



Welcome to Players first Ltd

# **SAFEGUARDING & PROTECTING CHILDREN**

## **Policy and Procedures**

## Introduction

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## Preface

Sport can and does have a very powerful and positive influence on people – especially young people. Not only can it provide opportunities for enjoyment and achievement, it can also develop valuable qualities such as self-esteem, leadership and teamwork. However, these positive effects can only take place if sport is in the right hands – in the hands of those who place the welfare of all children and young people first and adopt practices that support, protect and empower them.

The reality is that abuse can and does take place in sport and in some cases coaches and other trusted adults in sport have been convicted. Every adult has a legal and moral responsibility to protect children and young people in sport from abuse.

It is essential that systems be in place to ensure that staff recruitment, induction and education take safeguarding issues into consideration. Adopting best practice will help to safeguard young people from potential abuse as well as reducing the likelihood of allegations being made against coaches and other adults in positions of responsibility.

In addition, all those involved in sport are in a unique position to recognize and act on concerns about children's welfare that may arise away from the sport context. It is therefore important that coaches, volunteers and other staff are in a position to recognize and respond to signs of abuse outside of the sporting environment.

Players First Ltd (PF) recognizes that we all have a duty of care towards young participants and performers and can help to protect them from poor practice and abuse. The implementation of this policy and procedures forms part of CF work within the Framework for Safeguarding Children in and through Sport (Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU), 2011). PF accepts the 'Call to Action' made by the CPSU, to contribute to the shared vision that children can "play sport, stay safe, enjoy and achieve", by working with the sports and statutory sectors to further embed and improve safeguarding practice.

KSLO has worked with the Kent Safeguarding Children Board to ensure that this policy meets national standards and reflects the [Players first Safeguarding Children Procedures September 2009](#). It has also been endorsed by the [Players First Sports Board](#), which oversees the planning and implementation of the Strategic Framework for Sport.

## Introduction

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The policy and procedures will take effect from January 2012, and will be formally reviewed in December 2014, or in light of significant organizational change or legislation, or in the event of a serious incident. This work will be led by the Workforce Development Officer who acts as the Designated Safeguarding Officer within the unit.

## Introduction & Scope

Players First Ltd service unit (PF) is hosted by and primarily funded through Kent County Council, and is recognized as playing a lead, co-coordinating role for sport in Kent, in conjunction with a range of partners.

The policy and procedures outlined in this document are designed to cover all aspects of PF work with young people, and relate to all staff and volunteers employed or deployed by PF for the programmes over which it has supervision and control.

PF also has a strategic responsibility to ensure that partners with whom it works, have adequate safeguarding measures in place.

It is recognized that the sphere of influence is limited to specific partners (see page 9), but efforts will be made to encourage other local sports organizations and agencies to use this document as a model upon which to develop their own policies and procedures.

## Relationship of Policy, Procedures & Guidance

This document is separated into two distinct elements:

- Policy statement & principles
- Implementation procedures

The **Policy** outlines a set of principles, which are intended to guide decisions and actions, and which reflect agreed practice about *how* staff and volunteers should work with children and young people.

The reporting **Procedures** are the specific actions that need to be taken in the event of an allegation, disclosure or suspicion about the welfare of a child.

## Introduction

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These are supported by **Information & Guidance**, which provides contextual information and addresses specific areas of work within sport, which can be found at [www.theplayersfirst.com](http://www.theplayersfirst.com)

The contents of this document have been developed from, and are consistent with:

- Relevant law, regulation and statutory and non statutory government guidance
- Information and advice supplied by the Players First Safeguarding Children Boards
- Current best practice as identified by the NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit

## Child

Anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday, as per the Children Acts 1989 and 2004.

## Young Person

Reference to 'children' and 'young people' throughout this document apply interchangeably.

## Vulnerable Adult

A person aged 18 or over who is or may be in need of community care services **and** is or may be unable to protect themselves from harm.

PF recognize that it is not appropriate to operate combined policies regarding the safeguarding of children and of vulnerable adults, due to the vast differences in legal and statutory requirements. Therefore, the information in this document **cannot** be assumed to apply to vulnerable adults.

For information regarding CF policies and procedures regarding its work with vulnerable adults, please refer to the CF Safeguarding & Protecting Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedures, or contact the CF Disability Sport Manager (see Appendix C for Contacts).

### Parent

The term 'parents' also refers to carers or guardians, or people with parental responsibilities.

### Child Protection

Process of protecting individual children identified as either suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of abuse or neglect.

### Safeguarding

The process of protecting children from abuse or neglect, preventing impairment of their health and development, and ensuring they are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care that enables children to have optimum life chances and enter adulthood successfully.

### Wellbeing

The five outcomes that are key to children and young people's wellbeing, as first set out in *Every Child Matters* are to be healthy; stay safe; enjoy and achieve; make a positive contribution; and achieve economic wellbeing. The Children Act 2004 requires local agencies to co-operate with a view to improving the wellbeing of children in relation to these outcomes.

### Poor Practice

Poor practice includes any behavior that contravenes the Code of Conduct (see page 20), which is based around:

- **Rights** of the player, the parent, the coach, the official
- **Responsibilities** for the welfare of the players, the sport, the profession of coaching, and their own development
- **Respect** for other players, officials and their decisions, coaches, the rules

### Abuse & Neglect

'Child abuse and neglect' are forms of maltreatment of a child. These terms include serious physical and sexual assaults as well as cases where the standard of care does not adequately support the child's health or development. Children may be abused or neglected through the infliction of harm, or through the failure to act to prevent harm.

## **Terminology**

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Abuse can occur within the family or in an institution or community setting. Abuse can also take place using electronic communication. Abuse can occur within all social groups regardless of religion, culture, social class or financial position. Children may be abused by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by adults or other children.

## **Policy Statement**

<p>Players First Ltd is committed to working in partnership With organizations delivering sport within the County, to promote and deliver Best practice when working with children and young people.</p>
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## **Principles**

- The welfare and safety of children and young people is of primary concern

## Policy

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- All children have a right to be safe and to be treated with dignity and respect
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse
- It is the responsibility of the child protection professionals to determine whether or not abuse has taken place, but it is everyone's responsibility to report any concerns
- All incidents of suspected poor practice and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- Confidentiality should be upheld in line with the Data Protection Act (1998), and the Freedom of Information Act (2004)
- This policy will be promoted to all staff and volunteers, partners and customers, and will be available on the CF website and in additional formats as required

## Operational Responsibilities

Players First Ltd will:

## Procedures

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- Accept the moral and legal responsibility to provide a duty of care to protect and safeguard the wellbeing of children engaged in any activity over which it has supervision and control
- Respect and promote the rights, wishes and feelings of children and young people
- Undertake recruitment procedures that take account of the need to protect children and include arrangements for appropriate checks on new staff and volunteers, in accordance with Players First recruitment practice
- Train and supervise its employees and volunteers to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect young people from abuse, and reduce the likelihood of allegations of abuse against themselves
- Require all staff and volunteers to adopt and abide by this Policy and Implementation Procedures, and the Code of Ethics and Conduct (see page 20)
- Respond to any allegations and concerns appropriately and implement the appropriate disciplinary and appeals procedures, in accordance with Coaches First disciplinary procedures
- Promote a culture that ensures that all children and young people are listened to and respected as individuals
- Ensure that parents, children, staff and volunteers are provided with information about this policy, what it does, and what they can expect from Players First
- Ensure that parents, children, staff and volunteers are provided with clear procedures to voice their concerns or lodge complaints if they feel unsure or unhappy about anything
- Maintain confidentiality and ensure information is shared as appropriate with other agencies in all cases involving safeguarding, in line with current legislation
- Lead on the production, monitoring and review of this policy and procedures

### Strategic Responsibilities

In respect of its strategic responsibilities for safeguarding, *partners* of Coaches First are defined as;

- Organizations who make partnership funding contributions
- Organizations who are awarded funding from PF
- Organizations with whom PF has a Service Level Agreement or other partnership agreement
- Organizations whom PF commissions to provide a service
- Organizations to whom PF award Club mark or other accreditation

Partners could include, but are not limited to: Local Authorities, sports clubs, Governing Bodies of Sport, leisure/activity providers, schools, School Sports Partnerships, Community Sports Networks, media agencies, event management companies, training providers, youth service, sports facilities.

Players First Ltd:

- Ensure partner organizations have adequate policies and procedures in respect of safeguarding
- Expect partners to respond to any allegations appropriately and implement their own procedures
- Ensure that the inclusion of adequate safeguarding arrangements is a key element of all commissioning, funding and partnership agreements
- Encourage, support and assist organizations to develop and implement safeguarding policy and procedures.

All Coaches First staff and volunteers have a role to play in ensuring that the organization's strategic responsibilities are upheld. For more information about the roles and responsibilities at each of the following levels within the organization, visit [www.playersfirst.com](http://www.playersfirst.com)

- Players First Sports Board
- Senior Management Team
- Designated Officer
- Deputizing Officers
- Staff & Volunteers

### Introduction

All staff and volunteers should have an understanding of abuse and neglect and know how and when to take action. Players First Ltd with its partners will put in place training and support programmes to ensure that all personnel are able to effectively deal with any suspicions of poor practice, abuse or neglect.

*Working Together to Safeguard Children 2006* sets out definitions and examples of the four broad categories of abuse:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect

These categories overlap and an abused child frequently suffers more than a single type of abuse. For more detailed information on each category of abuse, or any of the following specific areas, please visit [www.thePlayersfirst.com](http://www.thePlayersfirst.com):

- Race and Racism
- Bullying
- Deaf and Disabled Children
- Abuse of Position of Trust

### **Recognizing Abuse & Neglect**

Factors described below are frequently found in cases of abuse and/or neglect. Their presence is not proof abuse has occurred, but must be regarded as indicators of possible significant harm. Such indications justify the need for careful assessment and discussion with the designated officer, and may require consultation with and/or referral to Local Social Services.

Indications that a child may be experiencing abuse include the following:

- The child appears frightened of the parent/s
- The child acts in a way that is inappropriate to her/his age
- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries
- An injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent
- Unexplained changes in behavior
- Inappropriate sexual awareness
- Engaging in sexually explicit behavior
- Distrust of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected
- Has difficulty in making friends
- Is prevented from socializing with other children
- Displays variations in eating patterns including overeating or loss of appetite
- Loses weight for no apparent reason
- Becomes increasingly dirty or unkempt

It is not the responsibility of those working in sport to decide that child abuse is occurring but it is their responsibility to act on any concerns.

### Reporting

There are a number of ways in which abuse can become apparent. In any of the following circumstances, a report should be immediately referred to the Designated Safeguarding Officer (see Appendix B).

- A **disclosure** by a child of poor practice/abuse
- A **suspicion** that poor practice/abuse may have taken place
- An **allegation** of poor practice/abuse

In being vigilant of child protection it is crucial that all staff are aware of the steps used to recognize signs of child abuse.

- 1 As soon as possible after the disclosure/allegation/suspicion, an Incident Report Form must be completed (see Appendix B) accurately, legibly and in as much detail as possible and submitted within 24 hours to the Designated Officer, who will notify Children's Social services/Care.
- 2 The incident report must be forwarded by the Designated Officer to a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). If as a result of the report the young person becomes an identified 'Child in Need', or should the LADO need clarification or further information, staff may be asked to take part in discussions – this could be over the telephone or at an initial strategy meeting co-ordinated by the child protection team.
- 3 If the situation is one of child abuse, or a child is in imminent danger, the Designated Officer should contact the Duty Manager for Social Services in the area in which the young person lives (see Appendix C).
- 4 If the designated officers and deputies are not available, the person discovering or being informed of the abuse should immediately contact Children's Social services/Care or the police (see Appendix C), who will decide how and when parents/carers/guardians will be informed and ultimately become responsible for what steps to take next.

- 5 The Duty Manager will make a decision within 24 hours if a formal 'referral' (further action) is required. Within seven working days, an initial assessment will be completed based on the child's development needs, family and environment factors, and parenting capacity.

### **Disclosure by a Child**

Children who are being abused will only tell people they trust and with whom they feel safe. By listening to and taking seriously what a child is telling you, you will already be helping to protect them.

If a child starts to disclose abuse, use the following guidelines:

- React calmly so as not to frighten or deter the child.
- Reassure the child that s/he is right to tell you and is not to blame.
- Do not make promises of confidentiality; explain that you have to make sure that s/he is safe, and that you may need to ask other adults to help you to do this.
- Take what the child says seriously, recognizing the difficulties inherent in interpreting what is said by a child who has a speech disability and/or differences in language.
- Keep questions to the absolute minimum to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said. Questions should only consist of Who...? What...? When...? Where...? Questions should be not be leading.
- Let the child tell you what s/he wants to tell you and no more. S/he may have to disclose to a specialist later, and too much detail now may interfere with later investigations.

## Procedures

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- When the child has finished, make sure s/he feels secure. Explain what you are going to do next.
- Make a full written record of what has been said, heard and/or seen, including the date and time, and sign them.
- Record as much as you can remember, using the child's own words.
- Fill in the Incident Report Form (see Appendix B).
- Ensure the safety of the young person – if they need immediate medical attention, call an ambulance, inform doctors of concerns and ensure that they are aware it is a child protection issue.
- Immediately inform the Designated Officer/Deputy/member of SMT (see Appendix C).

## Suspected Abuse

Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported to the designated person, who will take the necessary steps to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk. The designated person will seek advice from the social services department who may involve the police.

The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department. The designated person also notify the NGB and LA CPO who will decide who should deal with any media enquiries.

If the designated person is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made directly to a member of the Unit's Senior Management team (see Appendix C) who is then responsible for taking the action outlined above.

## Sharing Concerns with Parents

KSLO is committed to working in partnership with parents where there are concerns about their children. Therefore, in most situations, it would be important to talk to parents to help clarify any initial concerns. For example, if a child seems withdrawn, there may be a reasonable explanation. S/he may have experienced

## **Procedures**

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an upset in the family, such as a parental separation, divorce or bereavement. If you are unsure what to do, discuss this with the Designated Officer.

There are circumstances in which a young person might be placed at even greater risk if concerns are shared (e.g. where a parent or carer may be responsible for the abuse or not able to respond to the situation appropriately). In these situations or where concerns still exist, any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to the designated person in charge as soon as possible and recorded.

## **Allegations against Staff**

Any concerns for the welfare of the child, arising from abuse or poor practice by a member of staff or volunteer, must be dealt with in the same way as allegations against other people, and reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

If the allegation is about the Designated Officer, the report should be made to a deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer, or a member of the KSLO Senior Management Team. Where there is a complaint of abuse against a member of staff or volunteer, there may be three types of investigation:

- Criminal
- Child protection
- Disciplinary or misconduct

Civil proceedings could also be initiated by the person/family of the person who alleged the abuse.

Coaches First Ltd disciplinary investigations will take into account all relevant information, including the results of any police and social services investigations and those of other partners.

### **Internal Enquiries and Suspension**

Players first will follow CF disciplinary procedures with regards to the suspension of any individual accused of abuse, pending further police and social services inquiries.

All relevant sports personnel will be notified of the suspension and the investigation procedures that the Unit may instigate in the event of an allegation. This will be included as part of their induction training and signing up to the Code of Conduct (see page 20).

Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries, Players First Ltd will assess all individual cases under the appropriate misconduct/disciplinary procedures, to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer should be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled with other staff or volunteers.

This may be a difficult decision, particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, PF will reach a decision based on the available information that could suggest, on a balance of probability; it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of children will always remain paramount.

### **Poor Practice**

If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice, the Designated Officer for the National Governing Body of Sport will also be informed (see Appendix C) and their complaints and appeals procedures will be followed.

If the allegation is about poor practice by the Designated Officer, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be referred to the SMT, to decide how to deal with the allegation and whether or not disciplinary proceedings should be initiated.

### **Support for Staff**

Players First and its partners will ensure adequate support is made available, that is appropriate to children, parents and members of staff.

It is acknowledged that feelings generated by the discovery that a member of staff or volunteer is, or may be, abusing a child, will raise concerns among other staff or volunteers. This includes the difficulties inherent in reporting such matters.

Players First assures all staff/volunteers that they will fully support and protect anyone who, in good faith (without malicious intent), reports his or her concern about a colleague's practice or the possibility that a child may be being abused.

Staff are entitled to free, confidential counseling sessions with an independent, experienced professional counselor from Support Line (Call 01732 526910).

### **Allegations of Previous Abuse**

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (e.g. by an adult who was abused as a child or by a member of staff who is still currently working with children). Where such an allegation is made, the procedures as detailed above should be used and the matter reported to the police, as other children, either within or outside sport, may be at risk from this person. Anyone who has a previous criminal conviction for offences related to child abuse is automatically excluded from working with children.

### **Action if bullying is suspected**

Players First Ltd will promote the PF anti-bullying policy, which can be found at [www.Theplayersfirst.com](http://www.Theplayersfirst.com)

All personnel as well as all young people involved in PF events will be provided with training, support and information as appropriate.

## **Procedures**

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A procedure for dealing with bullying should be developed as part of the Welfare Plan for any PF events, which should be made available to participants, and should include;

- Record the incident using the Incident Report Form (see Appendix E)
- Speak to the bully separately and agree a course of action
- Follow up to ensure the victim is safe
- Aim to integrate the victim into the group
- Praise the bully for any subsequent positive behavior
- Track any further action, including speaking to other agencies or parents, or undertaking any mediation or other meetings
- Inform the Designated Officer/Deputy/member of SMT (see Appendix F)

## **Good Practice**

## **Good Practice**

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All personnel in sport will be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behavior in order to promote the welfare of young people and reduce the likelihood of allegations being made.

Sports personnel must demonstrate good practice by:

- Treating all young people equally, and with respect and dignity
- Always putting the welfare of each young person first, before winning or achieving goals
- Always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations)
- Maintaining a professional relationship with performers
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children to share in the decision-making process
- Making sport fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play
- Ensuring that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it is provided openly and according to guidelines provided by the NGB
- Keeping up to date with the technical skills, qualifications and insurance in sport
- Involving parents wherever possible (e.g. for the responsibility of their children in the changing rooms)
- Ensuring that if mixed teams are taken away, they will always be accompanied by a male and female member of staff
- Ensuring that at tournaments or residential, adults will respect the privacy of young people but reserve the right to enter young people's rooms in exceptional circumstances
- Being an excellent role model – this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- Recognizing the developmental needs and capacity of young people - avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will
- Securing parental consent in writing to act in loco parentis, if the need arises to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment
- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given
- Requesting written parental consent if club officials are required to transport young people in their cars

### **Practice to be avoided**

The following should be avoided except in emergencies. If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable they should only occur with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge of the activity or the child's parents. For example, a child sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital, or a parent fails to arrive to pick a child up at the end of a session.

- Avoid spending time alone with children away from others.
- Avoid transporting children in a vehicle alone.

### **Practice never to be sanctioned**

You should never:

- Take children to your home where they will be alone with you
- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- Share a room with a child
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun
- Reduce a child to tears as a form of control
- Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- Do things of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves
- Invite or allow children to stay with you at your home unsupervised
- Use inappropriate language

It may occasionally be necessary for staff or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are young or are disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and written consent of parents and the performers involved.

There is a need to be responsive to a person's reactions. If a person is fully dependent on you, talk with him/her about what you are doing and give choices where possible. This is particularly so if you are involved in any dressing or undressing of outer clothing, or where there is physical contact, lifting or assisting

## **Good Practice**

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a child to carry out particular activities. Avoid taking on the responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained.

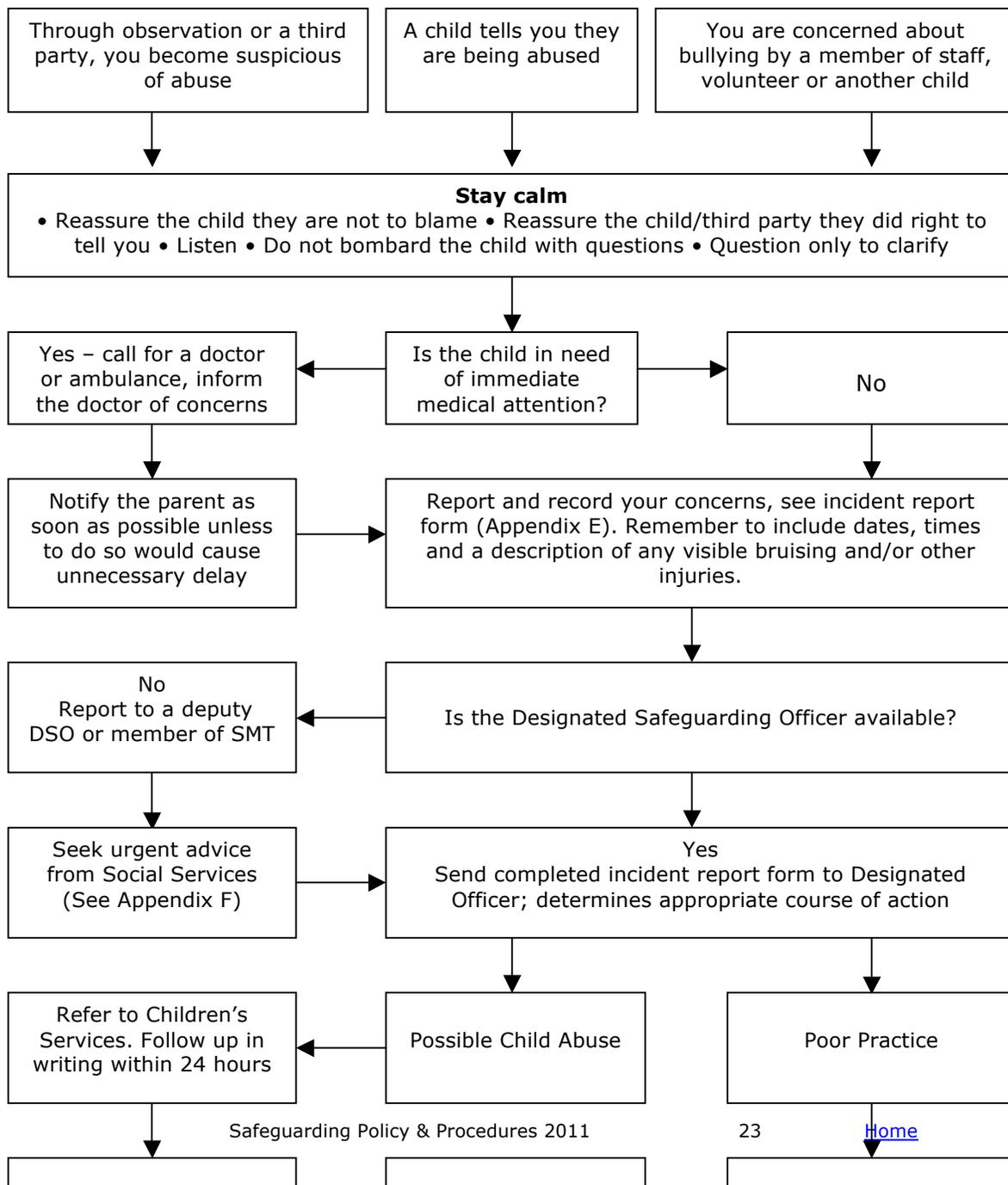
If any of the following incidents should occur, you should report them immediately to another colleague and make a written record of the event. Parents should also be informed of the incident:

- If you accidentally hurt a performer
- If he/she seems distressed in any manner
- If a performer appears to be sexually aroused by your actions
- If a performer misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done

## **Further Information**

For more detailed information on any of the following areas of good practice, please visit [www.coachesfirst.co.uk](http://www.coachesfirst.co.uk).

- Codes of Ethics and Conduct
- Photographic Filming Equipment
- Safe Recruitment
- Staffing & Supervision Ratios
- Mixed Age Activity
- Electronic Communication
- Duty of Care
- Managing Challenging Behavior
- Events
- Physical Contact
- Elite Young Athletes
- Information Sharing



**Incident Report Form**

Your name and contact number:
Your position:
Child's name:
Child's address:
Parents/carers names, address and contact number:
Child's date of birth:
Date and time of incident:
Your observations:
Exactly what the child said and what you said: (Remember; do not lead the child – record actual details. Continue on separate

**Appendix B – Incident Report Form**

sheet if necessary)

Who? . . . . .  
. . . . .

What happened? . . . . .  
. . . . .

When? . . . . .  
. . . . .

Where? . . . . .  
. . . . .

Witness(es) name and details plus their observations (if any):

Action taken so far:

**Incident Report Form**

External agencies contacted (date & time)

<b>Police</b> Contacted? Yes / No	Name and contact number:  Details of advice received:
<b>Social Services</b> Contacted? Yes / No	Name and contact number:  Details of advice received:
<b>NGB</b> Contacted? Yes / No	Name and contact number:  Details of advice received:
<b>Local Authority</b> Contacted? Yes / No	Name and contact number:  Details of advice received:
<b>Other</b> (e.g. NSPCC) Contacted? Yes / No	Name and contact number:  Details of advice received:

Signature:

Print Name:

Date:

**Appendix B – Incident Report Form**

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**A copy of this form should be sent to the Designated Officer who will refer it on to Social Services, as required.**

**Remember to maintain confidentiality on a *need to know* basis – only if it will protect the child. Do not discuss this incident with anyone other than those who need to know.**

**Appendix B – Incident Report Form**

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