



## Heathfield Swim School / Swim Stars Southeast Changing Room Policy

Updated: 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2024

### Key Information:

- The term 'children' describes any person under the age of 18.
- Clubs and other organisations, facilities, and those with responsibility for children have a general duty of care towards them.

### Purpose of policy:

This policy is designed to keep children and young people safe while they are getting changed at any swimming pool where lessons are operated by Heathfield Swim School and Swim Stars South East. By enrolling into lessons, you agree to accept the conditions of this policy. The purpose of this policy is to safeguard all children and adults utilising the changing facilities located at the swimming pool. This policy is in place as some children feel vulnerable and anxious when getting changed. Staff, volunteers, and parents can also feel unsure and uncertain with the changing room environment. This policy provides clarification on the Swim School's operational procedures regarding the use of the changing facilities before and after lessons.

**Child Protection:** Some signs of abuse may become apparent while children and young people are getting changed. For example, you might notice changes in behaviour, children being uncomfortable getting changed or unusual marks and bruises. Staff and volunteers should be trained to recognise the signs of abuse and know what procedures to follow if they have any concerns about a child and young person. If a parent has any concerns, please report these to the safeguarding lead at the Swim School which is Elliott Stevens at [heathfieldswimschool@gmail.com](mailto:heathfieldswimschool@gmail.com) or [hss.swimstars@gmail.com](mailto:hss.swimstars@gmail.com). Changing areas could be places where young people are more vulnerable to peer-on-peer abuse such as bullying or harmful sexual behaviour, the swim school staff will not directly supervise the changing facilities, however if there are reports of misconduct, these should be reported to a member of staff as soon as possible who will then respond appropriately and log the incident with the safeguarding lead.

**Changing Areas:** The swim school will utilise separate 'male' and 'female' changing rooms as mixed gender changing areas are less appropriate for children as they start to get older. Alternative changing facilities will be made available for individuals who are:

- 1) Physically mature at a much earlier or later age than their peers.
- 2) An individual requiring additional support, including those with disabilities, those who are transgender, non-binary or questioning their gender identity and those from different religions, beliefs and cultural backgrounds.
- 3) Adults must always change privately, never in the same space as children.

**Transgender and Non-Binary Children:** The swim school are aware that using gendered changing facilities can be a source of stress for transgender and non-binary children. We therefore strive to meet young people's wishes on a case-by-case basis and in a considered and mindful way.

**Toilets:** The sites in which the swim school operates from will provide access to toilets intended for use by one pupil at a time, these can be secured from the inside. Sanitary fittings for boys and girls will also be available at all sites.

**Mobile Phones:** All use of mobile phones and / or devices in the changing room area is prohibited. Any mobile phone usage within the changing facilities must be reported to the safeguarding lead of the swim school.

**Staff Supervision:** The swim school will decide what is appropriate supervision based on the age and developmental needs of the children and young people getting changed. It should not be necessary for adults to remain in the changing room to maintain good behaviour; being in proximity and students being aware of this may be enough. Students should know that adults are in earshot of what is happening in the room and will enter if necessary - in response to a disturbance or bullying, for example.

**All swim school staff will utilise following principles of best practice:**

- It may be possible to leave the door of designated changing rooms slightly open so that nobody can see inside but staff outside can hear if there is a disturbance.
- If an adult needs to enter the room they should alert children in advance and give children the opportunity to cover up if they want to. Another member of staff should also be available to ensure the safety and safeguarding of all members (children and adults).
- Where possible, the adults who are supervising children getting changed should be of the same gender as them and not left on their own. If an adult enters the changing facilities they should leave the door open.
- Adults should never stand in the changing room watching children and young people, or go in and out repeatedly without good reason.
- a clear code of behaviour will be established to make sure students understand the expectations about their behaviour while they are unsupervised.
- Children and young people should know who to talk to if they have concerns about the behaviour of a member of staff or other young people. If concerns are raised these should be taken seriously, and the nominated child protection lead should take appropriate action.

**Supervision in the changing facility is only required if:**

- If mixed use of the changing facility by adults and children is unavoidable, at least 2 members of staff (of the same gender as the children) should supervise the group. It is important that staff and volunteers seek to balance the need for adult supervision with the rights of children to privacy in this context.

**Supervision in the changing facility may also be necessary when:**

- children are too young to be left alone or change themselves.
- the group includes disabled children who require additional support and assistance with changing (note that this should be undertaken by prior agreement with their parent or professional carer)
- children could injure themselves or access a potential risk such as a swimming pool that is unattended.
- there are concerns about bullying, fighting or other harmful behaviours taking place that need to be managed
- there are concerns about the prospect of photographs being taken in changing rooms.

**Parents and Changing Rooms:** Parents are often involved in supervising children during swimming and can provide valuable support to organisers and coaches. Where they are responsible only for their own child (or, by agreement, their relatives' or friends' children), this constitutes a private arrangement outside the responsibility of Heathfield Swim School and Swim Stars South East. However, when parents undertake a formal supervisory role at the request of or with the agreement of the organiser, which includes having responsibility for other people's children, the same steps should be taken as for staff and volunteers to make

sure they are suitable for the role including enhanced DBS checks. Parents must not be left alone in the changing rooms.

**Parents (or carers’) responsibilities:** Parents and carers have a responsibility to ensure that their children are appropriately supervised while they are attending swimming lessons. It is the parents’ responsibility to judge whether it is safe and appropriate to allow their unaccompanied child to visit the swimming pool facility or changing rooms independently. This judgement should be based on:

- their child’s general developmental maturity
- their child's awareness of the potential risks
- the level of supervision and care provided within the facility

Parents may wrongly assume that swim school staff will take responsibility for their children within the pool or changing room areas. Parents will be informed about the facility’s expectations about supervision of their children, including the use of changing rooms and shower areas. Parents should clarify these points before they let their children go to a facility alone.

**Children and young people who need assistance getting changed:** When organising changing areas for children who need extra support to get changed, the swim school should:

- have a written care policy and review these arrangements regularly for each individual child.
- involve children, parents, or carers in making decisions.
- ensure all staff and volunteers are aware of any intimate care issues for individual children and young people and understand the school’s policy for assisting children who are disabled or require additional support.
- encourage children of all ages to be as independent as possible - consider prompting and giving verbal help and encouragement before offering physical assistance.
- be especially careful when helping children with underclothes, tights, and swimming costumes. If it’s necessary to give a child assistance, adults should always do so openly and in sight of others.

Risk	Low	Medium	High	Control Measure
Children under 8		X		Should be supervised by staff or parent helpers.
Children over 8	X			N/A
Unsupervised Changing Rooms	X			Behaviour expectations agreed. Code of conducts explained.
Changing with other parents		X		Parents should not be in changing rooms on own. Parents can be in changing facilities assisting their child only or as per policy above. If assisting other children DBS required.
Swimming lessons (staffed by school)	X			All staff DBS checked. Care policies for vulnerable children Safeguarding policies
Attending a school club or after school session	X			All teachers DBS checked
Unaccompanied children		X		Behaviour management and expectations, code of conduct, clear lines of communication.