

DEALING WITH CHILD ABUSE

For the purpose of these guidelines, a child is defined as a person under 16 years of age. For persons over the age of 16 years there is not requirement to follow these guidelines. However, where protective action is thought to be appropriate e.g. a young person with special needs these guidelines provide a helpful framework for considering how best to protect that person.

In the context of these guidelines, the term “Child Abuse” incorporates suspected as well as actual abuse of children. Provided there are reasonable grounds for suspicion, each instance of actual or suspected Child Abuse must be reacted to and followed up as indicated in these guidelines.

The Inter Agency Child Protection Guidelines for Aberdeenshire – NESCPC Child Protection Guidelines identifies five categories of child abuse which must be recorded and acted upon:

- ◆ Physical Injury | Fuller details of these
- ◆ Non-Organic Failure To Thrive | categories can be found
- ◆ Emotional Abuse/Emotional Neglect | in the NESCPC Child
- ◆ Sexual Abuse | Protection Guidelines
- ◆ Physical Neglect | (Chapter 1).

Any member of staff, including voluntary staff, who has abuse reported to them should, without delay, **contact designated member(s) of staff**, dealing with all such instances. If they are not immediately available then refer to another of the officer team

Where the named staff judge that there is evidence of abuse or potential danger to a child then s/he will contact the Divisional Social Work Service in accordance with the NESCPC Child Protection Guidelines.

*The designated officers can be contacted
onduring office hours*

*The NESCPC Child Protection Guidelines
are available in full at the main office at
.....*

Child Protection Statement to Parents

Aberdeenshire Council *Sport and Active Lifestyles* is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children taking part in our activities.

Given on-going public concern on the subject of child abuse, and changes in the law, we are now required to report if we think any child has come to harm as a consequence of possible abuse.

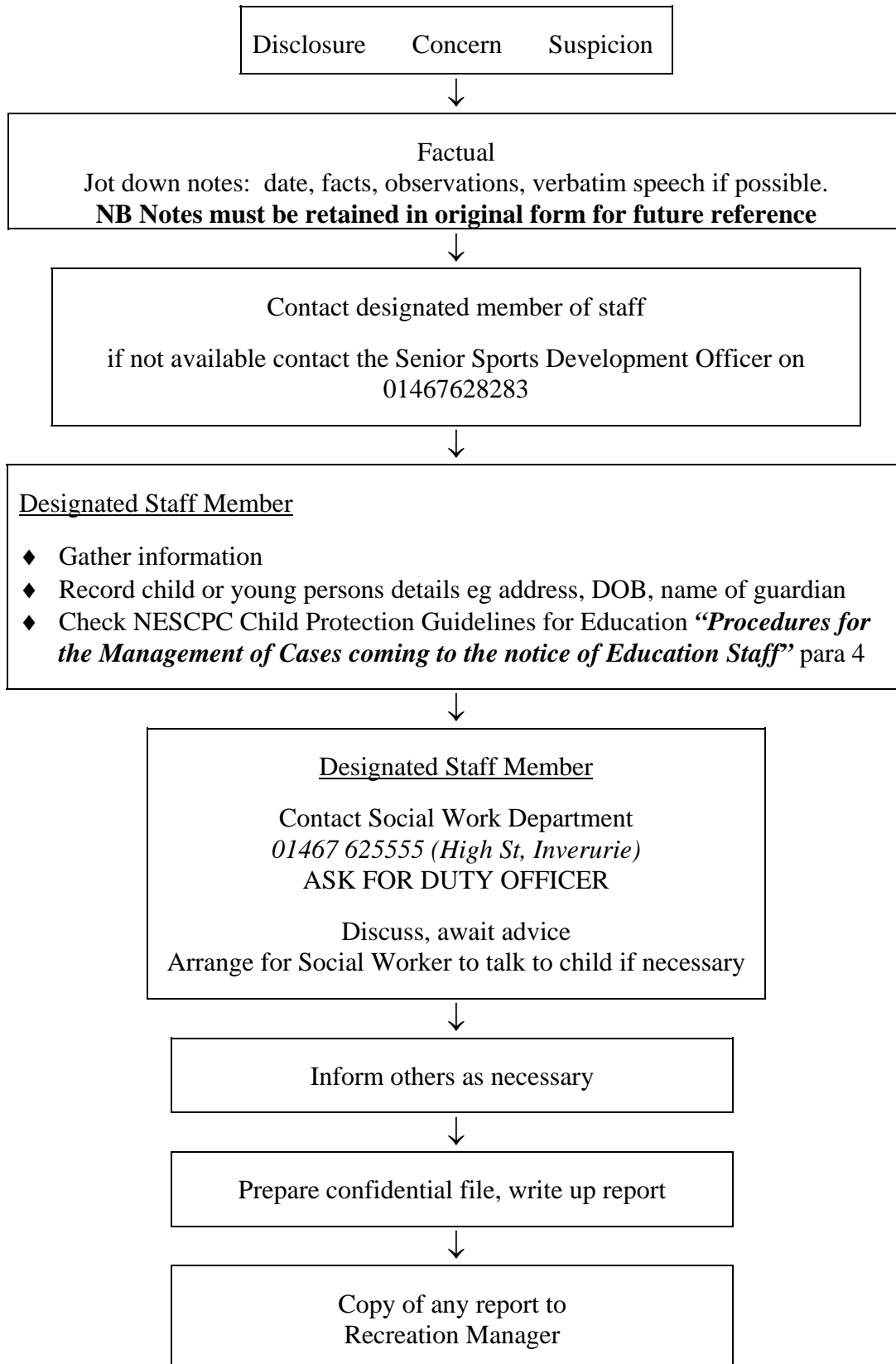
Sport and Active Lifestyles now has a Designated Officer appointed to be responsible for Child Protection matters and specially trained for the task.

Should you wish to talk further about Child Protection and the safety of children please feel free to contact the *Sport and Active Lifestyles* section at any of the offices below.

Where there is the possibility that a child could be at risk of abuse or neglect, sports development is required to refer the child to Social Work, the Police or the Reporter, and under these circumstances, the parent would not normally be contacted first.

Recreation Office, Gordon House, Blackhall Road, Inverurie
Recreation Office, Viewmount, Arduathie Road, Stonehaven
Recreation Office, 1 Church St, Macduff

PROCEDURES: DEALING WITH CHILD ABUSE



GUIDELINES FOR STAFF DEALING WITH CHILD ABUSE

The following guidelines for dealing with disclosures have been devised to assist any member of staff who may have to respond to such a situation being brought to their attention.

Dealing with Disclosures

Receive

- Listen to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief
- Accept what is said
- Take notes

Reassure

- Reassure the child, but only so far as is honest and reliable, for example, don't make any promises you may not be able to keep, like *"I'll stay with you"* or *"Everything will be all right"*.
- Don't promise confidentiality : you have a duty to refer, but you must ensure confidentiality with the child's peers and community.
- Do reassure and alleviate guilt, if the child refers to it. For example you could say:

"You're not to blame"

"You're not the only one this sort of thing happens to"

React

- React to the child only as far as it is necessary for you to establish whether or not you need to refer this matter, but don't 'interrogate' for full details
- Do not ask leading questions, for example:
 - "What did he do next?"* (This assumes he did)
 - "Did he touch your private parts?"*
- Such questions may invalidate your evidence (and the child's) in any later prosecution in court
- Do ask open questions like:
 - "Anything else to tell me?"*
 - "And?"*
 - "Yes?"*
- Do not criticise the perpetrator, the child may love him/her, and reconciliation may be possible
- Do not ask the child to repeat it all for another member of staff
- Explain what you have to do next and who you have to talk to

Record

- Make some very brief notes at the time on any paper which comes to hand and write them up as soon as possible
- Do not destroy your original notes in case they are required by a court
- Record date, time, place, any noticeable non-verbal behaviour, and the words used by the child. If the child uses sexual 'pet' words, record the actual words used rather than translating them
- Draw a diagram to indicate the position of any bruising
- Record statements and observable things, rather than your interpretations or assumptions.

Remember

- To follow the sports development guidelines

Relax

- Try to get some support for yourself if you need it.
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**PROCEDURES FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF CASES OF CHILD ABUSE OR CHILD
PROTECTION COMING TO THE NOTICE OF STAFF**

Extract from the NESPC Child Protection Guidelines – Chapter 2, Education Section.

1. All establishments should designate a senior member of staff as responsible for co-ordinating action on child abuse within the programme. Referrals should normally be through this designated person but every employee has the responsibility to make a direct referral if this is necessary.
2. Any member of staff suspecting or identifying child abuse, should, without delay, contact the designated member of staff. If contacting the designated person implies delay beyond the end of the session, an assessment should be made of the child's safety and, if necessary, a direct referral should be made.
3. Where the designated member of staff judges that there is evidence of abuse or potential danger to a child then he/she must ensure that Social Work is contacted (this to include discussion as to how parents are engaged). It is important that all staff understand that investigation only needs to establish evidence of the need to investigate abuse. A full inquiry by staff must be avoided because collection of evidence is a specialist Police/Social Work role. Inappropriate inquiries may prevent successful prosecution.
4. If it is considered that the child required immediate medical attention, contact the GP, Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital or Local Hospital as appropriate. If there is a view that the child may risk further abuse if returned home, the Police and Social Work must be informed as soon as possible.
5. When the designated member of staff considers that further investigation is required before suspicions can be confirmed or rejected, he/she can contact social work and any other agency who may be able to assist in any such inquiries or who may have information about the child or family. In particular the School, Health Visitor or the child's General Practitioner. The designated officer may also check the Child Protection Register.
6. A Head of Establishment or designated member of staff may, of course, at any time draw to the attention of the Reporter to the Children's Panel the circumstances of a child who is believed to be in need of compulsory measures of care.
7. In all cases, incidents should be logged, action taken and recorded in written form. The following format is suggested. (copies attached)

**Sport and Active Lifestyles
Policy & Practice
Dealing with Child Abuse**

Venue of class Coach's name		
Name of Child DOB Gender		
Staff member making report.....designation.....		
Type of session.....		
Date	Incident	Action Taken

A copy of any such report should be forwarded to the designated officers at Recreation, Gordon House, Inverurie AB51 3WA and also to the appropriate Senior Education and Recreation Officer for the area.

8. It is essential to maintain strict confidentiality in all child protection matters. Breach of confidentiality is a serious disciplinary matter and must be reported immediately to the line manager.
9. The relevant link Sports Development Officer should ensure that all the staff, including new staff, on an ongoing basis, are made familiar with the contents of this booklet.
11. It is possible that employees are implicated in abuse. Indeed, any adult or child may be an abuser and research shows that some abuse may be perpetrated by women or men, or women and men acting in partnership. Disclosure should not be discounted because of the status or role of the alleged abuser.

EDUCATION – CHILD PROTECTION DECISION MAKING FLOW DIAGRAM

