



Diocese of Salisbury
Academy Trust
'Beyond expectations for all of God's children'

PUPILS CHANGING POLICY

FOR ACADEMY PHYSICAL EDUCATION, SPORT, ENRICHMENT OR ANY RELEVANT PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Policy Date: May 2024

Review Date: May 2028

This policy is to be implemented by each school

Introduction

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the school's Child Protection Policy, Intimate Care Policy, Employment Manual and Guidance for Safer Working Practice. They have been developed in conjunction with our safeguarding advisors, for the reasons outlined below. They are not intended to be a comprehensive guide about safer practice in PE and Sport or any other related activities which are deemed appropriate by our schools.

1. Rationale

- 1.1 Although it is acknowledged that the majority of people who work with children are safe to do so, well publicised cases of abuse have prompted our consideration of clear local guidance, as well as the need to review and update procedures when children are changing for PE or other activities.
- 1.2 It is recommended that Headteachers regularly review changing arrangements, particularly where they pre-date their own arrival in the school and / or take place on another site. This might include visiting an off-site venue as part of the review e.g. Public Swimming Pools, Local Leisure Centres and Residential Trips.
- 1.3 Being in a state of undress can cause some children to feel vulnerable, particularly those who have experienced abuse, and cause them to misunderstand or misinterpret the actions of an adult.
- 1.4 Changing for and after PE, or any other related activity where there is a requirement for pupils to get changed, can cause anxiety for some pupils and can influence their perception of the subject and determine whether it is an enjoyable and positive experience. The concern caused by changing can influence a pupil's participation and lead to a variety of avoidance strategies.
- 1.5 For staff there can be confusion and / or worry about supervision and how it accords with safer working practice. There can be a tension between the need to ensure that bullying or teasing does not occur and the risk of being accused of acting inappropriately or even being perceived as someone who might pose a sexual risk to children.

2. Principles

- 2.1 Staff must always change or shower privately; never in the same space as children.
- 2.2 It is recommended practice that pupils should change for PE, sport or any other enrichment activity, particularly when the exertion rate will necessitate a change of clothing for reasons of hygiene.
- 2.3 Our policy is to ensure that all our schools will make adequate and sensitive arrangements for changing, which take into account the needs of pupils from different religions, beliefs and cultural backgrounds.
- 2.4 Particular consideration might need to be given to, and alternative arrangements made (where possible) for, the requirements of individual pupils with needs relating to sexuality or sexual orientation.
- 2.5 All pupils should be treated fairly and with respect for their privacy and dignity.
- 2.6 Wherever possible, designated single sex changing rooms or areas should be used. In a primary school setting, this is often not possible and boys and girls may change together, in a classroom for example, consideration can be given to utilising furniture or screens to provide discrete areas. Also consider covering windows if practicable. Headteachers should be aware of and approve such arrangements wherever possible.
- 2.7 Mixed gender changing areas clearly become more of an issue as children get older and staff need to have due regard for those who mature at a much earlier or later age than their peers. Ideally, boys and girls should change separately where possible in Key Stage 2 and certainly in Years 5 and 6.
- 2.8 Parents should be generally aware of arrangements, particularly in situations where designated changing rooms are not available.
- 2.9 Pupils who express disquiet or concern about the behaviour of a member of staff should be listened to and appropriate enquiries conducted by the Headteacher or appropriate member of the senior leadership team.
- 2.10 Allegations about a member of staff, from any source, must be reported promptly to the Headteacher, who will act in accordance with procedures.

2.11 Mobile telephones, cameras or any other recording devices should not be used by staff members at any stage whilst children are changing. However innocent their use may be, it places the staff member, as well as the child, in a very vulnerable position.

3. Should the member of staff remain in the changing room?

- 3.1 This judgement will be based on the age and developmental needs of the pupils but there should not be an assumption that staff need to remain in the room in order to maintain good behaviour. This can also be achieved by being in close proximity and pupils being aware of it. They should also know that staff will enter the changing area if necessary - in response to a disturbance, for example.
- 3.2 It is often possible to leave the door of designated changing area slightly ajar; their layout makes it unlikely that the occupants can be seen in this way.
- 3.3 If there is a need for a member of staff to enter the changing area it is recommended that they should alert pupils to this by announcing it, to give them the opportunity to cover up if they need to.
- 3.4 All staff, but particularly those of the opposite sex, must avoid just standing in the changing area watching pupils, or repeatedly going in and out without good reason.
- 3.5 Behaviour expectations should be established with all pupils, so they are clear about expectations about their conduct whilst they are unsupervised.

4. What if pupils need assistance with getting changed?

- 4.1 Refer to the Intimate Care Policy for assisting children who are disabled or require additional support.
- 4.2 Pupils of all ages should be encouraged to be as independent as possible; staff should consider prompting and giving verbal help / encouragement before they offer assistance.
- 4.3 Staff should be especially vigilant when helping children with underclothes, tights and swimming costumes, wet clothing on residential trips etc. In the case of older children, help will not generally need to be given and should be avoided wherever possible.
- 4.4 Assistance should take place openly, not out of sight of others.
- 4.5 It should be undertaken to meet the pupil's needs, not the member of staff.

5. What about when off-site changing rooms are used?

- 5.1 The principles detailed above still apply.
- 5.2 It is not appropriate for pupils when swimming to share changing facilities with members of the public (unless this is part of a special school programme of community integration which has been carefully risk assessed). If the school sessions precede or are followed by public sessions, enough time should be booked either side of the swimming session to allow pupils to get showered and changed.
- 5.3 As far as possible, should pupils require supervision or assistance, this should be from a member of staff of the same sex as the pupils involved and involve more than one member of staff.
- 5.4 If changing areas are shared with pupils from another school, particularly those who are older / younger, staff from both / all schools should take this into consideration and properly risk assess together.

Further guidance on safer practice in PE and sport:

NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit <https://thecpsu.org.uk/>

Association for Physical Education www.afpe.org.uk

Active Dorset – County Sports and Physical Activity Partnership www.activedorset.org

Safe Practice in Physical Education, School Sport and Physical Activity, 2020
https://www.afpe.org.uk/page/Safe_Practice_in_PESSPA