



Standard one: Child protection, safety and security

Best practice for PE changing

Why is there a need for guidelines on PE changing?

There is no current legislation around safe PE changing practices in primary schools; it is up to individual schools to write their own guidelines.

Clear guidelines are recommended because:

- Being in a state of undress can make some children feel vulnerable
- PE changing can cause anxiety for some children and can influence their enjoyment of the subject
- Staff can feel unsure about PE changing supervision and how it matches with safer working practice.

Changing areas

- Where possible, **use designated single sex changing rooms or areas**. If this is not possible and boys and girls change together, think about using furniture or screens to provide discrete areas.
- Mixed gender changing areas are less appropriate as children get older and staff need to be sensitive to those who mature at a much earlier or later age than their peers. **Ideally, boys and girls should change separately after they reach Year 2.**
- Schools need to treat all pupils fairly and with respect for their privacy and dignity.
- Schools should make adequate and sensitive arrangements for changing which take into account the needs of pupils from different religions, beliefs and cultural backgrounds or gender identity.
- Adults must always change or shower privately; never in the same space as children.



Staff supervision

- You will need to make a judgement about supervision based on the age and developmental needs of your pupils. It is not necessary that adults remain in the room in order to maintain good behaviour; being in close proximity and pupils being aware of this may be enough. Pupils should know that adults will enter the room if necessary - in response to a disturbance, for example.
- It is often possible to leave the door of designated changing rooms slightly open.
- If there is a need for an adult to enter the room, it is recommended they should alert pupils to this by announcing it to give pupils the opportunity to cover up if they want to.
- Where possible, female staff should supervise girls and male staff should supervise boys.
- All adults, but particularly those of the opposite sex, should avoid just standing in the changing room watching pupils, or repeatedly going in and out without good reason.
- Establish a code of behaviour with pupils so they are clear about expectations about their conduct whilst they are unsupervised.
- Pupils who express concern about the behaviour of a member of staff should be listened to and appropriate enquiries conducted by the Head teacher.

Pupils who need assistance with getting changed

- Refer to the school's Intimate Care Policy for assisting children who are disabled or require additional support.
- Ensure all staff are aware of any intimate care issues for individual pupils. It is best practice to involve pupils and parents in making decisions which involve intimate care, and these arrangements should be reviewed regularly.



- Encourage pupils of all ages to be as independent as possible; consider prompting and giving verbal help/encouragement before offering assistance.
- Be especially vigilant when helping children with underclothes, tights and swimming costumes.
- If necessary, offer assistance openly and not out of sight of others.

Using off-site changing rooms, such as at a public swimming pool

- It is not appropriate for school swimmers to share changing facilities with members of the public (unless this has been carefully risk assessed). If 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.
- As far as possible, members of staff should supervise or assist pupils of the same sex.
- If changing areas are shared with pupils from another school, particularly those who are older/younger, adults from both/all schools should take this into consideration and properly risk assess together.