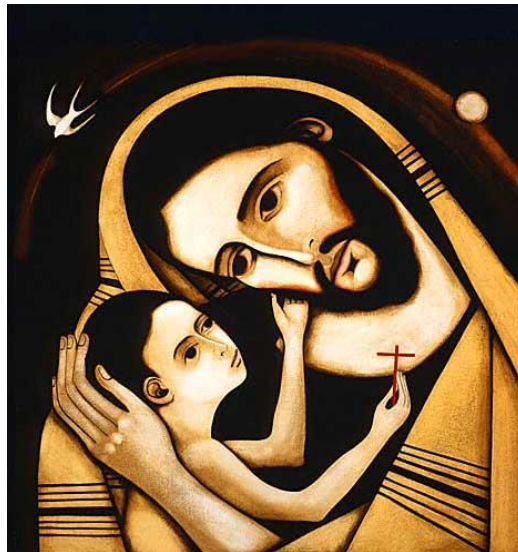




St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School Clydach



Toilet Policy

School Mission Statement

‘Together in Christ – Living, Learning and Growing.’

“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

Water and toilets

For children 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 the need first arises.

Children spend at least half their waking hours at school so how much they drink and how often they go to the toilet are important issues. Where children are provided with open access to fresh drinking water, inadequate fluid intake may be due, consciously or unconsciously, to toilet avoidance or inadequate opportunities to visit the toilets.

There are occasions when children will need to ‘hold on’ before they can visit the toilet, but repeated prolonged delays can cause distress and health problems. For some children any delay is impossible. Each child’s bladder and bowels are individual and their bladder and bowel capacity are very variable, function to their own timetable and will differ according to a multitude of variable factors.

A child’s timetable is therefore unlikely to conform to the school’s timetable, which may not be drawn up with the best interest of children’s need to have a drink or go to the toilet in mind. Pupils may not have the opportunity to go between each lesson and there may be long periods in the school day without a break. Exams can also be a problem, if pupils are not allowed to go to the toilet during an exam.

Pupils may also avoid emptying their bowels at school. This can be due to a lack of privacy, poor toilet conditions, and not enough time to use the toilet. Holding on can lead to constipation, which in turn can result in soiling.

Despite a lack of education about healthy toileting habits, some teachers are very understanding of the physiological needs of children and young people, and of the problems restricted toilet access can create. Others are unaware of, or unsympathetic to, the corresponding physical and psychological health risks. Many schools further exacerbate the toileting (and drinking) problems for pupils by reducing break and lunch times to a minimum to reduce the number of incidents in the playground.

Going to the toilet 'just in case'

There is a widespread expectation that children should go to the toilet at set times irrespective of whether the child needs to, in order to minimise disruption to lessons. It is all too easy to reprimand the child who needs to go during lesson time with "You should have gone at break!" However, having set times for access to the toilet can cause "I'll go 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. This results in a vicious circle. A child may consciously or unconsciously ration their fluid intake, or avoid drinking altogether, if they fear not being able to go to the toilet when they need to.

Incontinence means difficulties in controlling the bladder and bowel. Approximately three quarters of a million children in the UK aged between 5 and 16 suffer from incontinence. It is likely that at least two or three pupils in every class you teach at primary level will be experiencing continence difficulties – and one pupil in every two classes at secondary level. The emotional and psychological difficulties of incontinence can be devastating. Wetting your pants in class, for example, can be perceived as a major disaster and was highlighted in a study of children's feelings by children as one of the most stressful events that could happen in their lives, rating third after losing a parent and going blind.

Children with continence problems should be encouraged to make scheduled visits to the toilet, make full use of breaks to visit the toilet and may need to go as soon as they need to. They will need to be particularly mindful of drinking sufficiently and regularly. If a teacher has concerns, they can discuss these with the parent/carer and encourage them to seek help via the school nurse or GP. The doctor or nurse can

advise them and, if necessary, refer them onto the Community Paediatrician or children's continence service (if this exists in their area). [ERIC](#) can also provide information.

Good toileting practice - for children with continence problems:

1. This group of children should be encouraged to make full use of breaks to visit the toilet
2. They will need the opportunity to make scheduled (perhaps hourly) visits to the toilet
3. It is important for many of these children to sit down on the toilet and spend several minutes trying to make sure the bladder and bowels are completely empty
4. They should have the opportunity to visit the toilet in privacy
5. Many of these children will have a very short warning of the need to go and may need to go frequently, even if they have just been. They should be allowed to leave the class to visit the toilet immediately, without fuss, and without having to wait for permission. Avoid causing embarrassment or making the child 'hang on'
6. Consider where the pupils sit in class in relation to the door and when regrouping pupils for different activities
7. In order to develop their bladder capacity and to help avoid constipation and soiling problems, it is important they drink water regularly throughout the school day

Good toileting practice - for children without continence problems:

1. Most children should be encouraged to only go to the toilet when they feel the need to go
2. Should not be taught to go 'just in case'
3. Should not be subject to prolonged delays before going
4. Should be able to go to the toilet without adverse comment or restriction
5. Should have open access to toilets when the need arises
6. Should have the opportunity to visit the toilet in privacy
7. Should be encouraged to drink water regularly throughout the school day

A few children can develop a sudden problem of needing to go to the toilet frequently and urgently, up to several times in an hour. This condition, which mostly affects young boys, is known as Frequency-Urgency Syndrome. It tends to get better on its own and, if treated sympathetically, will usually settle down within a few weeks. However, for some children, it may last for up to a year or longer.

There are many factors that may influence bladder function, such as anxiety, diet, caffeine consumption, and going from somewhere warm out into the cold. It is worth noting that almost everyone needs the toilet if they become emotionally upset.

Aims of this policy

- 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. We recognize that some

pupils only feel comfortable going to the toilet when others are not around and will allow children to quietly go 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 privacy for users.
- 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 provided at a convenient height.
- To ensure sanitary disposal units are available in the ladies staff toilet and these are made available for all female pupils who need them.
- To implement and maintain an effective toilet cleaning, supervision and inspection regime to ensure proper standards of provision and cleanliness.
- 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 outdoor 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.