

Blyth Lifeguard & Swimming Club



Changing Room Policy

It is imperative all members of BLSC, including employees and volunteers, understand the individually harmful and legal consequences of a child being sexually assaulted, or having indecent images of them taken. We reinforce that such behaviour is illegal and will not be tolerated in any form. All such incidents should be acted on in accordance with specific BLSC guidance

Responsibility

BLSC has a responsibility for the wellbeing of all club members whilst they are using changing rooms before, after and during club run sessions..

Responsibility during a club session

While a club member is in any pool complex, they remain under the responsibility and duty of care of the BLSC club member who is teaching or coaching them. If a club member goes out of the pool area, the coach or teacher should be made aware of this. If the club member fails to return within a reasonable time, or appears to be upset upon leaving the poolside, the coach/teacher should request a suitable official to check on them. It is best practice for two persons to look for the member (the second person could be a senior member or a parent/guardian). If a complaint is received about an incident that has occurred in the changing room between a member of the club and any other person, the club has a duty to act upon that concern as appropriate. If the incident involved possible risk to children, it is advisable also to make pool management aware. If the incident involves a person not associated with the club, the pool manager should be made aware, and consideration given as to whether the statutory agencies need informing.

Information for parents/guardians regarding changing facilities

- Ensure that club members and parents/guardians are made aware that changing facilities at venues may be shared by both club members and members of the general public.
- Ensure that club members and parents/guardians are made aware of the type of changing room in use, i.e., separate for male and female or mixed changing villages (and what segregation measures are in place).
- Ensure that the behaviour of club members in changing rooms fall under the club member's Code of Conduct and any behaviour contracts, where appropriate. Masters (adult) members should be encouraged to use their own area wherever possible, when changing at the same time as children. Where this is not possible adults are to be reminded to change in an appropriate fashion, and to be mindful that they are changing with children.

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- Ensure parents/guardians are aware that they should not be alone in the changing room area whilst children are changing unless their child is of an age where help is required from parents/guardians or if the child requires additional specific assistance. This is generally at an age that is stipulated by the pool hirer, usually seven or eight years of age. In such circumstances, the parent/guardian should be the same gender as the child, unless the facility has family changing facilities or is a mixed changing village.
- When organising an event where other clubs or schools are involved, ensure that parents/guardians and competitors are advised (via the event information) whether or not the facilities are likely to be open to the general public at any time during the event.

BLSC does not advise that adults supervise changing facilities as that places them and the children at risk of harm and allegations. The clubs may however place an officer or appointed poolside helper on the outside of the doors in and out of the changing rooms to allow club members to call for assistance if required. This approach has proved helpful when club members have reported incidents of bullying or general behaviour issues between club members in the changing rooms.

Use of image capturing devices

The use of mobile phones or any other device capable of image capturing other than in the event of an emergency is strictly prohibited whilst in the changing room area of any premises where club members of BLSC are involved in club activities or preparation for those activities. Any breach of this rule will be considered a potential child protection issue and will be reported to the relevant authorities. Parents/guardians should make sure that children know that this policy applies to everybody.

Responsibility after a session is completed

BLSC has a reasonable duty of care to their members, which extends to an awareness on the part of the club that their junior members have been collected, in so far as is possible, at the conclusion of a session, i.e. that a member is not left unsupervised if a parent/guardian is late. This has to be age appropriate, i.e. a 17-year-old is capable of getting themselves home, but a 12-year-old is not. However, if a club uses changing rooms that are also accessible to non-club members for public swimming lanes, it would be extreme to expect a club to search the changing areas in case a junior club member was there. Best practice would be for a club to make all junior members and their parents/guardians aware that if children are not collected by a parent/guardian, then they should make that known to the Welfare Officer, coach or whoever the club deems to be appropriate, and for the nominated individual to ensure that the member is supervised appropriately until a parent/guardian arrives or they communicate alternative arrangements.

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If a parent/guardian fails to collect a child, the club should follow the procedure outlined in the BLSC Late Collection of Children Policy.

If a child's whereabouts cannot be accounted for, while under a club activity, then members should invoke the BLSC Missing Child Policy.

Blyth Lifeguard and Swimming Club follows guidance provided by Relevant Governing Bodies (RGB) Swim England, Royal Lifesaving Society (RLSS), Surf Lifesaving Great Britain (SLGB), Swim Teachers Association (STA) and The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NCPCC) in formulating our policies, regulations, and codes of conduct and in having robust procedures in place

Agreed by BLSC Executive Committee	Due for review
22 nd July 2024	July 2026