

This document is for all Early Years providers in Suffolk, including Childminders, those working in private, voluntary, independent and maintained early years and childcare settings (including out of school provision and nursery classes in schools).

Aim

The aim of this guidance is to promote inclusive practice in developing and supporting children's intimate care skills and ensuring that the toileting needs of all children in Suffolk are met appropriately and with sensitivity. We encourage the use of this guidance to support those providing personal care for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, with the aim of ensuring access to quality early education for all children.

Background

- Contenance is a developmental milestone, and children develop these skills at different times. By age 3, 9 out of 10 children are dry most days; however, toileting accidents are very common. By age 4, most children are reliably dry during the day. [How to potty train - NHS](#)
- It is common for children to regress even after being clean and dry for a while. A change in routine such as starting Nursery can be a trigger.
- Almost all children can learn to be clean and dry. Delayed continence is not necessarily linked with SEND. However, children with SEND including delayed development and physical disabilities may take longer and require more support.
- Evidence suggests that toilet training is happening at a later age and developmental stage than in previous generations due to environmental, cultural and social changes [Managing bowel and bladder issues in nursery, school and college - ERIC](#)

The Rights of Children and Parents/Carers

All children are entitled to...

- Be included and welcomed into an Early Years setting, whether they are toilet trained or not.
- Have their needs respected and met by people they are familiar with and trust.
- Be supported in age/stage appropriate ways to gain independence in self-care skills.
- Be included in decisions concerning their personal care needs.
- Have their toileting needs and/or need for nappy changes responded to in a sensitive way without unnecessary delay.

All parents/carers are entitled to...

- Be consulted about how their child's needs are met and have their own cultural expectations around toileting valued.
- Have information as to how their child's toileting needs will be met shared with them.
- Be signposted to support in managing their child's individual toileting needs.

Admissions

It is unacceptable to refuse admission to children who are wearing nappies or are delayed in achieving continence. In Suffolk we strive to ensure that every child has access to quality early years care, play and learning experiences.

With the introduction of the expanded funding entitlements, more young children have access to early years provision than before, and we are seeing an increase in the number of children with SEND attending our mainstream settings. Subsequently, providing intimate care and supporting children's toileting have become a key responsibility for all those working within the Early Years Foundation Stage. Providers have an obligation to meet the needs of the children wearing nappies and those with 'delayed' continence in the same way as they would meet the individual needs of any other child. Children must not be excluded from a setting (or from any activity, experience or opportunity) because they are not toilet trained.

Refusing to admit a child because of their incontinence is likely to be viewed as discriminatory, and the Early Years and Childcare Service will actively challenge admission being refused to children who are wearing nappies and/or are delayed in achieving continence.

The Equality Act (2010): *what are your responsibilities and duties when it comes to nappies and incontinence?*

- The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (DDA) is now incorporated into the Equality Act (2010) however the requirements detailed below remain appropriate.
- The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (DDA) requires all education providers to reexamine all policies, consider the implications of the Act for practice and revise their current arrangements. Schools and settings must make sure that they provide an accessible toileting facility if this has not previously been available.
- 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. In 2002 the SEN and Disability Act extended disability discrimination duties to schools. If the need for nappies were linked to a child's disability, then excluding a child would be discriminatory practice. It is clear therefore that anyone with a named condition that affects aspects of personal development must not be discriminated against.
- It is also unacceptable to refuse admission to other children who are delayed in achieving continence.
- Admission policies that set out a "blanket standard of continence, or any other aspect of development" for children is discriminatory and therefore unlawful under the Act.
- Asking parents to come and change their child could be challenged as being in direct contravention of the Equalities Act.
- Children must not be excluded from normal early years activities solely because of incontinence. Any admission 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 must be dealt with on an individual basis and settings/schools are expected to make reasonable adjustments to meet the needs of each child.

This guidance is based upon best practice and draws on information from the Equality Act (2010) and the DfE document "Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions" (December 2015).

Health, Safety and Hygiene

Dealing with 'accidents'

It is to be expected that some children across the Early Years Foundation Stage (and beyond) will be wearing nappies or have toileting accidents occasionally.

Requesting that parents come into the setting to change their child is unacceptable (unless parents have requested such an arrangement) and, in some cases, is likely to be a direct contravention of the Equality Act. All settings and schools should have a statement of the procedures the setting/school will follow in case a child accidentally wets or soils themselves or is sick while on the premises. The same precautions will apply for nappy changing.

- The child's right to privacy and dignity is paramount. *Consider staff reactions to accidents, are they dealt with sensitivity and with understanding?*
- There should be no unnecessary delay in changing the child's soiled clothing or supporting the child to change themselves. *Are children who have accidents responded to it as soon as practically possible? Are they asked to wait for extended periods of time?*
- Soiled clothing belonging to the child should be double bagged and returned to parents. *Consider where you store soiled clothing until the child leaves the setting, obviously storing or returning bags of soiled clothing alongside children's belongings may cause embarrassment for the child/parent and may be a contamination risk.*
- Staff dealing with accidents must wear disposable aprons and gloves. 'Accident' areas must be cleaned and sanitized using appropriate materials to avoid cross contamination.

Nappy Changing

- Nappy changing should be a positive experience for children, where interactions are sensitive and supportive.
- Staff changing nappies must wear disposable aprons and gloves – changing these after each nappy change.
- Soiled nappies should be double wrapped and placed in a suitable bin – they should not be returned to parents for them to dispose of.
- Changing mats/units must be cleaned and sanitized after nappy changing.

- Staff should wash their hands thoroughly after changing a child's nappy – children should be encouraged to wash their hands also.
- There should be no unnecessary delay in changing a child's nappy if soiled or uncomfortably full.
- It is recommended that nappy changes are documented on a written record.

Reusable Nappies and Wipes

Some parents may choose to send reusable nappies and/or wipes in for their child. Their views and preferences should be respected, and adaptations may need to be made to your policies and every-day procedures.

Things to consider:

- Ask parents for a demonstration (or link to an online video) on how to change their choice of reusable nappy.
- Agree how you will return soiled/wet nappies and used wet cloths at the end of their child's day.
- How many nappies/wipes and other supplies such as 'wet bags' will be provided?
- Agree on whether 'liners' will be provided (sole use or washable)?
- Establish a plan for nap time and agree whether 'booster pads' will be used during nap times.

Handling Used Nappies at Nursery:

- For soiled nappies, you will need to agree with parents on either packing everything up in the nappy wet bag to deal with at home or disposing of the solids in the toilet before placing the nappy in the provided 'wet bag.'
- If 'liners' are provided to use in nappies, parents may be happy for you to dispose of the liner (and contents) or keep the liner inside the nappy for you to deal with at home.
- If the nappy is only wet with urine, you should be able to place the wet nappy directly into the 'wet bag.'

Staff Considerations

Deployment

It may be necessary to consider the deployment of staff and the introduction of routines for a child who needs changing on a regular basis. Settings/schools are used to organising staff to deal with toileting accidents, so these procedures can be adapted to accommodate changing a child with a soiled or wet nappy.

It is not typically necessary for more than one member of staff to change a child's nappy. Within a school, senior leaders should ensure that resources are allocated from the school's delegated SEN budget to ensure that the children's individual needs are met.

Job Descriptions

Roles of existing staff may need to be clarified regarding personal care. Tasks relating to 'providing intimate and personal care to promote independent toileting and other self-care skills' should be included, where appropriate, when reviewing job descriptions and recruiting new colleagues.

Safeguarding

Typically, nappy changing and supporting a child to access the toilet, should not raise child protection concerns, and there are no regulations that stipulate that a second member of staff must be available to supervise. Safer recruitment processes ensure the suitability of staff employed in childcare and education settings.

However, in some circumstances it may be appropriate for a second staff member to be present when changing a child's nappy/supporting toileting:

- If there is a known risk of false allegation by a child, then a single practitioner should not undertake nappy changing.
- A student on placement should not change nappies unsupervised.
- An employee whose DBS has not yet been returned must not undertake nappy changing or toileting tasks.

All staff must be aware of the procedures to follow if a complaint is made against a member of staff and be familiar with the signs of abuse and neglect.

Facilities

What does the EYFS say about nappy changing facilities?

Providers must ensure that 'there are suitable hygienic changing facilities for changing any children who are in nappies' (3.71 EYFS, 2021).

It may not be possible to provide a 'purpose-built' changing area, if this is the case a changing mat or unit placed in an existing space is acceptable. You will need to consider how you ensure children's privacy and dignity if you do not have access to a designated, purpose-built changing room or space. You must ensure that the area and equipment you are using are fully risk assessed. It is the settings responsibility to make appropriate arrangements for the safe and hygienic disposal of soiled nappies. It is not acceptable practice to return soiled nappies to the parent/carer at the end of the session as this could be seen as being both unhygienic and discriminatory.

Policies and Guidelines for Staff – *ensuring a consistent approach a consistent approach and providing a positive experience for children.*

- Who will change the nappy/support toileting with the child?
- Where will nappy changing/managing accidents take place?
- How will the child's dignity and right to privacy be promoted?
- How can independence be encouraged?
- How will you manage children's refusals to be changed?
- Where and how will nappies be disposed of?
- How will bodily fluid spillages be managed in a safe and hygienic way?
- What measures are in place to minimise risk of infection in changing areas?
- How will concerns around changing and toileting be shared with parents?
- Who will be responsible for checking for accidents/when nappies need changing?

Working in Partnership with Parents

To assume that a child has not achieved continence by a specific age because of parenting is not helpful and is likely to hinder your relationship with parents. Parents are more likely to be open about their concerns about their child's toileting if they are confident that their child (and their parenting) are not going to be judged.

A consistent approach is key. A home-setting/school agreement which defines responsibilities and expectations could be useful in supporting this. This agreement could include:

- Parent changing nappies prior to arriving at the setting.
- A minimum change policy per session for the setting.
- Parent providing nappies, wipes, bags and changes of clothing.
- Setting agreeing to regularly 'check' for accidents or if nappies require changing.

Key 'Take-aways'

- Settings and Schools must not discriminate against or disadvantage children with SEND. It is not acceptable for a provider to refuse or delay admission to children who have yet to achieve continence.
- Check your policies: The Equalities Act (2010) stipulates that "Any admission policy that sets a blanket standard of continence, or any other aspect of development, for all child is discriminatory and therefore unlawful under the Act".
- It is against statutory regulations to ask parents to come into a setting or school to change their child.
- Leaving a child in a soiled nappy for any length of time or waiting for the parent to return to change the child, could be considered abusive.
- Typically, nappy changing and supporting toileting does not require more than one adult to complete *
- Providers should work together with parents and devise an Individual Health Care Plan to support a child's toilet training journey, if appropriate.

Useful Links and Further information

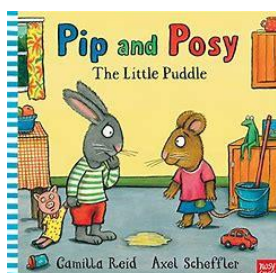
- Guide for Early Years providers and Schools [Potty training at nursery and school - ERIC](#)
- Extensive guidance around managing incontinence in nurseries, colleges and schools [Managing bowel and bladder issues in nursery, school and college - ERIC](#)
- Toilet Training for children with Additional Needs [Potty training children with additional needs - ERIC](#)

Intimate Care and Toileting in Early Years Foundation Stage Settings Summary Guidance

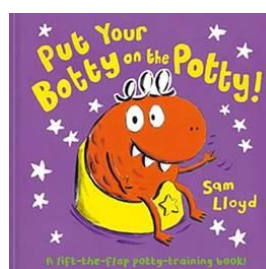
- Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions Statutory guidance for governing bodies of maintained schools and proprietors of academies in England. [Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school - GOV.UK](#)
- Health protection in children and young people settings, including education contains detailed information that is a useful resource in this context for settings and schools. [Health protection in children and young people settings, including education - GOV.UK](#)
- Bladder & Bowel UK – information and guidance, including a sample intimate care policy, school toilet charter and sample care plan [Children – Bladder & Bowel UK](#)

Books for children which support their toilet training journey

[Books for potty training | BookTrust](#)



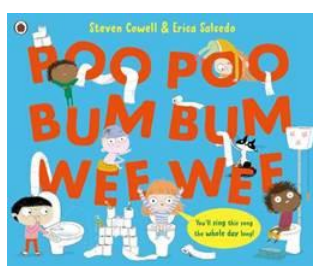
Pip and Posy; The Little Puddle



Put your Botty on the Potty!



I need a Wee!



Poo Poo, Bum Bum, Wee Wee



Poo in the Zoo



Meekoo and the big read potty

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