

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 7 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.

Parents do not expect their child to be at risk. It is important that children should have:

- A Code of Conduct giving clear direction on acceptable behaviour in changing areas.
- 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.)

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.

If the age range is varied (and the numbers require it) it is advisable to ensure those under 18 changes separately to those over 18 when no individual facilities are available if at all possible.

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.