

Cheddar Kingfishers Swimming Club Changing Area Policy

Swim England case records show that incidents of sexual assault and the taking of indecent images have occurred in changing rooms/areas.

It is imperative that all members of the club understand the individually harmful and legal consequences of a child being sexually assaulted, or having indecent images of them taken. The club recognises that such behaviour is illegal and will not be tolerated in any form. All such incidents will be acted on in accordance with specific guidance found in Wavepower, on pages 21-23.

When training, the changing area used at the leisure centre are mixed with separate cubicles. This area is also accessible to non-club members for public swimming lanes.

Anyone (including other children) sexually assaulting others, or taking indecent images of children, including over/under adjoining cubicles, renders themselves liable to arrest, prosecution and registration as a Sex Offender.

Responsibility during a club session

Under the duty of care to safeguard children, the club has a responsibility for the well-being of children in the changing area. This does not mean that parents/guardians have no responsibility, but parents/guardians are not in the pool area at the time when children are swimming and training to exercise their duty of care. Therefore, while a child is training or being taught, they remain under the responsibility and duty of care of the person who is coaching them at that time. If a member goes out of the pool area, the coach should be aware of this. If the child fails to return within a reasonable time, or appears to be upset upon leaving the poolside, the coach 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 area between a member of the club and any other person, the club has a duty to act upon that concern as appropriate, following the guidance in Wavepower on pages 21-23. If the incident involved possible risk to children, it is advisable to make the leisure centre management aware.

If the incident involves a person not associated with the club, the leisure centre management should be made aware and consideration given as to whether the statutory agencies need informing.

Information for parents/guardians regarding changing facilities

- Parents/guardians should be aware that the changing facilities at the leisure centre are mixed and are shared by both club members and members of the general public.
- The behaviour of members in the changing area is part of the member's code of conduct and any behaviour contracts, where appropriate. Master (adult) members are reminded to change in an appropriate fashion, and to be mindful that they are changing with children.

- Parents/guardians to be aware that they should not be alone in the changing area whilst children are changing, unless their child is of an age where help is required or if the child requires additional specific assistance.

Swim England does not advise that adults supervise changing facilities as that places them and the children at risk of harm and allegation. However, the club will, if necessary, place an officer or poolside helper in the mirror area, to allow children to call for assistance if required or when incidents of bullying or general behaviour issues have been reported.

