

I am writing to formally express my deep concern regarding the current locker room arrangements at our Northbridge Terrace pool - specifically, the use of the girls' bathroom by a biological boy.

As a parent of two young children, ages 9 and 6, I have a duty to protect their privacy, safety, and healthy emotional development.

It is neither appropriate nor acceptable for young girls, my daughter included, to be placed in a situation where they are forced to undress in front of a biological boy and witness a biological boy undress in front of them.

Allowing biologically male children to share intimate spaces such as locker rooms with young girls creates real and valid discomfort. This is not simply a matter of personal preference - there is compelling developmental research supporting the need to protect children from being placed in situations that are beyond their emotional and cognitive maturity.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, early school-age children (ages 6-12) are in a stage of development where they begin to understand bodily autonomy, privacy, and modesty. Forcing them into settings where these boundaries are blurred can cause confusion and stress. In a study published in Pediatrics, children exposed to situations perceived as socially inappropriate or confusing - particularly regarding their bodies or gender norms - experienced increased anxiety and discomfort, especially when those situations were not initiated or understood on their terms.

Additionally, 74% of parents surveyed by Pew Research Center in 2023 said they are not comfortable with children who are biologically male using girls' bathrooms and locker rooms. This is not an isolated concern - it reflects a broad discomfort among families who simply want to protect their children's right to age-appropriate spaces and experiences.

Additionally, I am increasingly concerned about the broader consequences for our team and community. I have already heard that some parents from other teams are considering withdrawing from meets held at our pool due to this issue. This threatens not only the future competitiveness of our swim team but also the reputation of our community pool and the hard-earned and esteemed reputation of our coach.

Further, as someone who has supported the team and pool financially and through active involvement, I feel a responsibility to raise these concerns directly.

While I hope to continue that support, I must be candid in stating that it depends on the board's actions in response to this situation. Many families are watching closely, and failure to act may result in broad withdrawal of participation and sponsorship.

I propose a common-sense interim solution: the immediate placement of a separate portable restroom, aka "porta-let," for use by anyone who identifies as transgender and whose presence in gender-specific facilities raise privacy or safety concerns. This measure would allow for respectful accommodation while maintaining the privacy of all parties.

While there may be consideration to immediately construct a permanent family restroom, I think such a hasty and costly decision is not the best one, as it would unjustly pass the cost of a permanent facility onto all members to accommodate one unique situation.

I acknowledge that this is a sensitive matter, and I do not raise it lightly. But protecting the privacy and innocence of young children should be non-negotiable.

I trust the board will act promptly and with prudence to ensure a resolution that protects all families involved. I look forward to your response and to hearing what steps will be taken to address these concerns.

Michael Mule'
NBT Father / Former Parkshore Assistant Coach