

For immediate release

**Best practice guidance document for managing continence problems in nurseries, schools and colleges across the UK is launched.**

**\*\*8 October 2019\*\*** In response to requests from families, schools and health care professionals, the charities Bladder & Bowel UK and ERIC, The Children's Bowel & Bladder Charity, have teamed up to produce comprehensive, practical information for educational establishments regarding bladder and bowel issues and toileting in schools.

Available as a free downloadable resource and supported by [a short film](#), *Managing Bladder and Bowel Issues in Nurseries, Schools and Colleges* provides much needed clear, concise guidance for school leaders, proprietors, governors, staff and practitioners.

Topics covered include:

- How to promote good bladder and bowel health in schools
- Hygiene standards / provision of school toilets
- Managing incontinence in schools
- National legislation for the four countries of the UK
- Safeguarding
- Continence policy and care plans (sample policy and plan are provided)

Continence conditions are among the most common health issues affecting children and young people - in excess of 900,000 children in the UK suffer bowel and bladder difficulties. Growing numbers of children are also starting school still wearing nappies – an issue placing a huge burden on teachers both in time and resources. Some parents report that being repeatedly called into school to change their child after a wetting or soiling accident has left them unable to work.

The impact can be profound on a child or young person's life. Bladder and bowel difficulties are associated with stigma, embarrassment and shame; they cause avoidance of school trips and sleepovers; they impact social interactions, wellbeing, educational attainment and progress.

*"I can't remember a time I wasn't bullied because of my wetting problem. At junior school I would have regular accidents and be taunted constantly in the playground for 'smelling like fish'. I didn't have any friends. I always wanted to sit inside at break to avoid the bullies". Beccie*

Welcoming the document, Sharon White, OBE and CEO of School and Public Health Nurses Association says: "This guidance not only helps us better understand the key and far-reaching role that education has to play in better managing continence issues, but also highlights the critical interface and role of health such as school nurses, paediatricians, continence services, and other agencies, including the children and young people themselves.

Educational attendance, attainment and health are intrinsically linked. Therefore, the more we can do to minimise the negative impact on a pupil's health and well-being, the more likely they are to flourish and grow."

Lead author and specialist children's bladder and bowel nurse, Davina Richardson says: "Our respective helplines hear daily from families who are left with feelings of despair due to struggling alone with the burdens of disturbed sleep, constant washing and having to take unplanned time off work due to the unpredictability of soiling and/or wetting 'accidents'. Against this background, many families find it difficult to ask for help. If they

are met with a lack of understanding or inappropriate response from health services, nursery, school or college their problems are compounded.”

Juliette Randall, CEO of ERIC says: “We hope this guidance will raise awareness of the prevalence and range of different continence conditions, encourage positive action between school and home whilst providing information and strategies for preventing and managing bladder and bowel conditions in educational settings.”

This guidance has been endorsed by the following organisations; The Association of Continence Advisors (ACA), The Paediatric Continence Forum and the National Association for Primary Education (NAPE).

## **ENDS**

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## **Resources:**

- Managing Bladder and Bowel Issues in Nurseries, Schools and Colleges (PDF) and accompanying documents can be downloaded from [www.eric.org.uk/help-at-school](http://www.eric.org.uk/help-at-school) and [www.bbuk.org.uk](http://www.bbuk.org.uk)
- Managing Continence Issues in Secondary Schools film: <https://youtu.be/QHB1jsSjPI>

## **Bladder & Bowel UK**

Working under the umbrella of Disabled Living, Bladder & Bowel UK is a national charity that offers advice and information on all bladder and bowel issues for all age groups and abilities, including children and young people. Staffed by specialist nurses they provide a range of free online resources and bespoke training to help children and young people, their parents, carers and professionals to promote continence and manage incontinence. They also offer national education days and symposia for professionals and have a confidential helpline to provide professional advice and support families and professionals.

**Address:** Burrow’s House, Priestley Road, Worsley, Manchester M28 2LY

**Helpline:** 0161 607 8219

**Email:** [bbuk@disabledliving.co.uk](mailto:bbuk@disabledliving.co.uk)

**Website:** <https://www.bbuk.org.uk>

## **ERIC The Children’s Bowel & Bladder Charity**

ERIC is dedicated to helping all children and teenagers manage and overcome distressing continence conditions. Whether it is a toilet-training issue, bedwetting, constipation or soiling problem, ERIC provides expert support, information and understanding to children and young people and enables parents, carers and professionals to help them establish good bowel and bladder health. ERIC’s family support includes a free confidential helpline, parent and family workshops, online resources and information. Support for professionals includes training targeted at the needs of the health, education, early years and social care sectors working with children and families. Professionals can also access ERIC’s free confidential helpline, online tools, resources and information.

**Address:** 36 Old School House, Britannia Road, Kingswood, Bristol BS158DB

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