



Dorset Trade Skills
Good Practice Guidance
Getting Changed for Sport

April 2021

Review date April 2022

Dorset Trade Skills Guidance Getting Changed for Sport

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with:

- Safeguarding Policy and Child Protection Procedures
- Intimate Care Policy ☒ Staff Code of Conduct and Guidance for Safer Working Practice
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Members of Staff and Volunteers Policy
- Trips and Visits Policy

They have been developed by the Education Safeguarding Standards Advisor in conjunction with the Dorset advisor for PE, for the reasons outlined below. They are not intended to be comprehensive guidelines about safer practice in Sport. It should be used in conjunction with relevant risk assessments & Department Policies.

1. Rationale

1.1 It is acknowledged that the vast majority of people who work with children are safe to do so. However, in 2011 a case within school raised concern in relation to staff conduct in the changing rooms. This, and similar cases has prompted the consideration of the need for additional clear local guidance. It is recommended that Principal review changing arrangements, particularly where they pre-date their own arrival in the Principal and/or take place on another site. This might include visiting the off-site venue as part of the review.

1.2 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.

1.3 Changing for PE can cause anxiety for some students, 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 student's participation and lead to a variety of avoidance strategies.

1.4 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 Adults must always change or shower privately; never in the same space as children. This does not include changing footwear or over layers.

2.2 It is recommended practice that students should change for PE, particularly when the exertion rate will necessitate a change of clothing for reasons of hygiene. Students without kit will be offered spare kit. Should they decline, an alternative role other than participant will be standard practice.

2.3 We provide adequate and sensitive arrangements for changing which take into account the needs of students 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 students with needs relating to sexuality or sexual orientation. In this instance, please seek advice from our DSL.

2.5 All students' should be treated fairly and with respect for their privacy and dignity.

2.6 Designated single sex changing rooms or areas should be used for changing. We have the option of using either the outdoor changing rooms or Sports Centre Changing Rooms. Both are completely separate.

2.7 Parents should be aware of arrangements, particularly in situations where designated changing rooms are not available.

2.8 Students who express concern about the behaviour of a member of staff should be listened to and appropriate enquiries conducted by the Principal and Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy.

2.9 Allegations about a member of staff, from any source, must be reported promptly to the Proprietor, Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy or the advisory group if it involves the Principal who will act in accordance with the Centre's procedures (see the **Whistle Blowing Policy and Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Members of Staff and Volunteers Policy**).

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 students but there should not be an assumption that adults need to remain in the room in order to maintain good behaviour. Staff at Dorset Trade Skills are encouraged to be in the changing rooms at the start of lesson to welcome students, collect valuables, inform students of lesson objectives, deal with kit issues and take the register.

3.2 In the Sports Centre Changing Rooms, it is possible to leave the door of designated changing rooms slightly ajar; their layout makes it unlikely that the occupants can be seen.

3.3 All adults of the opposite sex must avoid going in, standing in the changing room watching students, or repeatedly popping their head around the door. If there are only female/male staff available at any time and there is an issue, staff can stand at the door without looking in and communicate what is necessary. However if there is an emergency (for example a student/s is/are at risk) clear warning should be given and 2 members of staff should enter the room to deal with the situation.

3.4 A code of behaviour should be established with all students so they are clear about expectations about their conduct if they are unsupervised.

4) What if students 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 Students of all ages should be encouraged to be as independent as possible; adults should consider prompting and giving verbal help/encouragement before they offer assistance.

4.3 Adults should be especially vigilant when helping children with underclothes, tights and swimming costumes.

4.4 Assistance should take place openly, not out of sight of others.

4.5 It should be undertaken to meet the student's needs, not the adult's.

5) What about when off-site changing rooms are used, such as at a public swimming pool?

5.1 The principles detailed above still apply.

5.2 It is not appropriate for school swimmers 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 Centre's sessions precede or are followed by public sessions, enough time should be booked either side of the swimming session to allow students to get showered and changed.

5.3 As far as possible, members of staff should supervise or assist students of the same sex.

5.4 If changing areas are shared with students from another school, particularly those who are older/younger, adults 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 www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/cpsu/cpsu_wda57648.html

Association for Physical Education www.afpe.org.uk

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

British Association of Advisers and Lecturers in Physical Education (BAALPE) publication: Safe Practice in Physical Education and School Sport, 2004