touching our eyes, nose or mouth so that they pass into our body.

But first, pupils need the basics of warm running water, soap and hand drying facilities.

Facilities must be effective, easy and quick to use, clean, and ideally attractive. Otherwise children will walk away!

Hand sanitiser gels/foams

Fear of infection outbreaks in schools has encouraged the use of hand sanitiser gels or foams. This is due, in part, to time constraints, lack of facilities for conventional handwashing, and hand-drying facilities not sited adjacent to eating areas. In most medium to large schools it is simply not feasible for all the pupils to wash their hands before eating, however desirable that might be.

Hand sanitisers don't require water so are a good and quicker alternative to soap and water, and serve when soap and water isn't available.

Hand sanitisers are a useful addition to soap and water in schools. Floor mounted or wall mounted dispensers can be sited in sufficient numbers at the entrance to eating areas and outside toilets where pupils have to touch a door handle to exit (and consequently may pick up and transfer contamination). They may also be useful in teaching areas.

However hand sanitisers are not appropriate for use when hands are visibly dirty or have touched blood as they do not remove organic material. But they do disinfect clean-looking hands, helping to prevent transmission of infectious microorganisms. They require an on-going budget allocation and regular encouragement, without which their use may decline. A member of staff posted by the dispensers outside the dining hall to remind pupils to use them will help compliance; this can be done after initial installation and then periodically.

Sanitisers are simple to use:

- Apply enough of the product to the palm of the hand to wet hands completely
- Rub hands together, covering all surfaces, for up to 25 seconds or until they're dry

There has been debate over which is better, alcohol-based or alcohol-free hand sanitisers. In the past, alcohol-free hand sanitisers tended to significantly under-perform alcohol or alcohol rubs as germ killers in clinical studies. More recently, advanced formulations have been developed, some of which have been shown to out-perform alcohol. Alcohol has also been found to decrease in efficacy after repeated use.

George Watson's College in Edinburgh introduced gel sanitisers in key parts of the school to prevent the winter vomiting bug. Gareth Edwards, school principal, explained that the measure was introduced in response to fears that the virulent virus would affect school attendance.

"We thought we would need to do something so we got together - nurses, cleaners and teaching staff - and came up with this solution of putting sanitising gel dispensers around the school, especially on the way to the refectory where the children are going to eat. It's a low cost option, it seems to be a common sense solution and we have seen a decline in the number of children being off school with infections and bugs."

Everyone was gradually getting into the habit of using the dispensers regularly, he added, and pupils said they found them convenient and easy to use.

Checklist for schools:

- Washbasins and hand drying facilities are adjacent to all toilets and urinals
- These are accessible throughout the school day
- All are kept clean and in working order
- Every wash basin has hot and cold running water. A mixer tap is preferable. Water should be set at a safe temperature (maximum 41⁰C). Advice should be taken to avoid legionella.
- If push taps are used, they are easy to operate and stay on long enough for pupils to wash their hands properly
- Liquid or foam soap dispensers should be wall mounted and within arm's reach: usually a minimum of one per two washbasins
- Bars of soap are best avoided as they can spread germs from one person to another
- Soap dispensers should be replenished as needed and cleaned between refills (not simply topped up). Cartridge disposable refills are considered more hygienic. Dispensers should be non-drip
- Hand drying facilities are provided in sufficient numbers and adjacent to basins to facilitate and encourage pupils to dry their hands
- If disposable paper towels are used, they are provided in wall-mounted dispensers and replenished throughout the day
- Lidded general waste bins are provided (ideally foot-operated if free-standing) and emptied at least daily
- Sanitary disposal units are provided for girls aged 8 and over within individual cubicles and are emptied and sanitised sufficiently often, by a registered company to prevent them becoming over-full or malodorous. Disposal bags or absorbent toilet paper are available within cubicles for girls to wrap used sanitary products in prior to disposal.
- Hand washing notices are displayed
- Drinking water supplies of any sort are not located in toilet and washroom areas

Comments from other Head Teachers on installing new toilets in their schools...

They cost a lot to install but we've saved a fortune on water because the boys toilets don't flush all the time & taps can't be left running because everything is automatic. It's the best thing we did!

I feel school toilets are very important. We have installed two sets of "open-access" toilets, designed with input from the school council, and following a template used successfully in a number of new-build schools. Separate and completely private boys and girls cubicles are arranged around an open communal wash area. They are already proving popular with our younger students in particular. There are five remaining sets of old-style toilets around the school for students who prefer to use them.

Since having the new toilets installed, children are no longer scared to use the toilets, even if there was nothing scary in the toilets before, children didn't want to use them for fear of what might be there. The new open plan design, means children feel safer & use the toilets happily.

School toilet policy

While some teachers may feel a formalised policy is unnecessary, a written school toilet policy is a powerful indication to children and parents that teachers value and respect the welfare of their pupils. A policy enables a school to develop and maintain a shared philosophy and co-ordinated approach to their school toilets and when pupils are allowed to use them. It encourages schools to audit the toilets properly and to take into account the needs of pupils. It also pays dividends to actively involve the pupils in establishing and implementing a policy.

For the policy to be effective, it is advisable that the policy be approved by pupils and governors, communicated to the whole school and reviewed yearly.

(The following 2 pages show a sample School Toilet Policy from the Bog-Standard Campaign).

Sample School Toilet Policy



School name:

Date of policy implementation:

Date of next review:

The named persons for drawing up and leading the review of this policy are:

.....

This document is freely available to the entire school community. It has been approved by the school governors and pupils, and made available in the school newsletter, website and prospectus.

Aims

To maximise access to pupils' toilet facilities during the day to promote the health, wellbeing and learning opportunities of all pupils.

To provide good quality toilet facilities throughout the school.

Rationale: Why we are writing this policy?

The school recognises that well-maintained toilet facilities where pupils feel comfortable and safe and have open access to throughout the school day, are essential for health, wellbeing, and learning.

We value and respect our pupils and want them to be able to benefit from good provision and practice.

Objectives: What do we want to achieve?

To ensure that this policy is both accepted and upheld by the whole school community - school management, staff, pupils, governors, parents, site manager, cleaning and ancillary staff.

To keep all toilets open and available to pupils throughout the school day. While pupils can use toilet facilities at break and lunchtimes if they need to, we ensure pupils have access at all times. We recognise that toilet needs are highly individual and do not conform to regimental timetables. At secondary level, to cut down on the need for pupils to leave lessons, we will provide regular and frequent enough toilet breaks (every 45 – 60 minutes). We recognize that some pupils only feel comfortable going to the toilet when others are not around and will allow children to quietly sign in and out of class to use the toilet without adverse comment.

- To ensure that the toilet and washroom facilities are suitable for the range of anticipated users, including pupils with disabilities and special needs, with adequate lighting, fixtures and fittings.
- To ensure the toilet and washroom facilities cater for the needs of all pupils from ethnic and religious communities, and ensure these needs are met in a sensitive, informed and appropriate manner.
- To ensure that the toilet facilities provide visual and aural privacy for users, ensuring a spare supply of cubicle door locks.
- To ensure that all toilet areas have properly maintained supplies at all times of warm and cold water, soap, hand drying facilities and toilet tissue in dispensers, provided at a convenient height.
- To ensure sanitary disposal units in all female cubicles (for girls aged eight and over), serviced on a regular basis and to provide sanitary dispensers in female toilet blocks (where applicable).
- To implement and maintain an effective toilet cleaning, supervision and inspection regime to ensure proper standards of provision and cleanliness, throughout the school day.
- To locate drinking water supplies and outlets in safe and appropriate locations, and not in toilet areas.
- To supervise the toilets at break and lunchtimes, if pupils perceive the need. If pupils assume this role, we will train and supervise them to ensure they carry out their duties correctly and do not restrict fellow pupils from using the toilets as and when they need to.
- To actively seek the views of the whole school community in relation to any concerns about toilet provision and access issues (ensuring a child friendly procedure for pupils to report deficiencies or problems) and to respond seriously to these and deal promptly with any problems highlighted by the pupils.
- To actively consult and involve the pupils in managing the toilets (via the School Council or establish a working group).
- To encourage pupils to respect the toilets and each other (via the School Council, in PSHCE lessons, in form-teacher discussion times, in the Social, Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) programme) and for pupils to establish a Pupil Code of Conduct in toilets and washrooms.
- To regularly include toilet management issues in all appropriate School Council, staff, parent and governor meetings.
- To provide indoor social areas to discourage toilets from being used for such purposes.
- To implement and maintain annual reviews of the policy to monitor that it is being adhered to and remains relevant.

Notes

This policy document was produced in consultation with pupils, parents, school staff, governors and the school nurse.

The school actively supports the provision of open access to well-maintained, clean, private and safe toilet facilities throughout the school day.

Funding help

- Appeal for sponsorship to fund refurbishments from local businesses through an open letter to readers in your local paper or approach businesses directly.
- Invite sponsorship of a full-time toilet supervisor and cleaner. Write an open letter to readers in your local paper or approach businesses directly.
- Look at any funding opportunities available through the LEA or from the government.
- We can come up with school fund raising ideas where pupils can get involved in raising money too, e.g. non-uniform days etc.
- For more ideas, have a look at the funding and fundraising factsheet on www.bog-standard.org

Useful websites:



www.bog-standard.org

Bog Standard is a campaign to promote better toilets for pupils.

Their 3 aims are:

To increase awareness of the health benefits of better toilets for pupils

To encourage schools to improve the condition of pupils' toilets and to allow pupils to use them when they need to

To get laws that will make pupils' toilets nicer to use

School toilets affect children's physical and psychological health. Toilets which are unpleasant, or out of bounds, can cause serious, long-term health problems.

www.schooltoilets.co.uk

www.venesta.co.uk/school-toilet-cubicles/

www.armitage-shanks.co.uk/brochures (they have a School Solutions brochure to view or download)

www.britloos.co.uk

www.lanservicesltd.co.uk/sectors/school-toilets

www.eric.org.uk

www.bog-standard.org/award_entry.php