

The Holbrook & Shotley Practice

Dr S Gada Dr F Bezant Dr J D'Souza

The Surgery The Street
Holbrook Ipswich IP9 2QS
Tel: 01473 328263

The Surgery Kingsland
Shotley Ipswich IP9 1ND
Tel: 01473 787435

www.holbrookandshotleysurgery.co.uk

Toilet Passes

To: Head Teacher

RE: GP Letters for Toilet Access

We've recently received several requests from schools asking for medical letters to support the issuing of toilet passes to pupils. While we fully support efforts to manage classroom behaviour fairly, we'd like to clarify the role of GPs in these situations.

Access to safe, private, and timely toilet facilities is a matter of basic dignity — particularly for young people who menstruate, whose cycles may be irregular or unpredictable, especially around the time of menarche.

Although it's understandable that schools want to manage misuse of toilet access, identifying and excluding those with genuine need isn't something GPs can, or should, mediate. This includes pupils with continence issues, urinary or bowel urgency, and menstrual difficulties.

There are significant health risks to delaying toilet access:

- Withholding urine or stool can contribute to or worsen continence issues.
- Some pupils may reduce their fluid intake to avoid needing the toilet, which can affect both physical and cognitive wellbeing.
- Denying access during menstruation can lead to soiling, which is not only distressing but also harmful to a young person's mental health.

It's also important to note that GPs are not contracted to provide letters for matters that fall within school management, and we are not in a position to charge families for such paperwork. Whether a child is allowed to leave class for the toilet is ultimately a decision for the school, in consultation with the pupil and their parent or guardian.

If a child has a diagnosed medical condition that affects toileting and this is relevant to their school care plan, that should be handled via the usual NHS communication channels, often through the school nurse or specialist services, with appropriate consent.

Please accept this letter as confirmation that the Holbrook and Shotley Practice does not provide individual notes for toilet access. We support the principle that all children should be allowed to use the toilet when needed for continence or menstrual reasons, without requiring external validation. Thank you for your understanding.

Yours sincerely,
The Partners
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