

Safe Use of Changing Facilities and Toilet Guidance

September 2026

Parkour UK has produced guidance for the safe use of changing facilities and/or toilets based on the NSPCC Sport guidance.

These include guidance for:

- Adults sharing changing rooms with young children/vulnerable adults.
- Activity organisers are unclear about the level of supervision they should provide.
- Unaccompanied children/vulnerable adults using facilities.
- Use of gendered changing rooms by transgender, gender-questioning or non-binary children.
- Toilets or changing rooms at a venue being used by young people/vulnerable adults for an event but which can still be accessed by members of the public (such as at a leisure centre, public park or open space).

Note: The term 'children' describes any person under the age of 18. The term 'vulnerable adult' describes an adult who, due to mental or bodily disability, cannot take care of themselves without help from others.

Clubs and other organisations, facilities and those with responsibility for children/vulnerable adults have a general duty of care towards them. However, there are no specific legal requirements regarding the use of changing facilities.

Parkour UK recognise that gym/academy facilities will differ from club to club; some will have their own dedicated facility with toilets, changing and showering facilities, some will hire third-party facilities, and some will offer outdoor sessions only. The guidance below advises clubs on best practices when using facilities shared by adults, children, vulnerable adults and young people.

Based on the facilities available to you, we recommend you convey to your participants the most effective way to meet their needs; consider the number of people wanting to access them at any given time and the activities they are taking part in. You may decide to encourage

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participants to come to classes already changed, wear suitable clothing and go home after class to shower. This guidance should be discussed at your club.

1. Where facilities are used by adults, vulnerable adults and children at the same time, there must be access to separate changing, showering and toilet areas. If mixed use of the changing facility by adults and children is unavoidable, at least two members of staff (of the same sex 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.)
2. Adult staff/volunteers must not change or shower at the same time as children, vulnerable adults and young people using the same facilities.
3. For mixed sex activities, separate facilities must be available for boys and girls.
4. When children/vulnerable adults use changing rooms, they should be supervised by two members of staff/volunteers. Older teenagers may not require any supervision; however, a club may wish to have an appropriately recruited adult within the vicinity of the changing facilities to ensure their welfare is monitored.
5. If a child/vulnerable adult feels uncomfortable changing or showering in public, then no pressure should be placed on them to do so. Instead, they should be encouraged to do so at home.
6. If children/adults with disabilities use your club, make sure they and their carers are involved in deciding how they should be assisted. Make sure the child, vulnerable adult or young person is able to consent to the assistance that is offered.
7. The use of mobile phones and/or photographic equipment by club officials, members, parents and young people should be prohibited within areas where children and young people are changing/ showering.
8. Where no changing facilities are available, children, vulnerable adults, and young people, parents/carers should be made aware prior to the class and advised to make alternative arrangements and to take appropriate additional clothing if the class is being held outside, e.g. Tracksuits, etc.
9. The use of gendered changing and toilet facilities may be a source of stress for transgender and non-binary children. As a gym/club you should consider how to support these young people to use the changing rooms that they feel comfortable with. Your policies should reflect that decisions need to be made on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration all children's safety.
10. If there are concerns about bullying, fighting or other harmful behaviours taking place that need to be managed in line with the guidance above.

Parkour UK recognises that not all clubs have their own private facilities and may use those owned by the community/local authority/schools/ private business. These facilities may already

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have their own policy on the use of changing and showering areas to which you may have to adhere as part of a facilities usage agreement. A copy of this policy should be made available to participants/parents/carers on request.

Supervision

If, having reviewed the above guidance, you have decided that children need supervision, staff should consider who will carry this out. This task provides access to children in circumstances of increased vulnerability and therefore careful consideration should be given to ensuring that those undertaking this task have been assessed as being suitable to do so.

Consider the following:

- Numbers – organisers are recommended to have more than one adult supervising, as this will ensure cover in the event of an accident or incident occurring or if one supervisor is called away
- Sex – it's considered good practice to ensure that children and vulnerable adults are supervised by staff or volunteers of the same sex while changing

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- Timings – by agreeing a very clear timetable for use of the changing facilities by children, and vulnerable adults, the risks associated to any extended contact between the adults and children/vulnerable adults are minimised
- Carry out safe recruitment practices, including:
 - criminal records check for individuals whose roles make them eligible
 - Self-declaration – completion of an appropriate self-declaration form as part of safe recruitment
 - References – these should include a reference from a recent previous employer where they have worked with children/vulnerable adults
 - Role description – provide clear details about the boundaries of their role
 - Code of conduct – a document that individuals sign up to that clarifies the standards of behaviour expected of staff and volunteers

Parent Supervision

Parents are often involved in supervising children during sports activities and outings. 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 the activity organisers. 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.

Unsupervised children

There are potential risks with inadequate adult supervision levels of young children and vulnerable adults in changing and shower areas.

Parents' (or carers') responsibilities

Parents and carers have a responsibility to ensure that their children are appropriately supervised while they are attending a sport or leisure facility. It is parents' responsibility to judge whether it is safe and appropriate to allow their unaccompanied child to visit a sport or leisure facility.

This judgement should be based on:

- Their child's general developmental maturity

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- Their child's awareness of the potential risks
- The level of supervision and care provided within the facility.

Parents may wrongly assume that staff will take responsibility for their children within a sport or leisure facility, or within specific areas such as changing rooms. Parents should therefore 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. Your policies and procedures should clearly state the level of supervision provided and be communicated clearly to parents. A notice summarising these arrangements should be displayed outside the changing and toilet facilities.

Facility operators' responsibilities

When children are given access to facilities, operators assume a duty of care for them. The level of responsibility will vary, depending on if the child is:

- Alone and unsupervised
- With parents
- Attending an activity
- Attending an activity staffed by the facility
- Attending a school group, club or other activity managed by a third party
- Attending a public session

Operators have a responsibility to put in place appropriate safeguarding arrangements, which include promoting and implementing a policy for admitting unaccompanied children. This information should be provided to parents and other users, informing them about the policy regarding unaccompanied children and any rules about the supervision of young children within

the facility. Many facilities currently use the age of eight as a guide (based on sector guidance for an unaccompanied child to attend a swimming pool). In practice, while facilities need to be able to establish a minimum age for admission that is practical to operate, identifying a child's age can be difficult. While the facility may set a lower age limit, it is for parents to judge if their child needs to be accompanied. Facilities should have a process for responding to children below this minimum age of 8 who may arrive, or be left, at the facility alone. Refusing entry or asking an unaccompanied child to leave the centre would raise obvious safeguarding concerns.

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Third party hirers

Organisations hiring facilities should ensure they are aware of:

- Key safeguarding contacts at the facility, should an issue arise
- Changing room layouts (for example, single-sex, cubicles or village style)
- Whether members of the public have access to the changing facilities and toilets at the same time as the children or vulnerable adults
- Other activities taking place that could impact on the use of changing facilities and toilets
- The particular changing needs of any of the children and young people/vulnerable adults under their supervision; this may include sex, gender, medical conditions, or disabilities, which could mean special equipment (such as hoists or changing mats) being required

If members of the public will also be using the toilets and facilities, make sure that there is staff presence at these points:

- To monitor and ensure that contact between young people and vulnerable adults and members of the public is appropriate
- To motivate and encourage young people to return to their groups in a timely manner
- To help young people/vulnerable adults if they are lost

Processes must be in place for missing children/vulnerable adults or found individuals who do not belong to the activity or event, but who have been found or passed on to facility managers or event organisers.

Mixed-sex teams

Many sports and physical activity providers operate mixed-sex classes at several age group levels, and arrangements to enable the groups to change separately should always be made.

Solutions may include:

- Each sex using a different room or facility
- Each sex having a distinct time slot
- Everybody changing at home before they leave
- Each sex having an allocated area of a larger shared facility

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Transgender and non-binary children

Using single-sex changing facilities can be a source of stress for transgender and non-binary children. Sport and activity providers should consider how to provide appropriate alternative facilities. Your policies should reflect that decisions need to be made on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration all children's safety