

West Common Lane Teaching Practice



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Ashby Clinic and Children's Centre
Collum Lane
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Partners: Dr K J Hall MBBS, MRCP, Dr L Thomas MBBS, MRCP⁽²⁰¹⁷⁾

Salaried GPs: Dr A W Lee MBChB, MSc, DPhil & Dr S Baddipudi, MBBS & Dr L Green MBChB, MRCP

Practice Manager: Mrs. A Taylor

To whom it may concern,

Parents have been instructed to provide a medical letter in order that their child be able to receive a toilet pass to access the toilet as needed.

It appears that the school has adopted a policy that a doctor's note is required in order to allow the provision of a toilet pass, without any consultation with local GP surgeries.

Access to safe, timely and appropriate personal hygiene is considered to be essential to human dignity. Indeed, the Human Rights Act specifies that the human right to sanitation entitles everyone, without discrimination, to have physical and affordable access to sanitation, in all spheres of life, that is safe, hygienic, secure, socially and culturally acceptable and that provides privacy and ensures dignity.

Whilst we accept that a small percentage of pupils may abuse their right to access personal hygiene, this is a discipline issue to be addressed by school in conjunction with the child and their guardians rather than a medical issue to be addressed by doctors. It is not an NHS matter to provide evidence of a child's lack of continence, urinary or faecal urgency or menstrual difficulties.

It is not dignified for a child to be singled out as having toileting difficulties and there are significant medical ramifications in either deliberately dehydrating to prevent the need for toilet use, or in withholding either stool or urine which can worsen continence issues. It is also detrimental to a young person's wellbeing to risk an episode of incontinence within the classroom or to prevent them accessing menstrual hygiene, leading to soiling. A recent study¹ concluded that young people with continence problems require unrestricted access to private and adequate toilet facilities during the school day. The study outlines there is a need for inclusive toilet access policies and improved toilet standards in schools, and notes that children with continence issues are at greater risk of not achieving their full academic potential.

Whether an individual child can delay their needs until the end of the lesson is a matter to be decided between the school, the child and their family.

We trust that in future, children attending your school will be permitted to use the toilet as needed.

Yours faithfully,

Drs Hall & Thomas

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¹Whale K, Cramer H, Joinson C. Left behind and left out: The impact of the school environment on young people with continence problems. *Br J Health Psychol*. 2018 May; 23(2): 253–277.