



A Policy for Changing for PE/ Extra Curricular Activities/ Swimming

Last Reviewed January 2019

Rationale

Changing for PE can cause anxiety for some pupils, can influence their perception of the subject and determine whether it is an enjoyable and positive experience. The concern caused by changing can influence a pupil's participation and lead to a variety of avoidance strategies.

Being in a state of undress can cause some children to feel vulnerable, particularly those who have experienced abuse, and cause them to misunderstand or misinterpret the actions of an adult.

For staff there can be confusion and/or worry about supervision and how it accords with safer working practice. There can be a tension between the need to ensure that bullying or teasing does not occur and the risk of being accused of acting inappropriately or even being perceived as someone who might pose a sexual risk to children.

Principles

It is recommended practice that pupils should change for PE, particularly when the exertion rate will necessitate a change of clothing for reasons of hygiene.

It is our responsibility to make adequate and sensitive arrangements for changing which take into account the needs of pupils from different religions, beliefs and cultural backgrounds.

Particular consideration might need to be given to, and alternative arrangements made (where possible) for, the requirements of individual pupils with needs relating to sexuality or sexual orientation.

All pupils should be treated fairly and with respect for their privacy and dignity.

Mixed gender changing areas clearly become less appropriate as children get older and staff need to have due regard for those who mature at a much earlier or later age than their peers. Ideally, boys and girls should change separately when they reach P4.

Pupils who express disquiet or concern about the behaviour of a member of staff should be listened to and appropriate enquiries conducted by the principal.

Allegations about a member of staff, from any source, must be reported promptly to the principal, who will act in accordance with the school's procedures.

It is often possible to leave the door of designated changing rooms slightly ajar; their layout makes it unlikely that the occupants can be seen in this way.

If there is a need for adults to enter the room it is recommended they should alert pupils to this by announcing it to give them the opportunity to cover up if they want to.

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.

A code of behaviour should be established with all pupils so they are clear about expectations about their conduct whilst they are unsupervised.

What if pupils need assistance with getting changed?

Refer to the **Intimate Care Policy** for assisting children who are disabled or require additional support.

Pupils of all ages should be encouraged to be as independent as possible; adults should consider prompting and giving verbal help/encouragement before they offer assistance.

Assistance should take place openly, not out of sight of others.

What about when off-site changing rooms are used, such as at a public swimming pool?

The principles detailed above still apply.

It is not appropriate for school swimmers to share changing facilities with members of the public (unless this is part of a special school programme of community integration which 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.

Practice at St. Comgall's Primary School

Changing for PE Procedures

P.1/2/3 – Children take off jumpers/ties

P.4/5/6/7 – Change into full PE uniforms. Where possible teachers swap over – boys in one room/girls in the other and a teacher stands outside the room with the door ajar to ensure discipline. In the case when two classes cannot swap (P.4C + P.5C). The boys will change inside the room while the girls wait outside and then vice versa.

In the senior building, when it is only one class changing and where a classroom assistant is available, the girls may change in the senior girls' toilets. The classroom assistant will supervise from the corridor. The boys of the class will change in the classroom with classroom procedure above adhered to.

After Schools

As there are only a small number of children changing at any one time – pupils will be allowed to change in the store/toilets in groups of 2/3.

Swimming

Regarding Antrim Forum – each child has an individual cubicle so they must change in there.

If there is a possibility of unknown adults being present at times when the children are getting changed – then teacher/classroom assistant must supervise in the changing room.

Residential Trips

No adult should ever be present in a room where children are changing unless there is an emergency – in which case two adults should be present.

Children changing for school shows

It must be encouraged – that pupils always have vest/tights/leggings on so that they are always covered whilst undressing to change into costumes.

Male members of staff will want to ask for a female CA to assist them in supervision of Upper Key Stage Two children so they are not left in a vulnerable position.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with our school's PE Policy/ Child Protection Policy/ Intimate Care Policy and Pastoral Care Policy.