

Diseases related to water, sanitation and hygiene are a huge burden in developing countries. An estimated 88% of diarrhoeal disease is caused by unsafe water supply, and inadequate sanitation and hygiene.

Many schools serve communities that have a high prevalence of diseases related to inadequate water supply, sanitation and hygiene, and where child malnutrition and other underlying health problems are common.

Girls and boys are likely to be affected in different ways by inadequate water, sanitation and hygiene conditions in schools, and this may contribute to unequal learning opportunities.

Adequate provision of water supply, sanitation, hygiene and waste management in schools has a number of positive effects and contributes to a reduced burden of disease among children, staff and their families. Such interventions also provide opportunities for greater gender equity in access to education, and create educational opportunities to promote safe environments at home and in communities.

The international policy environment increasingly reflects these issues. Providing adequate levels of water supply, sanitation and hygiene in schools is of direct relevance to the United Nations Millennium Development Goals for achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality and reducing child mortality. It is also supportive of other goals, especially those on major diseases and infant mortality. Every additional year of schooling for girls reduces both the under-five mortality rate and the maternal mortality rate.

This document provides guidance on water, sanitation and hygiene required in schools. The guidelines it contains are designed to be used in low-cost settings in low- and medium-resource countries, and to support the development and implementation of national policies.

The document is aimed at education managers and planners, architects, urban planners, water and sanitation technicians, teaching staff, school boards, village education committees, local authorities and similar bodies.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Standards for Schools in Low-cost Settings



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