

Particular care should be taken to ensure that places where food is prepared or eaten and toilets are kept scrupulously clean.

Details of the cleaning requirements of schools and colleges with delegated budgets may be found in the contract specification negotiated between the school/college and the cleaning agency.

### **Advice and support**

For advice and support, contact your NASUWT Local Association or NASUWT Northern Ireland Centre.

Contact details can be found:

- on the NASUWT website at [www.nasuwt.org.uk](http://www.nasuwt.org.uk);
- in the NASUWT diary; or
- by phoning 028 9078 4480.

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***The largest teachers' union in Northern Ireland***

## Hygiene and Welfare

**health&safety**  
at work

This leaflet provides essential information relating to issues of general school cleanliness and the provision of toilet, washing, staffroom and cloakroom accommodation for employees. It does not cover the provision of facilities for pupils or students.

### Regulations

Part 2 of the Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978 requires employers to ensure 'the health, safety and welfare at work' of all employees. The provision of toilet and washing facilities for employees is clearly covered.

The Department of Education Northern Ireland (DENI) *School Building Handbooks (Nursery, Primary and Secondary)* cover washrooms for pupils, medical accommodation, acoustics, lighting and water supplies. The regulations state that teachers should also have toilets for their sole use, convenient for the staffroom.

Sufficient facilities should be provided to enable everyone at work to use them without undue delay. This minimum provision must be improved upon in situations where workers are obliged to use the facilities during breaks at set times, such as in schools.

The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1993 require the minimum provision of sanitary facilities and washbasins shown alongside.

### Number of toilets and washbasins to be provided for employees (see Table 1)

A separate calculation must be made for men and women. In the case of facilities used only by men, the minimum provision may be made (see Table 2).

In the context of teaching, these numbers should be considered to be an absolute minimum. The NASUWT's view is that double this number would be more reasonable, in view of the pressure on facilities at certain times of the day (e.g. morning break).

### Other regulations concerning toilet provision

Toilets must be kept clean and fit for use. Every WC must be ventilated and not lead directly into a workspace except through the open air or an intervening ventilated space.

Every WC (other than a urinal) must be under cover, partitioned off for privacy and have a proper locking door.

Table 1

Number of staff	Number of WCs	Number of washbasins
1-5	1	1
6-25	2	2
26-50	3	3
51-75	4	4
76-100	5	5

Table 2

Number of male staff	Number of WCs	Number of urinals
1-15	1	1
16-30	2	1
31-45	2	2
46-60	3	2
61-75	3	3
76-90	4	3
91-100	4	4

Urinals must be placed or screened so that they are not visible from other parts of the workplace. Toilets must be easily accessible to the workforce.

Where both genders are employed, toilets for each gender must be placed so that the interior is not visible (even when the door is open) from any place where workers of the other gender have to work or pass.

If WCs for one gender adjoin those for the other, the approaches must be separate and clearly marked. In schools, there must be separate toilet accommodation for male and female staff and these must be separate from the accommodation provided for pupils.

In toilets used by women, there should be suitable and effective means for the disposal of sanitary towels. All equipment provided must be kept in proper condition and, in the case of bins, emptied at appropriate intervals.

### Other regulations concerning washing facilities

Washing facilities must be kept clean and be provided with hot water, soap (or other suitable means of cleaning) and a hygienic means of hand drying.

Washrooms for each gender must be clearly marked, enclosed, private and safely lit.

Showers must be provided if the work is particularly dirty or strenuous.

Schools must have a wholesome supply of water that, as far as is reasonably practicable, shall be drawn from the mains.

### Provision of staffrooms

Teachers in schools should be provided with accommodation both for work and rest. Although there is no direction as to the size of room, furnishing or decoration, each of these must be reasonable bearing in mind the number of people who use the accommodation and the purposes to which it is put.

In addition, facilities for taking food and drink should be provided, including a washing-up sink and a source of hot water.

### Cloakroom facilities

The Health and Safety Executive Northern Ireland (HSENI) suggests the following facilities as a minimum:

- a separate peg or locker for each employee (a nail is not considered adequate);
- provision for the drying of outdoor clothes;
- adequate space for the changing of clothes;
- adequate precautions against theft;
- a high standard of cleanliness;
- adequate ventilation and lighting.

### Rules about the cleaning of schools

School premises, furniture and fittings should be kept clean.

Rubbish and food waste should be kept covered and spillages cleaned up immediately.

In particular, floors and steps should be washed or swept regularly and internal walls and ceilings washed or painted at regular intervals.