



Sussex Squash & Racketball

[sussexsquash.org.uk](http://sussexsquash.org.uk)



## **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY** **AND PROCEDURES**

# CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

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# **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In 1999 Government figures indicated that over 31,900 children were registered as being in need of protection from abuse. Children may be abused regardless of their age, racial origin, social class, gender, culture, religious belief, disability or sexual identity. Most abuse is committed by those who are known to the child and who are trusted by the child. This can be from within or outside the family including a sports situation.

As an organisation with responsibility for children, we have both a moral and a legal obligation to ensure the highest possible standard of care for those children who use our services.

Sussex Squash and Racketball is committed to providing safe, enjoyable activities and sporting opportunities for young people. To this end the following Child Protection Policy Document has been compiled.

The purpose of the policy is to safeguard children placed in our care and to facilitate the best possible professional practice from Sussex Squash and Racketball and it's staff.

## **2.0 POLICY STATEMENT**

Sussex Squash and Racketball is committed to ensuring that children are protected and kept safe from harm whilst they are engaged in any activity associated with them.

We will endeavour to achieve this by:

- Ensuring that our staff and volunteers are carefully selected, trained and supervised.
- Providing clear procedures for parents and children to voice their concerns or lodge complaints if they feel unsure or unhappy about any issue.

## **2.1 Policy Aims**

This Child Protection Policy is provided as part of an induction package to all those employed, whether paid or unpaid, who will have direct contact with children. The aims are:

- To create a healthy and safe environment at all activities, sport programmes and sessions.
- To ensure children are listened to, and kept safe from harm.
- To support and encourage parents to voice their opinions regarding the welfare of their children.
- To ensure staff and volunteers who administer sessions are well informed, supported and enabled to provide the best possible practice.

## **2.2 Objectives**

The objectives are:

- To raise the level of awareness of staff and volunteers about child abuse and its various forms.
- To raise the level of awareness of staff and volunteers about what children are entitled to be protected from.
- To ensure that all staff are able to recognise signs which could signify the abuse of a child.
- To promote the general welfare, health and full development of children during all sessions.
- To develop effective procedures in recording and responding to accidents and complaints and to alleged or suspected incidents of abuse.

## **3.0 Employment Issues**

### **3.1 Recruitment and Selection of Staff/Volunteers**

**All** applicants to provide recreational opportunities for children will complete a disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau to ensure that there are no irregularities in their background which may give cause for

concern. All new employees will be provided with the Child Protection Policy and asked to sign to confirm that they will abide by it.

Application forms are designed to ascertain as much information as possible, such as but not limited to:

- Past career, relevant interests, any gaps in employment and reasons for leaving, educational, National Governing Body and First aid qualifications.
- Consent for a Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure.
- At least one reference is taken up, and where relevant followed up by letter or telephone. References taken up will allow senior Sussexsport staff to ascertain the person's suitability to work with children.
- It is made clear that all information remains confidential.
- Personal identification will be confirmed by reference to a passport, driving licence, birth or marriage certificate, National Insurance number and utility bill.
- That coaches hold adequate professional indemnity and/or personal liability insurance to cover their coaching role.

### **3.2 Induction and Training**

The recruitment and selection process is followed up by relevant training.

- Staff are made aware that child abuse can and does occur and that it could be perpetrated by colleagues, who are Sussex Squash and Racketball members of staff/volunteers.
- It is made clear that most abusers are not the monsters most people picture them to be, but ordinary men and women, more commonly men, and, at the extreme, clever, manipulative and powerful.
- Staff are made aware that children can find it very difficult to tell about abuse. They need to be listened to, taken seriously, and have their concerns acted upon.
- Staff are made aware of what they need to do in response to concerns reaching their eyes and ears.
- All staff who may be working with children will be asked to attend the SportsCoachUK Good Practice and Child Protection Policy Workshop.

## **4.0 Information to be provided to employees**

### **4.1 RECOGNITION OF ABUSE**

It is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or has already taken place even for those experienced in working with child abuse. Sussex Squash and Racketball (SSR) acknowledges its staff are not experts at such recognition. It is important therefore to recognise that **it is not their responsibility to decide whether or not child abuse is taking place, but to report** where they have concerns or suspicions where an allegation has been made.

The concern that the child may have been abused could relate to something which has happened whilst the child is engaged in an activity run by SSR, or it may be a disclosure made by the child to a staff member or volunteer or a concern about something the child has experienced outside of the activity provided by SSR. Either would require a proactive response.

There are many ways in which child abuse may manifest itself, for example:

- 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;
- the child describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him/her;
- someone else, a child or adult, expresses concern about the welfare of another child;
- unexplained changes in behaviour over time e.g. becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper;
- inappropriate sexual awareness;
- engages in sexually explicit behaviour in games;
- is distrustful of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship will normally be expected;
- has difficulty in making friends;
- is prevented from socialising 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.

This list is NOT exhaustive and the presence of one or more of the above is NOT proof that abuse is actually taking place.

## 4.2 Main Forms of Abuse

- **Physical Abuse**

Where adults physically hurt or injure children by hitting, shaking, squeezing, burning and biting or by giving children alcohol, inappropriate drugs or poison. **In the sporting situation physical abuse can occur when the type of training exceeds the capacity of the child's physical capability.**

- **Sexual Abuse**

This occurs when children are abused by adults who use children to meet their own sexual needs. This could include full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse, fondling and the showing of pornographic material. Physical contact with children could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed. **The role of a coach in a sporting situation could provide the means of an abusive situation occurring.**

- **Emotional Abuse**

This may be caused by a persistent lack of love and affection, where a child may be constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted. It may also occur when there is constant overprotection (which prevents children from socialising), or there is neglect, physical or sexual abuse. Emotional abuse might occur if children are subjected to excessive criticism, inappropriate personal or sexual remarks, bullying, being exposed to undue or inappropriate pressure or exposed to danger.

- **Neglect**

This occurs where adults fail to meet the child's basic needs such as food or warm clothing, fail or refuse to give children love, affection and attention. Children might also be constantly left alone or unsupervised. Neglect could include not ensuring children are safe, exposing them to undue cold or to unnecessary risk of injury. **Neglect could occur during organised activities if young people are exposed to the risk of injury or there is a failure to ensure their safety.**

### **4.3 Effects of Abuse**

Abuse in all its forms can affect a child at any age. The effects can be so damaging that, if untreated, they may follow an individual into adulthood. For example, an adult who has been abused as a child may find it difficult or impossible to maintain a stable, trusting relationship, become involved with drugs or prostitution, attempt suicide or even abuse a child in the future.

There have been a number of studies that suggest children with disabilities are at increased risk of abuse through various factors such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, isolation and a powerlessness to protect themselves, or adequately communicate that abuse has occurred. Children from ethnic minorities who could also be experiencing racial discrimination may feel doubly powerless.

### **4.4 Bullying**

Bullying is in effect another form of abuse and can be either physical, psychological or verbal in nature and is frequently undertaken by a young person. The competitive environment provided by the sports situation makes an excellent environment for the bully to ply his/her trade. In sports the bully can be

- A parent who pushes the child too hard
- A coach with a win at all costs attitude
- A player who intimidates
- An official placing unfair pressure on a person

Bullying can take many forms

- Physical: pushing, hitting etc
- Verbal: name calling, teasing, sarcasm
- Emotional: tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating
- Racist: taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual: unwanted physical contact or abusive comments

There are various ways in which bullying show itself

- Behavioural changes such as reduced concentration, clingy, depressed, tearful, reluctance to attend training or club activities
- A reduction in the standard of play
- Physical signs such as headaches, stomach aches, difficulty in sleeping, damaged clothes
- A shortage of money or frequent loss of clothing

## **5.0 Good Practice**

It IS possible to reduce situations where abuse may occur. The following are more specific examples of care which should be taken when working within a sports/leisure context with children:

### **5.1 You should:**

- Always be publicly open when working with children. Avoid any situations where you and an individual child are completely unobserved (encourage an open environment).
- Where possible, children should not be left unattended, however this will depend on age and circumstances.
- If any form of personal contact is required, it should be provided openly and according to National Governing Body (NGB) guidelines. Parents today are becoming increasingly sensitive about physical contact, so their concerns must be considered and an appropriate response taken to inform them of your actions.
- Where possible, parents should take on the responsibility for their children in the changing rooms. If groups have to be supervised in the changing rooms, ensure that you work in pairs, and do not enter changing rooms of the opposite sex.
- Where there are mixed groups, supervision, where possible, should be by a male **and** female member of staff.
- You must respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person and treat everyone equally within the context of their sport.
- You must place the well-being and safety of the performer above the development of performance.

### **5.2 You should never:**

- Engage in rough, physical and sexually provocative games
- Share a bedroom with a child
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate contact
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child even in fun

- Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- Do things of a personal nature that children can do for themselves
- Enter the changing rooms of the opposite sex

Occasions may arise where a member of staff does things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are young or have disabilities. These duties should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents/carers and the children involved.

If a child is accidentally injured as a result of your actions, seems distressed in any manner, appears to be sexually aroused by your actions, misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done, such incidents should be reported as soon as possible to another colleague and a written report made. Parents and coaches/volunteers should be informed of all incidents.

Everyone should be aware that it is **not good practice to:**

- Spend any time alone with children away from others. When talking to children on your own ensure you can be seen by others.
- Take children alone on car journeys, however short.
- Take children to your home where they will be alone with you.

**If exceptionally any of these situations are expected to occur, plans on how to ensure the child is safe and sound must be made with your supervisor and enacted with the knowledge of the parents.**

## **6.0 What to do if you have concerns**

It is not your role to take individual responsibility for deciding whether or not child abuse is actually taking place. However, there is a responsibility to protect children by referring your concerns to the appropriate agency which is the local social services who can then make enquiries and take any necessary action. Social services will take responsibility for informing the police. Where there is an immediate need to protect the child from danger the police must be advised.

There should always be a commitment to work in partnership with parents or carers where there are concerns about their children. Therefore, in most situations it would be important to talk to parents or carers to help clarify any initial concerns. For example, if a child seems withdrawn, he/she may have experienced a family bereavement.

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

Once the incident/allegation has been reported it is the responsibility of the person in charge to inform the social services (see useful contacts) without delay. If the person in charge is not available, the person discovering or being informed of the abuse should immediately contact the social services, who will decide how and when parents/carers will be informed and ultimately become responsible for what steps to take next.

## **IT IS YOUR ROLE TO REPORT NOT TO JUDGE**

### **6.1 What to do in responding to 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.

#### **Guidelines**

- Create a safe environment by:
  - staying calm and not rushing into actions which may be inappropriate
  - confirming you know how difficult it must have been to confide in you and that they have done the right thing
  - reassuring the child and stressing he/she is not to blame
  - listening to what the child says. Show you are taking what is being said seriously
  - where possible remain in view, do not go somewhere on your own.
- **Be honest and do not make promises you cannot keep.** Explain you will have to tell other people in order to stop what is happening.
- **Ensure you** are quite clear about what the child says so you can pass it on to child protection professionals. Use open questions to encourage the child to use their own words but **do not** press for detailed information **NB** The law is very strict and a child abuse case can be

dismissed if it appears the child has been led or words have been suggested.

- **Record** exactly what the child has said to you, in a legible and accurate format, as soon as possible after the incident. As far as possible use the child's own words. Stick to the facts and do not give your opinion. (an incident report form is available for this)
  - the child's name, address, date of birth
  - the nature of the allegation
  - a description of any visible bruising or other injuries
  - your observations (e.g. a description of the child's behaviour and physical and emotional state)
  - exactly what the child said and what you said. Record the child's account of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred
  - any action you took as a result of your concerns (e.g. who you spoke to and resulting action, including any contact with parents, managers or social services). Include names, addresses and telephone numbers
  - sign and date what you have recorded
  - store the information in accordance with relevant procedures
- Do not take sole responsibility - consult someone else (e.g. a senior colleague or someone you can trust) as soon as possible so you can begin to protect the child and gain some support for yourself.

**NB: In determining your actions, remember that only experienced and specifically qualified and trained professionals should deal with cases or suspicions relating to child abuse.**

## **6.2 Dealing with Allegations against Staff/Volunteers**

Should a member of staff become aware of an allegation (against a colleague) of an incident of child abuse taking, or having taken place, it is vital that the following procedures are followed:

- Take the allegation seriously. It is your duty to consider any allegation to be potentially dangerous to the child and therefore report it.

- Make a written record of any details of which you are aware, as part of your report.
- Report the allegation to a more senior member of staff, giving details of the allegation, how you became aware of it and any other relevant details. In a case where the senior member of staff may be involved, report to another senior colleague or staff member you can trust.
- Do not judge or investigate. As an employee or volunteer it is important not to lose focus of your role. By reporting an allegation quickly, any necessary investigations and/or judgement can then be made by trained professionals.
- Maintain confidentiality. It is extremely important that any allegations are not discussed (unless absolutely necessary) as any breaches could be damaging to both the child and to any investigation that may follow.
- Any requests for information from members of the public (including parents) or the media should be directed to a designated member of staff and should be given the 'no comment' response.

### 6.3 Confidentiality

When dealing with any case/suspicion/allegation relating to child abuse, you must be made aware that any breaches in confidentiality can be very damaging to the child, family and any child protection investigations which may take place.

It is important that the rights of both the victim and the **alleged** perpetrator are protected by ensuring that only those who **need to know** are given the relevant information.

This will mean, at the very least, informing:

- Elected Child Protection Officer
- Sussex Squash and Racketball Committee
- The local social services team
- The parents of the child (only if social services ask for this to be done)

Informing the parents of a child about whom you are concerned will be handled in a sensitive way and only undertaken in consultation with the local social services.

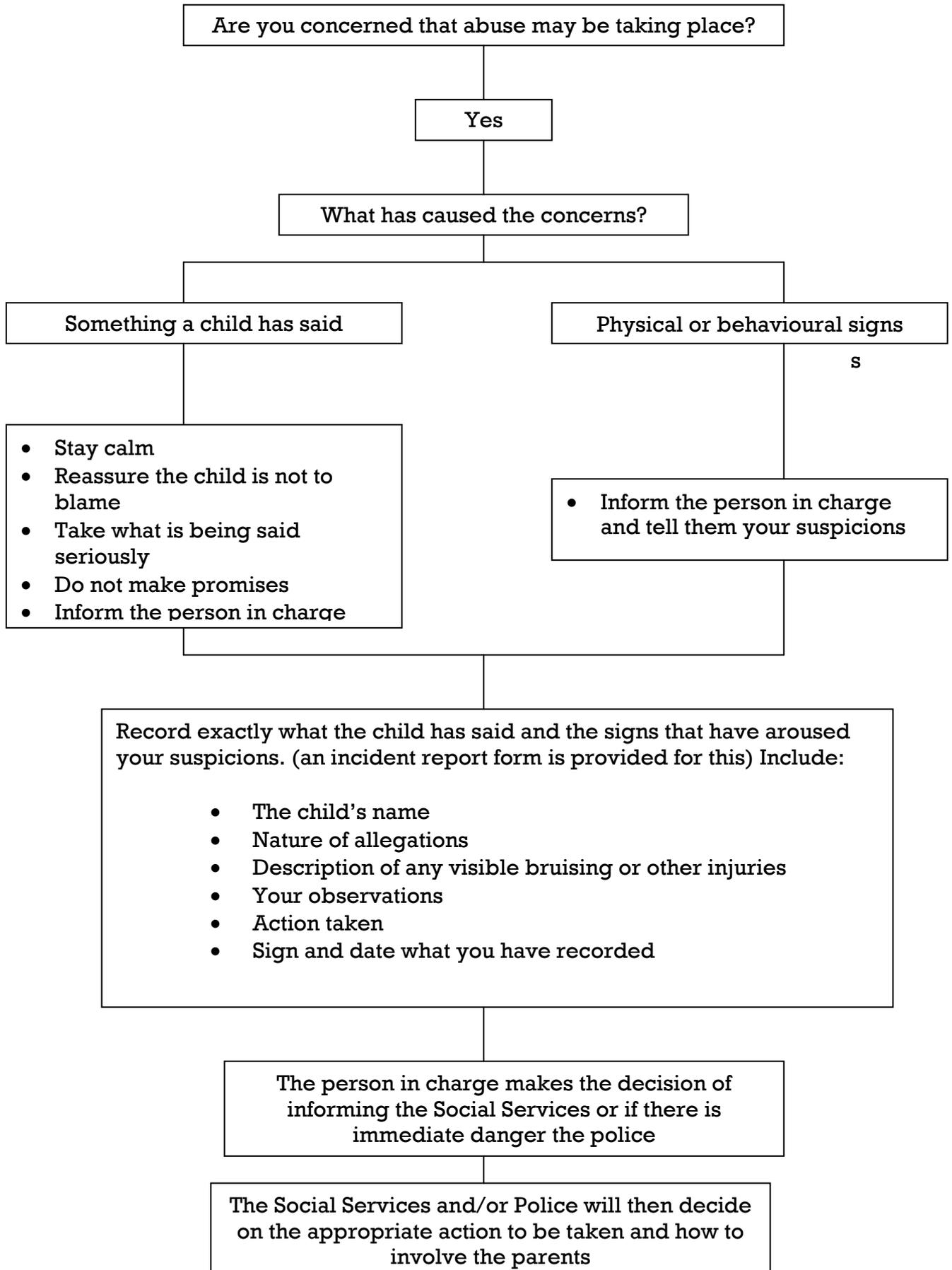
Depending upon the outcome of initial inquiries, staff and other agencies who have contact with either the child concerned or the alleged perpetrator may need to be given brief details of the incident and subsequent action. The statutory agency will provide advice as to who should be told, when they should be told, and the kind of information which it is appropriate to share

#### **6.4 Off Duty Contact between Staff and Children**

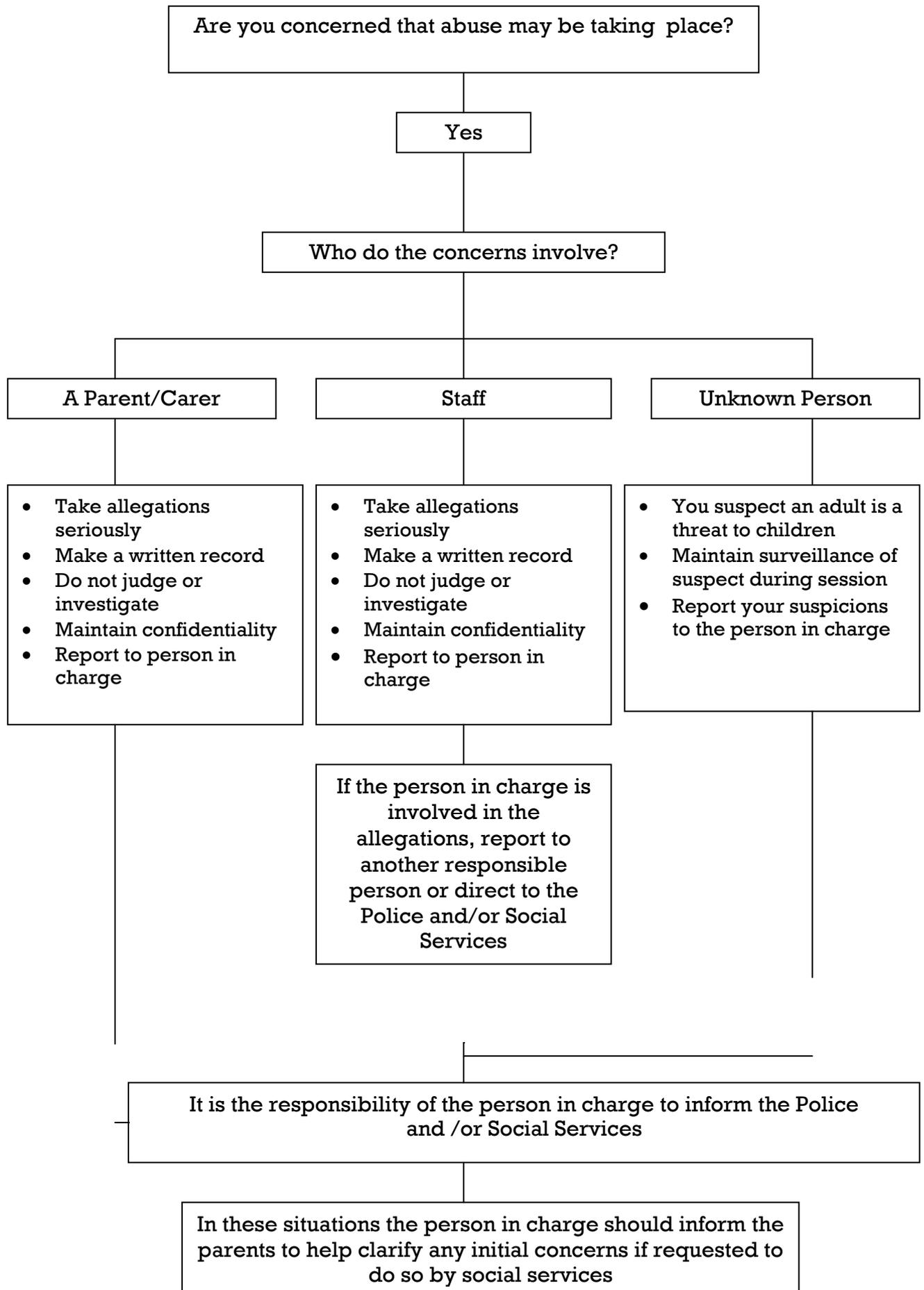
Members of staff must maintain a professional relationship with children during any off-duty contact, continuing to follow the guidelines and policies set out for working contact.

Staff should be particularly careful to limit and, if possible, eliminate any one-to-one contact. This should also include driving children to and from coaching/club sessions. Where an arrangement is made in an emergency, it is important to ensure there is a second adult in the vehicle.

## APPENDIX A: QUICK GUIDE



## APPENDIX B: QUICK GUIDE



## **APPENDIX C: USEFUL CONTACTS**

Social Services local offices Brighton and Hove 01273 296000 (10am –4pm)  
East Sussex County Council 01273 513574

Social Services out of hours service Brighton and Hove 07699 391462  
East Sussex County Council 07699 391462

### **NSPCC**

Child Protection Helpline  
24 hours, call free 0800 800500

### **Childline UK**

Freepost 1111  
London  
N1 0BR  
0800 1111

### **Sussex Police**

01273 475432

### **Child Protection In Sport Unit (CPSU)**

NSPCC National Training Centre  
3 Gilmour Close  
Beaumont Leys  
Leicester  
LE4 1EZ  
Tel: 0116 234 7278/7280

### **Sports Coach UK**

114 Cardigan Road  
Headingley  
Leeds  
LS6 3BJ  
0113 2744802

### **Criminal Records Bureau**

PO Box 21  
Liverpool  
L69 2UH  
0870 9090811

### **Brighton and Hove Council**

Head of Child Protection  
Room 315  
Kings House  
Grand Avenue  
BN3 2SU  
01273 295388

## **DECLARATION**

SSR is fully committed to safeguarding the well-being of children by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional harm.

As an employee of the SSR it is therefore important that you have taken the time to thoroughly read the Child Protection Policy. By being made aware of the policy, it is our intention to ensure that **all** employees are pro-active in providing a safe environment for the young people in their care.

### **Employee Declaration**

I have read and fully understood the Child Protection Policy, and hereby declare that I will carry out my role in line with policy statements and procedures contained therein.

Signed .....

Date .....

## **Incident report form**

Date	Venue
Time	
Name of child	DOB
Address	
Tel no	
Next of kin	
Address (if different from above)	
Tel no (if different from above)	
Person expressing the concern	
Address	
Tel no	
Nature of concern	
What has prompted the concerns? (physical, behavioural, other)	
Has the child been spoken to?	
Who by?	

What was said to the child and what did the child say?	
Is there an alleged abuser?	
Who is this?	
Has this person been approached?	
Has anyone else been consulted?	
Name of reporting person	
Signature	Date

**This form must now be passed to Child Protection Office for Sussex Squash and Racketball**