HEALTHY BLADDER AND BOWEL HABITS IN SCHOOLS

Toilet Tactics

This resource has been designed for Australian primary schools to raise awareness of healthy bladder and bowel habits.

National Continence Helpline 1800 33 00 66
continence.org.au

Supported by the Australian Government Department of Health under the National Continence Program
Toilet Tactics
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This resource is intended as a general introduction only and is no substitute for professional assessment and care.

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Toilet Tactics is a fun user-friendly kit designed to help promote healthy bladder and bowel habits in primary schools and improve or maintain the standard of school toilets.

Research shows that bladder and bowel problems can have a negative impact on a child's self-esteem and quality of life. A child's perception of their school toilets and access to them can impact on a child's health and wellbeing, which can also impact on a child's ability to learn.

- Poor toilet facilities increase the risk of continence issues\(^2\) and increase the risk of outbreaks of infectious diseases.\(^{20}\)
- Children with continence issues are more likely to be victims or perpetrators of overt bullying.\(^{2,10,14}\)
- Continence issues can also have a negative impact of a child's quality of life\(^6\) and increase absenteeism.\(^9\)
- Many children influenced by negative perceptions of school toilets have adopted unhealthy toilet habits during school time.\(^{14}\)

**We encourage you to take up the challenge.**

If you have any queries regarding the kit or a child with a continence issue please call the National Continence Helpline on 1800 33 00 66 for free, confidential information and advice or visit continence.org.au.

Information, resources and student activities can be easily downloaded from the included CD.
Inside your Toilet Tactics Kit
you will find:

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How to use this kit

Here are some simple steps to help get you started.

STEP 1: Identify a teacher or staff member from your school to champion this program. This could be the teacher who is head of student school council or student welfare.

STEP 2: Identify a group of students to help lead the project. This could be the student school council or a group of students who want to help improve their school. It could form part of a health promotion program for students.

STEP 3: Let your whole school community know about the Toilet Tactics program. This could be done through regular updates in your school newsletter and announcements at school assemblies. We recommend using the sample newsletter article on page 27 as a starting point and you can provide information to your staff using the information in the teachers’ section. You can also choose sections from the kit that you feel are relevant to your school.

STEP 4: Check your school toilets using the School Toilet Checklist on pages 7–8. This will help you decide if your school toilets require any improvements. The School Toilet Checklist should be ticked off at least once a term to make sure your school stays on track and meets your school toilet charter obligations.

STEP 5: We recommend that you ask your students to complete the student survey (page 9). This will give you a sense of what the students think about the school toilets.

STEP 6: With the results of the School Toilet Checklist and the student survey, identify any areas of your school toilets that need improving. See our “Tips on how to improve and maintain toilet standards” (page 6).

STEP 7: Develop your School Toilet Charter (page 10). A sample charter has been provided to get you started (page 11).

For ideas as to how to run your Toilet Tactics campaign see page 28.
Tips on how to maintain and improve toilet standards

*How to improve and maintain toilet standards – encouraging healthy bladder and bowel habits*

**Involve the whole school community**
- Ensure parents/guardians are informed about the program. This could be done via your school newsletter.
- Involve the whole school, including parents/guardians, in developing and introducing a school toilet management and access policy.
- Involve the school cleaners as they understand what needs to be done to help keep the school toilets clean.
- Introduce a toilet comments/complaints procedure for students and deal promptly with any issues identified.
- Have the school community complete the survey included in this kit to find out what they really think about their school toilets.

**Educate students**
- Educate students; ideally start when they are young. Provide opportunities to focus on behaviour in toilets such as respecting privacy, leaving the toilets clean and tidy and not hanging around in them.
- Work with the students on improvements, behaviour and respect. Take a leap of faith and encourage a whole school policy with flexible toilet visits.

**Toilet environment**
- Keep toilets clean and well maintained.
- Toilets that are clean, odour free, well lit and well maintained with working fixtures, fittings and supplies are essential to ensure school toilets are valued and looked after.
- It’s important for schools to keep on top of maintenance. People tend to drop less litter in clean places. Make budget allocation a priority for toilet maintenance, cleaning and repairs.
- Cleanliness and supplies should be checked regularly throughout the day and checks could be recorded.
- Have adequate soap, water and hand drying facilities, toilet paper, sanitary bins and waste disposal bins.

**Encourage good toilet habits**
- Recognise that toileting needs are highly individual and do not conform to school timetables.
- Restricting toilet access can have a negative impact on childrens’ bladder and bowel health. Consistent “holding on” behaviour can lead to constipation and incomplete bladder and bowel emptying.

**Find out what students think**
- Undertake the student survey on page 29.

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For toilet checklists and further information on good toilet design, hygiene and infection control go to [eric.org.uk/right-to-go](http://eric.org.uk/right-to-go)

Adapted from the *Bog Standard – Toilet Checklists for Schools*
School Toilet Checklist

**What is a school toilet checklist?**

- The School Toilet Checklist will help you to identify areas that you may need to work on to improve the standard of your school toilets.
- The checklist can be used to review your school toilets at least once a term to make sure you are meeting the standards set out in your School Toilet Charter (pages 10–11). Suggestions for your school toilet checklist can be found on page 8.
- Students should be allowed to go to the toilet when they need to go. This promotes healthy bladder and bowel habits.
  - Students are not to exploit this right and should ideally go to the toilet during their breaks, though this is not always possible.
  - If a student is asking to go to the toilet excessively during class time, this should be discussed by the teacher with the parent/guardian. The student may need to see a health professional to identify if there is an underlying medical condition.
- The toilet area should be free of bullying so all students feel comfortable and safe to use the toilets when they need to.
- There should be sufficient clean, working toilets for all boys and girls, with doors that lock.
- If a toilet is not working it should be a priority for the school to get it in working order as soon as possible.
- It is important that the wash basins have water, soap dispensers and hand drying facilities to encourage good hand washing practices for all students. It is extremely important to have adequate hand drying facilities to help prevent the spread of infection throughout your school.
- Make sure your disabled toilet is free of clutter so it can be used at any time.
  - Check that handrails are firmly fixed to walls.
  - Consider using picture story cards to help children with special needs to use the toilet properly.

**At the bottom of the checklist there are blank boxes for you to add individual checks you believe are important for your school.**
### School Toilet Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Does your school . . .</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allow students to use the toilets whenever they need to, including during lessons?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide suitable toilets for students with special needs, which they can access and use?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure toilets are private and have working locks on all toilet doors?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clean the toilets regularly?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain the toilets in good working order? (not broken)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide absorbent toilet paper in all toilets?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide water, soap dispensers and hand drying facilities?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide enough bins to discretely dispose of continence products, and for the girls, enough bins for sanitary products?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide enough bins in the male toilets to discretely dispose of incontinence products?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with students to prevent them from hanging around the toilets?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Toilet Tactics Student Survey

*Find out what students think about the school toilets*

- The student survey can be completed at home with parents/guardians, or at school with the teacher or buddy.

- If you decide to send the survey home, you may wish to ask parents/guardians to help their child fill in the survey. By doing this it will help parents become aware of the Toilet Tactics program. It may also help parents to become more aware of their child’s toileting habits at school and provide an opportunity for them to discuss bladder and bowel health with their child.

- The very first time you use the kit it may be worth giving all students the opportunity to tell you what they think about the school toilets.

- It is recommended that you survey the whole school or a group of randomly selected students at least once a year to help keep on track.

- The Continence Foundation of Australia has provided a Toilet Tactics Student Survey Consent Form template should schools choose to gain the consent of parents/guardians in line with individual school policy for their children to complete the student survey.

- It is hoped that the survey results will assist the school to identify issues that the school community can work on as a group to improve the school toilets.

In the Appendix (green section) you will find:
- the student survey (pages 29–30)
- a tool for collating the student survey results (pages 31–33)
- an automated Excel spreadsheet to assist with analysis of survey results (available on the enclosed CD)
- a student survey consent form template (page 34)
What is a School Toilet Charter?

_The School Toilet Charter is a formal statement that outlines the expected standard of your school toilets and promotes healthy bladder and bowel habits._

- On the following page is an example of a School Toilet Charter, which you can use, or you can write your own.
- The basis of a School Toilet Charter is respect for each other and school property.
- A School Toilet Charter also demonstrates that your school community takes bladder and bowel health seriously and values the importance of your school toilets.
- The name of the teacher who students need to report issues to should be clearly written on the bottom of the School Toilet Charter which should then be signed off by the school principal.
School Toilet Charter

At our school...

- We are allowed to use the toilet whenever we need to
- We have enough toilets for girls and boys
- We have toilets that are private and have doors that lock
- We have suitable toilets for students with special needs
- We have water, soap dispensers and hand drying facilities
- We have enough absorbent toilet paper in all toilets
- We don’t have bullying in our toilets
- We leave the toilet clean after use
- We have a policy to keep school toilets clean and in good condition
- We look after our toilets by cleaning them regularly and they do not smell
- We have students involved in managing and improving the toilets
- We take all complaints about toilets seriously and act on them as soon as possible
- We are all responsible to help look after the school toilets and we report any problems to:

__________________________________________
Principal
The student section can be integrated into classroom learning. Understanding good bladder and bowel habits is important for overall health and wellbeing.
Healthy Habits

Look after your insides by following these easy tips when it comes to your wees and poos.

- Eat fruit and vegetables every day
- Drink water with your meals and when you are thirsty
- Exercise every day

- Wee and poo when you feel like you need to go, even when you are at school
- How to sit on the toilet:
  - Girls should always sit right down on the toilet and wipe from front to back
  - Boys can stand or sit to do a wee
- Always flush the toilet and leave the toilet clean when you have finished
- Always wash your hands after going to the toilet
- Make sure you fully empty your bladder (wee) and bowels (poo)
- Do not push, squeeze or strain when you wee, and you should only push a little bit for a poo
How does my bladder (wee) work?

Your kidneys make wee (urine)

Your bladder acts like a water tank and stores the wee

When it is time to go to the toilet your bladder tells your brain

When you are ready to go to the toilet the bladder squeezes, the gate (sphincter) opens, and the wee comes out by itself

How do I look after my bladder?

• When you feel you need to do a wee you should STOP what you are doing and go to the toilet.
• Don’t hold on until you are busting.
• Don’t hurry or push to make your wee come out, just wait and relax until it is ready.

Tell a grown-up you know if...

• It hurts or burns to do a wee. It can be helped and will get better.
• Your wee sneaks out when you don’t want it to.

What else can I do to look after my bladder?

• Drink water with your meals and when you are thirsty.
• Your diet should include fresh fruit and vegetables every day.

Remember: don’t make fun of people who have trouble with their bladder. Be kind and help them to tell a grown-up they know - so they can get better.

This information is also available as a hard copy brochure from continence.org.au or phone the National Continence Helpline on 1800 33 00 66.
How does my bowel (poo) work?

How should I go to the toilet?

- When your bowel tells your brain to go to the toilet STOP what you are doing and go. Don’t hold on too long.
- If you need to do a poo, sit on the toilet.
- When you think you have finished, wait a little longer and see if you can do some more.
- Always wipe your bottom from the front to the back, and wipe until all the poo is gone.

Tell a grown-up you know if...

- It hurts to do a poo, or if it is hard, and you have to push a lot to get it out. It can be helped and will get better.
- You feel some poo stuck inside
- Your bottom is sore
- You find poo in your undies
- Your poo is always runny
- You feel you have to rush to the toilet often

What else can I do to look after my bowel?

- Drink water with your meals and when you are thirsty.
- Your diet should include fresh fruit and vegetables everyday.

Remember: don’t make fun of people who have trouble with their bowel. Be kind and help them to tell a grown-up they know - so they can get better.

This information is also available as a hard copy brochure from continence.org.au or phone the National Continence Helpline on 1800 33 00 66.
How to sit on the toilet correctly

- Relax elbows or hands on knees
- Lean forward (bend from the hips)
- Straight lower back
- Feet well supported
- Don’t rush
Spot the difference

What differences can you spot between these two pictures? Tip: there are ten differences. You can also colour in these pictures. A printable version is available on the Toilet Tactics CD.

Answers:
1. extra spikey hair
2. single flush button
3. logo on toilet
4. toilet seat is up
5. cheeky grin
6. watch
7. pocket
8. toilet roll on ground
9. missing undies
10. missing footstool/feet dangling
Healthy bladders and bowels

wordsearch

Tip: words may be diagonal, back to front, across or down.
A printable version is available on the Toilet Tactics CD.

Word list
- bladder
- bowel
- brain
- bursting
- clean
- clear
- constipation
- diet
- drink
- everyday
- fibre
- finish
- fruit
- healthy
- kidneys
- meal
- poo
- relax
- sit
- soap
- stores
- stuck
- thirsty
- toilet
- toilet paper
- urine
- vegetables
- wash hands
- water
- wipe

A T J S T U C K L E V U R I N E
X O R B U S T I N G Z C E K O V
Q I P L D R A E L C Y O L I S E
U L C A T N M I O F W N A J P R
S E E D R I N K H S I S X L G Y
E T R D U V A F L Y P T K A C D
L P I E W A T E R F E I S Z L A
B A N R A J O A S U D P O O E Y
A P W V S T A R G C I A K E A X
T E D T H I R S T Y Y T A J N P
E R I K H B B O W E L I Y I A S
G T E S A E R V Y S T O R E S Z
E Q T O N N A E L P K N D C F I
V F A K D F I B R E P W L A E M
E D O A S V N L E P K I U O S A
F I N I S H X H E A L T H Y I F
K I D N E Y S D N T O I L E T M

Answers:
See page 38
Healthy bladders and bowels crossword

*Tip: most answers can be found on pages 14–15. A printable version is available on the Toilet Tactics CD.*

**Down**

1. If your poo is hard you may be ______
2. It is important that ______ help look after the school toilets and report any problems
3. Students should not hang around the school ______
4. When you sit on the toilet ______ your elbows or hands onto your knees
8. Another name for poo
10. Poo travels through this tube in your body

**Across**

2. It is good to sit on the toilet with your feet well ______
4. It is important to _____ to the toilet when you need to
6. Where your wee (urine) is made
7. Another name for wee
8. You should always _____ the toilet
9. We should all drink this every day
10. Wee is stored here
11. We must all _____ our hands after going to the toilet
12. It is important to eat fruit and _______ every day

**Answers:**

**Down**
1. constipated
2. students
3. toilets
5. relax
8. faeces
10. bowel

**Across**
2. supported
4. go
6. kidneys
7. urine
8. flush
9. water
10. bladder
11. wash
12. vegetables
Teachers may also want to refer to the student section as it contains resources that teachers can integrate into health education activities.
Understanding the impact poor bladder and bowel habits have on students

**Did you know?**

- Incontinence can have a negative impact on a child’s quality of life.⁶
- Children who soil are significantly more likely to report being victims or perpetrators of overt bullying behaviour.¹⁰
- Many children influenced by negative perceptions of school toilets have adopted unhealthy toilet habits during school time.¹⁵
- If a child is not allowed to go to the toilet when they have the urge they could potentially wet or soil their pants.
- The psychological impact of wetting or soiling should not be underestimated.
- Adequate toileting facilities and good hand washing practices can help to reduce the outbreaks of infectious diseases²⁰ including gastroenteritis, colds and influenza.

**Why is it when you ask a child to wait for a break to use the toilet, when they return from the break they suddenly need to go to the toilet again?**

- When the bladder is filling up with urine, a person gets a desire to void, which they can consciously suppress.
- If a child suppresses the urge to void because he/she is not allowed to go to the toilet, they may forget that they needed to go until they next get the urge, which may be when they return to the classroom. This time the urge to void becomes stronger, may even be painful and it becomes more difficult to hold on.
- If a child is not allowed to go to the toilet when they need to, they may end up wetting their pants. This can be embarrassing and humiliating for the child.

**Did you know that restricting fluids can have a negative impact on a child’s overall health and wellbeing?**

- If a child is dehydrated their cognitive performance can improve by drinking water.⁶, ⁷
- Research has shown that free access to water in the classroom is not associated with children needing to visit the toilet more frequently during class time. Drinking water can also decrease flavoured drink consumption.³, ¹⁸
- If a child restricts their fluid intake at school, they may then drink an excessive amount when they get home from school, which has the potential to lead to night-time wetting.
- Allowing children to drink water throughout the day is not only beneficial for their overall health and wellbeing¹⁷, but can also promote healthy bladder and bowel habits for life.
Why is it important to let children go to the toilet if they need to?

- It is important to remember that the kidneys are always making urine, so the bladder is always filling up. We can only suppress the urge to void for a certain amount of time until the urine has to come out – whether we are on the toilet or not.

- If children ignore the urge to defecate, or are not allowed to leave the classroom to go, this may lead to constipation and faecal soiling.

- By ignoring the need to go to the toilet, the faeces stay in the bowel for a longer period of time and more water is absorbed making it harder and drier, and more difficult to pass. This leads to constipation.

- If a child becomes severely constipated the bowel can over distend (stretch) and liquid faeces can escape around the hard faeces, resulting in faecal soiling. This can happen without the child being aware of it. Often the child will not be able to smell themselves.

- A child with faecal soiling or day-time wetting needs to be referred to a health professional for assessment.

What can cause a child to have bladder or bowel problems?

- Most continence problems are functional. This means that although the bladder and bowel appear normal they are functioning or behaving in a way that makes usual continence difficult. Only a very small percentage of children have a neurological deficit or disease as a reason for their incontinence.

- There are a range of medical conditions that can lead a child to having bladder and bowel problems, such as diabetes, spina bifida, coeliac disease and Crohn's disease, just to name a few.

- The good news is that most children will achieve continence by school age. Children at school who have a continence issue need to see a health professional and with the right help and advice their continence issue usually resolves. There are a small percentage of children who will never achieve normal bladder or bowel function, although with the right help and support social continence should be achieved.

For more information about bladder and bowel health phone the National Continence Helpline on 1800 33 00 66

For other health conditions refer to the Better Health Channel betterhealth.vic.gov.au
Key messages for teachers

1. Students should be allowed to go to the toilet when they need to go. This will help instill healthy bladder and bowel habits for life.

2. If a student is asking to go to the toilet excessively during class time, the teacher needs to discuss this with the parent or guardian and encourage them to see a health professional to determine the cause, receive the correct management and help them develop a health care plan.

3. Students need access to clean toilets that are adequately equipped with absorbent toilet paper, soap dispensers, water, hand drying facilities and working locks – this can have a positive impact on students and encourage positive toileting habits.

4. Students have a right to privacy and toilets that are free from bullying.

5. Students with bladder or bowel issues require a health plan, quick and easy access to a toilet, privacy, supplies (in the case of an accident) and support.

6. By understanding and supporting the needs of children with bladder or bowel issues, you can help to improve their self-esteem and help to prevent further health problems.

7. It is important to remember that students with bladder and/or bowel issues are not being naughty or disruptive. Faecal soiling and urinary incontinence are involuntary and distressing events, that need to be managed and treated by a health professional. These children need to be supported when they are at school.

8. It is important that students feel safe and comfortable to use school toilets, which is why Toilet Tactics is so important. Would you be happy to use your students’ toilets?

9. For information about children with additional needs refer to One Step at a Time, which is available at continencevictoria.org.au

10. For further information on Toilet Tactics, basic continence care plans (see page 35) and bladder or bowel health, go to continence.org.au or phone the National Continence Helpline on 1800 33 00 66 and speak to an experienced continence advisor Monday–Friday, 8am–8pm AEST for advice, free brochures and details of the nearest continence clinic.
Your school has decided to take up the Toilet Tactics challenge.

For a full range of brochures for children go to continence.org.au or phone the National Continence Helpline on 1800 33 00 66
What is Toilet Tactics and why does your school need it?

Why do Toilet Tactics?

• Toilet Tactics will help raise awareness and understanding of childhood bladder and bowel health among parents, teachers and children. It will also help to improve or maintain the standard of school toilets across Australia.

• Evidence shows that school toilets can have a negative impact on a child’s physical and psychological health, which is why Toilet Tactics is so important.

• Many children avoid using toilets which can lead to bladder and bowel issues.

• With better understanding it is also hoped that children will adopt healthier bladder and bowel habits for life. This is built on the premise that many lifelong attitudes, behaviours and beliefs begin in childhood.

• Children with continence issues are more likely to be victims or perpetrators of overt bullying.

• Children with continence issues have higher absenteeism.

• Adequate toileting facilities also help to reduce outbreaks of infectious diseases (gastroenteritis, colds and influenza) by promoting good hand washing habits.

• If children are aware of the Toilet Tactics program and are involved, it is anticipated that they will look after their school toilets and respect the School Toilet Charter.

How will it work?

• It is anticipated that Toilet Tactics is a program that a group of students, such as the student school council, could lead with the support of a leading teacher.

• It is also important that if students identify any concerns about the school toilets that school management take them seriously and help to resolve the concerns identified.

• It is important to realise that Toilet Tactics need not cost money.

• As part of Toilet Tactics your school may decide to send a student survey home or complete it in class time to help identify any issues associated with the school toilets. If it is sent home, we hope you will be able to assist your child to fill in this survey and return it to school by the set date. The survey will also give you an opportunity to talk to your child about their bladder and bowel health.

• Your school may consider developing a school toilet charter. The School Toilet Charter is a formal statement that outlines the expected standard of your school toilets and promotes healthy bladder and bowel habits.

What can I do if my child has a bladder or bowel issue at school?

You should discuss your child’s condition with your child’s teacher and/or school principal so your child is well supported at school. If your child has a bladder or bowel issue at school it is important to see a health professional and have a health care plan developed if necessary.

For more information on Toilet Tactics, health care plans and bladder and bowel health, go to continence.org.au or phone the National Continence Helpline on 1800 33 00 66.

There are a range of free brochures available to download and/or order that can assist you in talking to your child about this important health topic. The National Continence Helpline is a free confidential service that operates Monday–Friday, 8am–8pm AEST and is staffed by experienced continence advisors.
Appendix
What is Toilet Tactics?

Our school has decided to take up the Toilet Tactics challenge.

Toilet Tactics is an exciting national initiative to raise awareness of bladder and bowel health and to maintain or improve the standard of school toilets in Australian primary schools.

Toilet Tactics has been designed to also help schools with great toilets keep them that way.

• By taking up the challenge we will be writing a school toilet charter that outlines the expected standard of our school toilets and will help promote healthy bladder and bowel habits among our students.

• Your child may be asked to fill in a survey about the school toilets, which you may be able to help them with. This will help us find out what our students think about the toilets and identify if anything needs improving.

• Toilet Tactics is being led by a group of students and Ms/Mr______________ is the leading teacher, who you can contact if you have any questions. For full access and information about the Toilet Tactics Kit go to continence.org.au

Toilet Tactics is supported by the Australian Government Department of Health under the National Continence Program.

Toilet tips

Did you know there is a correct way to sit on the toilet? (see picture below)

• Relax elbows or hands on knees
• Lean forward (bend from the hips)
• Straight lower back
• Feet well supported
• Don’t rush

Go to the toilet when you feel the urge.
You should only sit on the toilet for a maximum of five minutes.

For any continence issues go to continence.org.au or phone the National Continence Helpline on 1800 33 00 66
Monday–Friday, 8am–8pm AEST and speak to a continence advisor for free confidential advice, referral and printed information.
How to run your Toilet Tactics campaign

Here is an example of how you could run your Toilet Tactics campaign over an eight week period using the information provided in the kit.

All pages of the kit can be downloaded from the enclosed CD – so they can be easily added to your school newsletter.

Week 1: Complete the basic school toilet checklist (page 7). Provide information to parents/guardians about Toilet Tactics via an article in the school newsletter (see the sample newsletter article on page 27). Provide information to the teachers at a staff meeting (pages 20–23).

Week 2: Ask students to complete the survey (pages 29–30). This could be sent home as an attachment with the school newsletter or as a classroom activity (page 9). You could set up a drop box in a communal area for students to return the survey.

Week 3: Place the newsletter article for parents in the school newsletter so that parents know what to do if their child has a continence issue. Place the “Healthy Habits” poster (page 13) in the school newsletter and in the school toilets. Teachers could also incorporate this section into health education (see pages 12–19 for activity ideas).

Week 4: Place the crossword, wordsearch and spot the difference in the school newsletter.

Week 6: Provide results of the student survey to the school community. Tip: use the automated Excel spreadsheet on the Toilet Tactics CD enclosed.

Week 7: Consider developing or adding to the school toilet checklist and decide how often the checklist needs to be completed.

Week 8: Develop a school toilet charter and consider placing this in the newsletter and displaying it in your school (refer to page 11).
Toilet Tactics student survey

Information for teachers

All information on this form is anonymous. Students may need assistance to fill out the survey. See page 9 for ideas. They should discuss the survey with their parent/guardian.

A printable version is available on the Toilet Tactics CD.

1. Are you (please tick):
   - a girl
   - a boy

2. How old are you? _________

3. Do your school toilets have (please tick):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Toilet paper</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doors that lock</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toilets that flush</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taps that work properly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toilet seats</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soap dispensers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper towel or hand dryers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bins</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Privacy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Are your school toilets:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Dirty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Smelly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Clean</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Locked at certain times of the day</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey continues…
Please tick your answers below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. Are you allowed to go to the toilet during class time?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Are you scared to ask to go to the toilet during class time?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Do you leave the toilet clean after you use it?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Have you ever avoided drinking at school so you don’t have to use the toilet?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Have you ever avoided using the school toilets?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you answered "Yes" to question 9 above please explain why:

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

10. Is there anything else you would like to say that could make your school toilets better?

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

Continence Foundation of Australia

Toilet Tactics
Collating student survey results

- A teacher will need to support the student group to collect and understand the survey results so that areas that need improving can be clearly identified and a plan of action can be developed.
- You need to add up how many students completed the survey and how many students ticked each box or how they rated each question on the form below.
- The survey results should help to identify areas that students think need improving and you will now have a good understanding of what the students think about the toilets in your school.
- An automated Excel spread sheet is available on the enclosed CD to assist with analysis of survey results.

1. **Number of students who answered the survey:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of girls</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of boys</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. **Age of students who answered the survey:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4–6 years old</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7–8 years old</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8–10 years old</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11+ years old</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. **Do your school toilets have:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes: Total</th>
<th>No: Total</th>
<th>Sometimes: Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Toilet paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>Taps that work properly</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Privacy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What do the results from question 3 mean?

- If most students answered "Yes" to these questions, that's fantastic and you're doing a great job!
- If there are a lot of "No" answers in any section, this is an area you need to work on. You will need to think about what the problem is and how it could be fixed.
- For example, if all the doors do not lock this may be something that could be fixed at the next working bee, or if there isn't enough toilet paper there may need to be a person responsible to replace the empty rolls.
- Once you have come up with solutions to the problems, you need to talk to your supporting teacher and he/she will be able to help you decide the best way to approach the problem. This may mean you need to choose a representative to meet with your school principal and even school council so the problems you have found can be fixed.

4. Are your school toilets:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes: Total</th>
<th>No: Total</th>
<th>Sometimes: Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Dirty</td>
<td></td>
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<td>3. Clean</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Locked at certain times of the day</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What do the results from question 4 mean?

- If the toilets are dirty, smelly or locked at certain times of the day, this needs to be discussed to work out why and how the problem can be solved.
- For example, if the toilets are dirty, do they need to be cleaned more often, or is it because students are not respecting each other and not flushing toilets properly or are not leaving toilets clean?
- If your toilets are clean and never locked during school time, that's fantastic and you're doing a great job!

Questions 5–9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes: Total</th>
<th>No: Total</th>
<th>Sometimes: Total</th>
</tr>
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<td>5. Are you allowed to go to the toilet during class time?</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What do the results for questions 5–9 mean?

- If students are not allowed to go to the toilet when they need to go, if they feel scared to ask for permission or are avoiding using the toilet while at school, these are important issues that can be solved by talking to your supporting teacher and the principal.

- If students answer "No" to question 7, then students may need to be encouraged to flush the toilet properly or wipe the toilet seat after use. Girls should be encouraged to sit on the toilet properly because it helps the bladder to empty fully and stops the seat from getting wet. You could put stickers or dots for boys to aim at in the urinals.

- If students state that they avoid drinking at school it identifies the need to educate them about drinking more water at school.

- List all comments to question 9 to identify why students avoid using the school toilets. This will help you to work out ways to make your toilets more user friendly.
Toilet Tactics student survey consent form template

Toilet Tactics is a national campaign that aims to raise awareness of healthy bladder and bowel habits among school communities and maintain or help improve the standard of school toilets across Australia.

Toilet Tactics has been developed and is managed by the Continence Foundation of Australia and is supported by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing under the National Continence Program.

As part of Toilet Tactics, your school has decided to conduct an anonymous student survey to help identify any issues associated with the school toilets. De-identified survey data may be provided to the Continence Foundation of Australia as part of the evaluation of Toilet Tactics if your school provides permission.

For more information and to view the Toilet Tactics Kit (including the survey) go to continence.org.au

I am willing for my child to become involved in the student survey, as described above.

NAME OF CHILD

NAME OF PARENT/GUARDIAN

SIGNATURE OF PARENT/GUARDIAN  DATE / /       

A printable version is available on the Toilet Tactics CD.
This form is not intended for children who have complex continence issues, require urinary catheterisation or have a colostomy, or to replace state/territory education department care plans.

NAME OF STUDENT

DOB

CLASS/HOME GROUP

DATE OF NEXT REVIEW

NEXT OF KIN

RELATIONSHIP TO STUDENT

PHONE

MOBILE

Children with bladder and/or bowel control issues need support, assistance and understanding. They have a medical condition that causes them to wet and/or soil their pants. It is important for teachers and carers to understand that children are not being naughty or seeking attention.

**Continence issue:** (tick appropriate boxes)

- [ ] Urinary incontinence
- [ ] Faecal incontinence/faecal soiling
- [ ] Needs to be allowed to use the toilet when he/she asks
- [ ] Needs to be prompted to go the toilet every __________________________
- [ ] Needs to be able to use the toilet closest to his/her classroom
- [ ] Needs to have easy access to their bag to assist with clean up after incontinence episode
- [ ] May require assistance to help with clean up
- [ ] Will ask/be given assistance from
  (This person to be nominated by school in consultation with parent or guardian)
- [ ] Other _______________________________________________________________________

(NAME) ___________________________________________ will supply the necessary equipment to assist with clean ups including wipes, gloves, a snap lock plastic bag for wet or soiled clothes and have a change of clothes available at school.

If the student appears to be using the toilet excessively during classroom time please contact his/her parent or guardian so issues can be discussed with their supporting health professional.

PARENT/GUARDIAN NAME

SIGNATURE

DATE

TEACHER/PRINCIPAL NAME

SIGNATURE

DATE

HEALTH PROFESSIONAL NAME

SIGNATURE

DATE

STUDENT NAME

SIGNATURE

DATE

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Find out more

- **Continence Foundation of Australia**
  The Continence Foundation of Australia is the national peak body promoting bladder and bowel health. The Continence Foundation provides free resources, information and education about bladder and bowel health and runs national awareness raising campaigns such as World Continence Week.
  For further information about the Continence Foundation go to [continence.org.au](http://continence.org.au)

- **National Continence Helpline 1800 33 00 66**
  The National Continence Helpline is a free, confidential telephone advisory service that provides information and advice about bladder and bowel control problems for all ages. The Helpline is staffed by a team of experienced continence nurse advisors and provides free information, resources and details of local continence services. The Helpline operates Monday to Friday, from 8am to 8pm AEST and can be accessed from anywhere in Australia. The Helpline is managed by the Continence Foundation of Australia on behalf of the Australian Government.

- **Bladder & Bowel Website**
  For information and advice on the prevention and management of bladder control and bowel problems go to [bladderbowel.gov.au](http://bladderbowel.gov.au)

- **National Public Toilet Map**
  The National Public Toilet Map shows the location of more than 16,000 public and private toilet facilities across Australia. This is a useful tool for people with incontinence and convenient for people with young families.
  To find your local public toilets go to [toiletmap.gov.au](http://toiletmap.gov.au)

- **One Step at a Time**
  For information about challenging behaviour or if your child has a special need, refer to *One Step at a Time* which is available at [continencevictoria.org.au](http://continencevictoria.org.au)

- **Education and Resources for Improving Childhood Continence (ERIC)**
  ERIC is a national children's health charity based in the United Kingdom. ERIC deals with bedwetting, daytime wetting, constipation and soiling and potty training and provides a wide range of information, support and resources to families and health professionals.
  For further information about ERIC go to [eric.org.uk](http://eric.org.uk)

- **Bladder and Bowel UK**
  Bladder and Bowel UK offers advice and information on all bladder and bowel issues in children and young people, including those with additional needs. It provides a range of literature that will help parents, carers, professionals and schools cope with incontinence in children and young people.
  Go to [bladderandboweluk.co.uk/children-young-people](http://bladderandboweluk.co.uk/children-young-people)
References


17. Marsden, J 2010, ‘For good schools, forget the net, try the toilets’, The Sydney Morning Herald, 16 February.


Wordsearch answers

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{A T J S T U C K L E V U R I N E} \\
\text{X O R B U S T I N G Z C E K O V} \\
\text{Q I P L D R A E L C Y O L I S E} \\
\text{U L C A T N M I O F W N A J P R} \\
\text{S E E D R I N K H S I S X L G Y} \\
\text{E T R D U V A F L Y P T K A C D} \\
\text{L P I E W A T E R F E I S Z L A} \\
\text{B A N R A J O A S U D P O O E Y} \\
\text{A P W V S T A R G C I A K E A X} \\
\text{T E D T H I R S T Y Y T A J N P} \\
\text{E R I K H B B O W E L I Y Y I A S} \\
\text{G T E S A E R V Y S T O R E S Z} \\
\text{E Q T O N N A E L P K N D C F I} \\
\text{V F A K D F I B R E P W L A E M} \\
\text{E D O A S V N L E P K I U O S A} \\
\text{F I N I S H X H E A L T H Y I F} \\
\text{K I D N E Y S D N T O I L E T M}
\end{array}
\]