

4.6 Changing Room Guidance

Changing rooms will vary according to the activity venue. BSAC Clubs should adopt good practice guidance (below).

A club's duty of care to under-18s includes changing room and toilet areas. This does not mean the parents have no responsibility but parents may not be present when a child is changing or needs the toilet. Clubs must make clear to parents what is expected of them in terms of: presence at the venue; access to changing rooms; and direct input by parents to assist their child in the changing room (i.e. due to age or disability). Clubs must also notify parents if the venue will be used by members of the public during a club session.

Leisure Centre/ Pool changing rooms

Leisure centres and pools generally allow parents to assist their child if aged 8 or less, or when there is specific need for help. Good practice ensures that other adults, including parents whose children do not fit these criteria, shall not enter the changing room. If mixed use of the changing facility by adults and children is unavoidable, at least 2 members of staff (of the same gender as the children) should supervise the group. It is important that staff and volunteers seek to balance the need for adult supervision with the rights of children to privacy in this context.

It is important that children should have:

- A Code of Conduct giving clear direction on acceptable behaviour in changing areas.
- Information about how to seek help in changing areas, whether from instructors, club helpers or venue staff.
- Protection from bullying. (Where it is suspected, the club might station two DBS-checked adults within earshot, to intervene or be called if needed.)
- A path with/through parents to report concerns to the CWO who shall be bound to take the required action. (Parents should do no more than ensure their child is safeguarded from harm.)

Who should supervise?

If you have decided that children need supervision, staff and volunteers should consider who will carry this out. This task provides access to children in circumstances of increased vulnerability and therefore careful consideration should

be given to ensuring that those undertaking this task have been assessed as being suitable to do so. Consider the following:

- **numbers** – organisers are recommended to have more than one adult supervising, as this will ensure cover in the event of an accident or incident occurring or if one supervisor is called away
- **gender** – it's considered good practice to ensure that children are supervised by staff or volunteers of the same gender while changing
- **timings** – by agreeing a very clear timetable for use of the changing facilities by children, the risks associated to any extended contact between the adults and children are minimised
- **safe recruitment** practices, including:
 - criminal records checks for individuals whose roles make them eligible
 - self-declaration – completion of an appropriate self-declaration form as part of safe recruitment
 - references – these should include a reference from a recent previous employer where they have worked with children
 - role description – provide clear details about the boundaries of their role
 - code of conduct – a document that individuals sign up to that clarifies the standards of behaviour expected of staff and volunteers

Changing Huts

Occasionally, a one-roomed hut may be all that is available. This must operate as single sex only and under 18s should not change with over 18s. Arrangements must be made for segregation.

When no changing facility is available

When clubs dive in the sea, changing areas are commonly limited, even non-existent.

BSAC guidance:

- A public toilet should be used where possible.
- If an open area (e.g. a car park) must be used, the club must do everything possible to enable under 18s to change in a private area and so preserve the child's dignity.
- Some clubs require that children be accompanied by parent, carer or nominated adult. If so, then parents must be told in advance of arrangements for changing, their role in it and their responsibility for the welfare of the child.