

PUBLIC VENUES GUIDANCE

Clubs, facilities and those with responsibility for children have a general duty of care towards them. However, there are no specific legal requirements regarding the use of changing facilities.

Guidance around use of changing facilities will depend upon whether or not the facilities will be used exclusively by junior teams or athletes, and who facilities are managed by. If only junior teams or athletes are using a facility, safeguarding risks are reduced as there will be a reduction of children mixing with adults when changing or showering.

If facilities are owned by another organisation, such as a local authority, it is important to clarify their rules and procedures around use. All facilities should have a safeguarding policy and procedures for reporting any concerns, and staff and volunteers are advised to familiarise themselves with these.

Even when using public facilities, arrangements can be made to address any potential concerns, for example:

- There may be a separate room or space available for the group.
- It may be possible to negotiate specific time slots for the group, and the coaches or volunteers to have exclusive use of the changing rooms.
- A team area within the changing facility could be designated and nobody else allowed in that area.
- Children may opt to change at home before they arrive for the activity. (Remember that many children are very self-conscious and anxious about undressing in front of others. Staff and volunteers should consider offering the option of changing at home as a matter of course.)



If mixed use of the changing facility by adults and children is unavoidable, at least two 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.

Supervision in the changing facility may also be necessary when:

- Children are too young to be left alone or change themselves.
- Organisers of groups of children under 8 years should make arrangements for their supervision while changing before and after the activity.
- Although most children of school age (4 years old) may be capable of changing their clothes, many leisure facilities have established guidelines that any child below the age of 8 years must be accompanied by an appropriate adult.
- The group includes disabled children who require additional support and assistance with changing (note that this should be undertaken by prior agreement with their parent or professional carer).
- Children could injure themselves or access a potential risk such as a swimming pool that is unattended.
- There are concerns about bullying, fighting or other harmful behaviours taking place which need to be managed.

If supervision is required, numbers – more than one adult should be involved, as this will ensure cover in the event of an accident or incident occurring or if one supervisor is called away. It is good practice to ensure that children are supervised by staff or volunteers of the same gender while changing. Supervisors should be recruited following Volleyball England **Safer Recruitment Procedures (see Section 3.1)**.

Parents are often involved in supervising children, and can provide valuable support to organisers and coaches. Where they are responsible only for their own child (or, by agreement, their relatives' or friends' children) this constitutes a private arrangement outside the responsibility of the activity organisers. However, when parents undertake a formal supervisory role at the request of or with the agreement of the organiser, which includes having responsibility for other people's children, the same steps should be taken as staff and volunteers to make sure they are suitable for the role.

Parents and carers have a responsibility to ensure that their children are appropriately supervised while they are attending a sport or leisure facility. It is parents' responsibility to judge whether it is safe and appropriate to allow their unaccompanied child to visit a sport or leisure facility. Parents may wrongly assume that staff will take responsibility for their children within a sport or leisure facility, or within specific areas such as changing rooms. Parents should therefore be informed about the facility's expectations about supervision of their children, including the use of changing rooms and shower areas.