

APPENDIX 7 - SAFEGUARDING



CHANGING ROOM AND SHOWERING BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES

To be read in conjunction with the GB Taekwondo Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures

Context

The supervision of changing and showering facilities creates a number of challenges.

In order that our sport effectively maintains their “duty of care” for all participants (children (U18) and young people) all staff and volunteers are required to ensure that the participants do not come to harm whilst using the facilities. It is also essential that staff make every reasonable effort and modification, to ensure that both participants’ modesty, privacy and dignity is maintained, and that changing and showering is managed appropriately within the sporting environment.

It is important that participants are made aware of their obligation to follow a code of conduct and acceptable behaviour in changing rooms and showering facilities – a peer on peer, mutual respect, for modesty, dignity and privacy is paramount.

This guidance should be read in conjunction with the GB Taekwondo’s Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures and applied equally sport wide - e.g. schools, home and away tours, and elite settings.

Dignity, Privacy, Modesty and Respect

Children and young people have the right to dignity, privacy and respect for modesty when they are getting changed or using showers. Changing for sport, and showering, can cause anxiety for some children and young people and it can influence their feelings towards sports participation and determine whether it is an enjoyable and positive experience or not. The concern caused by changing and showering can influence a participant’s taking part and lead to a variety of avoidance strategies.

Being in a state of undress can cause some participants to feel uncomfortable or vulnerable. They may not have the confidence or maturity to say how they feel as the participant might not want to be singled out or appear as ‘the odd one out’. Acceptance within a team and being part of the team is a priority, and actions that may seem ‘different’ can cause anxiety.

Participants may not wish to show how they truly feel or say if they are embarrassed or uncomfortable. It may also cause them to misunderstand or misinterpret the actions of a member of staff who would otherwise be responsible for their wellbeing.

Additionally, staff may have concerns 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 risk to the participants.

Key Principles

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There are a number of key principles that can be applied when considering the management of changing rooms and showers. There will be restrictions upon and/or practicalities that cannot be managed effectively when attending away competitions, venues and locations. This may be out of your control, so plan ahead, ask what facilities are available and let the participants know the restrictions and how privacy, dignity and modesty may be compromised – therefore the participants have some choice and can prepare for themselves how they will manage this situation.

The layout of changing rooms and showers are invariably different from situation to situation (from a safeguarding perspective). You will need to ask on a venue-by-venue basis information in advance so that you can plan ahead if, for example, you have a mixed age group U14 – U18 or U17 – U22.

- Furniture or facilities should be arranged or included to ensure the dignity of participants – e.g. the use of privacy screens to interrupt sensitive sight-lines, or use of towels to screen off areas, or the considered positioning of mirrors.
- If a participant feels uncomfortable changing or showering in public/shared facilities, no pressure should be placed on them to do so - instead, they should be reminded to shower or change at home or to shower (with coach permission) after or before others;

Changing and showering should be organised or timetabled to ensure that:

- Participants and staff are comfortable with the arrangements.
- Males and females will always change and shower separately.
- Staff always maintain professional boundaries and should never change or shower with participants (U18).
- Cultural sensitivity of participants can be catered for as required.

Supervision of these areas should be done by suitably vetted (DBS Enhanced Disclosure with the appropriate Barred List check/s) and trained members of staff who never operate alone.

Staff should only enter the changing rooms:

- When necessary and if supervision of participants is required.
- In the event of a disturbance, injury or illness.
- In pairs, and of the same gender as the participants, and only if they have been appropriately vetted and suitably trained.
- Once they have announced their intention to do so.

Note: You may want to consider introducing systems where the participants control the staff presence in the changing area by inviting them in once they are dressed. At locations where there are limited facilities and the showering area is not discreet or private, participants may also agree (in advance) whether it is or is not acceptable within the team to shower if they are wearing swimwear. This may be a practical and last resort solution to preserving modesty and dignity if the facilities are outmoded or inappropriate. The team

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need to all agree to this course of action for exceptional circumstances, and it should not become accepted routine practice.

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