

City of Oxford Swimming Club



Changing Room Policy

Under the Duty of Care to Safeguard Children the club has a responsibility for the wellbeing of children in the changing rooms. This does not mean that parents have no responsibility, but parents are often not in the pool complex at the time when children are swimming and training to exercise their duty of care. For this reason the club will be clear with parents under what circumstances they require parents to remain at the pool throughout a session. For example with young children who require assistance in changing or for those children with a disability who may require additional help the club cannot provide.

Responsibility during a club session

Whilst a child is training, they remain under the responsibility, under the duty of care, of the person who is teaching/coaching them at that time on behalf of the club. A swimmer should only leave the pool area after requesting and gaining permission of the coach/teacher. If they fail to return in a reasonable time or appears upset upon leaving the poolside the coach/teacher should request a suitable club official to ensure that they are all right. It is best practice for two persons to look for the swimmer (the second person could be a senior swimmer or another parent).

Parents/carers of swimmers under the age of 8 should remain on site for the duration of the club session. Furthermore, parents of swimmers of all ages should ensure that their child has a method of contacting them in the event that they leave the training venue.

If a complaint is received that an incident has occurred in the changing room between a swimmer and any other person, the club has a duty to act upon that concern and investigate appropriately. 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 regarding changing facilities

Parents are made aware, via this policy, that:

- The changing facilities at venues may be shared by both club members and members of the general public
- Swimming venues used by the club have different types of changing facilities, i.e. separate for male and female or village changing.
- The behaviour of swimmers in changing rooms/facilities is part of the swimmers' code of conduct
- Parents should not be in the changing room while their swimmers are changing, unless the swimmer is of an age where help is required from parents, or the swimmer requires additional specific assistance. This is generally at an age that is stipulated by the pool hirer, usually 7 or 8 years of age. In such circumstances the parent must be the same gender as the child, unless the facility has family changing facilities or is a "mixed changing village". In the case of privately hired pools, COSC stipulates that only

parents/carers of swimmers under the age of 8 should enter the changing rooms and the parent must be of the same gender.

- Adults should not supervise changing facilities as this places them and the children at risk of harm or allegation.

Responsibility after a session is completed

In so far as possible, the club has a duty of care to swimmers, which extends to an awareness on the part of the club that their junior members have been collected at the conclusion of a session. This must be age appropriate, i.e., a 17-year-old is capable of getting themselves home, but a 12-year-old is not.

However, if the club uses changing facilities that are also accessible to non-club members for public swimming lanes it would be extreme to expect the club to search the changing areas in case a junior club member was there. The club, therefore, makes all junior members and their parents aware, via this policy, that if a child is not collected by a parent, they should make the coach aware and that this individual will ensure that the club member is supervised, by an appropriate person, until a parent arrives or the parent communicates alternative arrangements.