

KEEPING CHANGE ROOM FACILITIES SAFE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Children and young people may be exposed to greater risk of harm in change room facilities as they may be at various stages of dress/undress in an area that does not have natural lines of sight or supervision. There is also a risk of harm from their peers, such as bullying, violence, harassment, and discrimination if the changing room is left unsupervised.

Sporting clubs and organisations have a duty of care to implement Children and Young People Safe Practices to reduce the risks posed to children and young people when using such facilities.

This factsheet provides information on in the following areas:

- Children and Young People Safe Practices Do's and Don'ts for the use of Change Room Facilities.
- What Appropriate Supervision Looks Like.
- How to Actively Supervise.
- Considerations for Public Changerooms.
- Mixed Gender Teams.

For the purpose of this document, children and young people refers to any person under the age of 18.





Child Safe Practices Do's and Don'ts for the use of Change Room Facilities

Do

- Provide private change room facilities where possible.
- Ask children and young people if they feel comfortable using the change room facilities.
- Ensure that there is always appropriate supervision.
- See the what appropriate supervision looks like section below for information about appropriate supervision.
- Knock and announce yourself and wait for approval before entering change rooms.
- Ensure where possible that there are suitable facilities for children and young people who may have unique changeroom requirements, such as those with a disability, who identify as transgender, or have specific religious or cultural beliefs.
- Only allow parents or carers to enter the change room facility for the purpose of assisting their child to get changed if required, such as when a child is very young, child or young person has a disability or specific personal care needs.
- Utilise a 'buddy system' (of two or more children or young people of a similar age and gender) when children or young people are required to go the bathroom without adult supervision.
- Check on the whereabouts of children or young people if they do not return from change rooms or bathrooms in a timely manner during training or a competition.

Don't

- Undress or get changed in the presence of children or young people.
- Be alone and unsupervised with a child or young person in a change room area.
- Isolate yourself with a child or young person (or multiple children or young people) from others in the change room (for example, take them into a cubicle with you).
- Provide personal or intimate assistance without the child's consent and written permission of their parent or carer.
- Enter a change room of the opposite sex while they are changing.
- Allow mobile phones to be used in change rooms.
- Take or record images of children and young people in a change room.
- Use bathroom facilities at the same time as a child or young person.
- Unnecessarily allow parents or carers into change rooms, unless a child or young person requires physical help getting changed (for example, younger children or children with disabilities) and permission has been obtained for care arrangements.
- Place pressure on a child or young person to change and/or shower in public if they feel uncomfortable to do so.



What Appropriate Supervision Looks Like

When considering who should supervise children and young people in changing room facilities, ensure the following:

- Have at least two authorised adults supervising.
- Staff with supervision responsibilities in change rooms should be recruited by using safe recruitment practices, including, where required - holding a current valid Working with Children Check or equivalent.
- It is best practice to ensure that children and young people are supervised by staff or volunteers of the same gender while changing.

How to Actively Supervise

When supervising children and young people, remember to position yourself in a space that protects their dignity and their right to privacy. Positioning yourself at the entrance/exit of the change room will allow you to:

- hear conversations in case of peer-to-peer abuse
- ensure only permitted people enter and exit
- be accessed in the event of an emergency
- be able to support a child or young person if they require and consent.

Your position should NOT allow for full view of a naked child or young person.





Considerations for Public Changerooms

When using changerooms that are public, or where sharing of change room facilities may occur, additional considerations should be made, including:

- Conducting a prior risk assessment of the facilities (or ask the facilities manager for their risk assessment) to ensure safe facilities are available.
- Have additional adult supervision.
- Providing designated times for each group to change to minimise the risk of any contact between the adults and children and/or young people.
- Have a backup plan prior to the day/time of need.
- Encourage children and young people to come dressed ready for the activity if they do not wish to change in public or shared change rooms.

Mixed Gender Teams

Many sports operate mixed-gender teams at different age groups, and arrangements should be made to enable the groups to change separately. This may include:

- Each gender using a different room or facility.
- Each gender having a specific time allocation to change.
- Changing at home before and after competitions.

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