

Coping with bladder and bowel issues at school or college



Issues at school

Being at school or college can present challenges for teenagers with bladder and bowel issues. Many young people worry about how they will manage.

Schools and colleges have a duty to support you with any medical needs you may have. Bladder and bowel difficulties are medical needs. Therefore, school or college should provide support, adjustments or adaptations so that you are able to learn and take part in activities such as trips and sports.

Do I have to tell school or college about my bladder or bowel issue

It is up to you and your parents/carers whether you tell a teacher, pastoral lead, the SENCo (special educational needs co-ordinator), or your school nurse about your bladder and/or bowel issues. If school or college know, they should be able to provide some support that works for you.

I am moving to a new school or college

If you are moving to a new school or college, you or your parents/carers may get in touch before you go to arrange the support you may need. It is best if you do this early in the term before you are due to move, to have time to speak to the right person.

The school or college may be able to offer you a visit before you start to discuss your needs and how they can meet them. It may also help you to be able to see where you will be and find out about issues such as toilet access.

What support might school or college provide?

The support that can be provided will vary according to your needs and how the school or college is set up.

Schools and colleges may be able to provide you with a medical pass, that allows you out of lessons whenever you need to use the toilet. With the medical pass you should not have to explain to the teacher why you need to leave the classroom.

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You may be allowed to use the disabled toilet, if you need more space to change or clean yourself. The disabled toilet may also be more private, cleaner and better stocked with toilet paper and hand towels than other toilets.

You may be given a cupboard or locker to keep any supplies that you might need, such as clean clothes, wipes, bags, pads, catheters, stoma supplies etc. This may be in a disabled toilet or just near the toilets so that you can get anything you need, when you need it.

School or college may allow you to have a drink with you all the time and allow you to drink it whenever you need to.

You may be entitled to extra time in exams if you need to take toilet breaks. Ask about this well ahead of any exams as school or college may need to approach an external examining board about this.

School or college may be able to provide you with a [**care plan**](#) that is designed to meet your individual needs.

Information for school or college

Schools and colleges want to support teenagers to learn and make the most of the opportunities that they offer. However, they need information from you about your health condition and how that affects you to be able to provide the support you need. There is information written for schools and colleges about bladder and bowel issues, and the steps they should take and the ones that they must take in the guidance document [**Managing Bladder and Bowel Issues in Nurseries, Schools and Colleges**](#).

Further information

Find more information about bladder and bowel health in our information library at [**www.bbuk.org.uk**](http://www.bbuk.org.uk). You can also contact the [**Bladder & Bowel UK confidential helpline \(0161 214 4591\)**](#).

For further advice on bladder and bowel problems speak to your GP or other healthcare professional.