



# Physical Disability Outreach Support Team



## Helping Children and Young People with Bladder and Bowel Difficulties

### Background information

There are many reasons for a child or young person having bladder and bowel difficulties. Among these are:

• immaturity of development	• kidney problems/dialysis
• Spina Bifida	• constipation
• Cerebral Palsy	• urinary tract infection
• Muscular Dystrophy	• use of overnight feeding
• Hirschsprungs Disease	• perforated bowel
• colostomy	• emotional problems-early signs of physical abuse

Further professional advice relating to such individual conditions must be sought from the relevant NHS professionals.

### Whole school implications

***All staff need to be aware of a child or young person with continence issues, and their personal care plan. (a suggested format for a person care plan is enclosed).***

- **understanding, discretion and sensitivity** need to be exercised by all persons in contact with the child or young person. Home background and culture need to be taken into consideration. Support for the family is essential.
- adequate facilities with hot and cold running water for handwashing for adult and child or young person are essential.
- staff are recommended to use disposable latex gloves for any procedures involving bodily spillages and wear disposable aprons as appropriate.
- Plastic sacks/bags will be necessary.

### Managing the condition

- A child or young person with any of the more serious conditions described above usually receive support from health service personnel such as stoma nurses, genito-urinary nurses, community paediatric nurses, bladder and bowel services, dialysis teams etc.
- ask the parent/s for advice and the names of contacts. Schools should seek contact with these specialists, via their own school nurse.



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- for children and young people with continence difficulties which may arise with no associated medical condition, advice should be sought from the school nurse who can advise on bladder and bowel care.
- medication for constipation will often result in very loose stools: talk to parents/carers regarding the optimum timing for medication.

## Access, organisation and resources

- if at all possible base the child or young person in a classroom that is convenient to the toilets or BMA;
- you may need to use a separate toilet to ensure privacy for the child or young person;
- any of the following may improve access: adaptations, provision of changing mat/table, installation of grab rails, step up to the toilet, easy to operate locks on toilet doors, position of toilet roll;
- a secure cupboard is required for storing medical supplies for certain procedures;
- a spare set of clothes;
- plastic bags for sending home soiled clothing;
- gloves, aprons and antiseptic cleaner are essentials. Milton, bowl/bucket, paper roll for cleansing and clearing up will also be needed;
- Accessible basin with hot and cold water, soap, towels, hand drier within reach for the child or young person. Are lever taps required?

## Implications for PE

- some children and young people with kidney disease may have a 'line' in for dialysis. Care should be taken that this is not knocked –seek medical advice on the management of such lines;
- clothing for PE should be discrete;
- privacy for changing should be considered where necessary;
- seek advice from parents/carers and medical personnel with regard to swimming.

## Working with parents and carers

- **parents/carers should be involved at every stage when planning the personal care plan. Two-way communication is vital;**
- joint planning of toilet training programmes, based on the person care plan is crucial for success;
- liaise with parents or carers to ensure continuity of supplies of continence aids to school if these are required;
- look out for tell-tale signs of urinary infection: temperature, frequent visits to the toilet, pain on urination, drowsiness, discoloured urine, urine with a 'fishy' odour;



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- it is important to maintain the child's or young person's self-image and social standing within the peer group through sensitive handling and discretion. There may be teasing/bullying, particularly if there is an issue of odour.



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## The Person Care Plan

Consider the following:

How will the situation be managed:

- on home-school transport?
- on school trips?
- sports day/school plays?
- swimming?
- what if the child or young person arrives at school soiled?
- who is to cover if the TA is absent? Have they had relevant training?
- who will help if there is no TA?
- are spare clothes available in school?

## Classroom management and organisation

- adaptations to toilets, equipment needed and management strategies will vary according to the individual needs of each child or young person;
- consider where the child or young person sit in class in relation to the door if frequent visits to the toilet are needed;
- when regrouping children or young people for different activities, such as story time, think about the best place for the child or young person who may 'spring a leak' to sit. Is a plastic chair better than the carpet? Are individual carpet squares easy to clean or dispose of if necessary?
- the child or young person should be allowed to leave the class to use the toilet with no fuss. Avoid causing embarrassment, avoid making the child or young person 'hang on';
- if a child or young person has a set time for toilet management routines (like dialysis, catheterisation), they may be missing the same subject all year. What can be done to avoid this?
- physical activity such a PE can often result in an accident. Maybe it is a good idea to go to the toilet before the session.

## Implications for learning

*These are not always immediately obvious. Consider:*

- It is difficult to sit still if you need to go to the toilet;
- a child or young person with continence difficulties may be experiencing tummy pain and discomfort;
- concentration and general well-being could be affected as a result of the problem;
- it may be necessary to monitor fluid intake, or indeed, give extra fluids.



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## COMPLETE THIS FORM WITH DETAILS OF OTHER AGENCIES INVOLVED

NAME, ROLE	CONTACT ADDRESS
Outreach Service	PD Support Team Regency High School Carnforth Drive Warndon WORCS WR4 9JL Tel: 01905 456602
Parents/Carers	
School Nurse	
Bladder and Bowel Advisory Service	
Physiotherapist	
Occupational Therapist	
Hospital Consultants	
GP	