



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURE

As defined in the Children's Act 1989, for the purposes of this policy and procedure, anyone under the age of 18 should be considered as a child. This policy also applies to vulnerable adults.

This policy and procedure apply to all HRCST staff and volunteers who work with children or vulnerable adults in the course of their duties whilst at HRCST.

POLICY

HRCST recognises that the safety and welfare of the child is paramount and that all children regardless of their age, race, gender, status, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, culture or family circumstance, have a right to protection from discrimination and abuse of any and every form.

- All complaints or concerns of behaviour that contradicts the above should be reported via the procedure below, and will be responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All staff and volunteers of HRCST should do their utmost to safeguard children involved with HRCST from physical, sexual or emotional harm.
- All staff and volunteers of HRCST should do their utmost to create a safe and welcoming environment both on and off the water, where children can have fun and develop their skills and confidence.
- All staff and volunteers of HRCST are advised to follow the good practice guidelines attached, and may be asked to apply for an Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure.

PROCEDURE

If you have any concerns related to the above please refer to the RYA Child Protection Guidelines. If you are still worried please contact Mike Comyn (Child Welfare/Protection Officer) on 07939711328.

GOOD PRACTICE

In order to minimise risk do not:

- Spend any significant time working with children in isolation.
- Take children alone in a car on journeys, however short or take children to your home. Where these are unavoidable, ensure they only occur with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge in the organisation or the child's parents.
- Photograph or video children, or publish their pictures, without the knowledge and consent of their parents. Be sensitive to the risk, although it is probably slight in our sport, that images could be misused by a third party. Do not publish information, in print or on a website, that might enable someone to contact the child.
- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form.
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun.
- Let allegations a child makes go unchallenged or unrecorded; always act.
- Do things of a personal nature that children can do for themselves. However, it may be sometimes necessary to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are very young or disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents. In an emergency situation, which requires this type of help, parents should be fully informed. In such situations, it is important to ensure that all staff are sensitive to the child and undertake personal care tasks with the utmost discretion.
- Do not spend excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others.

GUIDANCE NOTES

This section explains what child abuse is, how to recognise it, and what to do if you have concerns.

WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

Child abuse is a term used to describe ways in which children are harmed, usually by adults and often by people they know and trust. It refers to the damage done to a child's physical or mental health. Children can be abused within or outside their family, at school and in a sports or community environment. Child abuse can take many forms:

Physical abuse where adults or other children:

- Physically hurt or injure children (e.g. by hitting, shaking, squeezing, biting or burning).
- Give children alcohol, inappropriate drugs or poison.
- Attempt to suffocate or drown children.
- In sport situations, physical abuse might also occur when the nature and intensity of training exceeds the capacity of the child's immature and growing body.

Neglect includes situations in which adults:

- Fail to meet a child's basic physical needs (e.g. for food, warm clothing, essential medication).
- Consistently leave children alone and unsupervised.
- Fail or refuse to give children love, affection or attention.
- Neglect in a sports situation might also occur if a teacher or coach fails to ensure children are safe or exposes them to undue cold or risk of injury.

Sexual abuse:

Boys and girls are sexually abused when adults (male or female) or other young people use them to meet their own sexual needs. This could include:

- Full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, fondling.
- Showing children pornographic books, photographs or videos, or taking pictures for pornographic purposes.

- Sport situations which involve physical contact (e.g. supporting or guiding children) could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed. Abusive situations may also occur if adults misuse their power over young people

Emotional abuse can occur in a number of ways:

For example, where:

- There is persistent lack of love or affection.
- There is constant overprotection which prevents children from socialising.
- Children are frequently being shouted at or taunted.
- There is neglect, physical or sexual abuse.
- Emotional abuse in sport might also include situations where parents or coaches subject children to constant criticism, bullying or unrealistic pressure to perform to high expectations.

Bullying

Bullying may be seen as deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. The bully may often be another young person. Although anyone can be a target of bullying, victims are typically shy, sensitive and perhaps anxious or insecure. Sometimes they are singled out for physical reasons - being overweight, physically small, having a disability or belonging to a different race, faith or culture.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF A CHILD TELLS ME HE OR SHE IS BEING ABUSED?

Always:

- Stay calm - ensure the child is safe and feels safe.
- Show and tell the child that you are taking what s/he says seriously.
- Reassure the child and stress that s/he is not to blame.
- Be honest, explain you will have to tell someone else to help stop the alleged abuse.
- Make a note of what the child has said as soon as possible after the event.
- Maintain confidentiality - only tell others if it will help protect the child.

Never:

- Rush into actions that may be inappropriate.
- Make promises you cannot keep.
- Ask inappropriate questions, which may jeopardise any impending police investigation.
- Take sole responsibility - consult someone else (the person in charge or someone you can trust) so you can begin to protect the child and gain support for yourself.

IF I DO SOMETHING, MIGHT IT MAKE THINGS WORSE?

Taking appropriate action if you are worried about abuse is never easy - it takes courage but it protects a young life.

You may be upset about what the child has said or you may worry about the consequences of your actions. Sometimes people worry about children being removed from their families as a result of abuse but in reality this rarely happens. However, one thing is certain - you cannot ignore it. The effects of abuse on children can be devastating, especially if children are left unprotected or do not receive help to cope with the abuse. The most serious effect is that children can and do die as a result of abuse. They can develop behavioural difficulties, problems at school, their development can be delayed and they can become depressed and withdrawn. Some of these problems, if left untreated, can persist into adulthood.

If you are worried, it is NOT your responsibility to decide if it is abuse BUT it is your responsibility to act on your concerns and do something about it.

WHERE CAN I GET FURTHER HELP?

If you want to talk things through to gain some advice, you can phone the following 24 hour free telephone numbers. You do not have to give your name but it is helpful if you can.

NSPCC helpline:
0808 800 5000
nspcc.org.uk

ChildLine:
0800 1111
childline.org.uk

If you are an instructor or volunteer and have had an allegation made against you, advice and support can be gained from the following sources:

Local Citizens Advice Bureau:
Refer to Yellow Pages for contact details

RYA Legal:
023 8060 4220

Sportscoach UK (if a member):
0113 274 4802 sportscoachuk.org

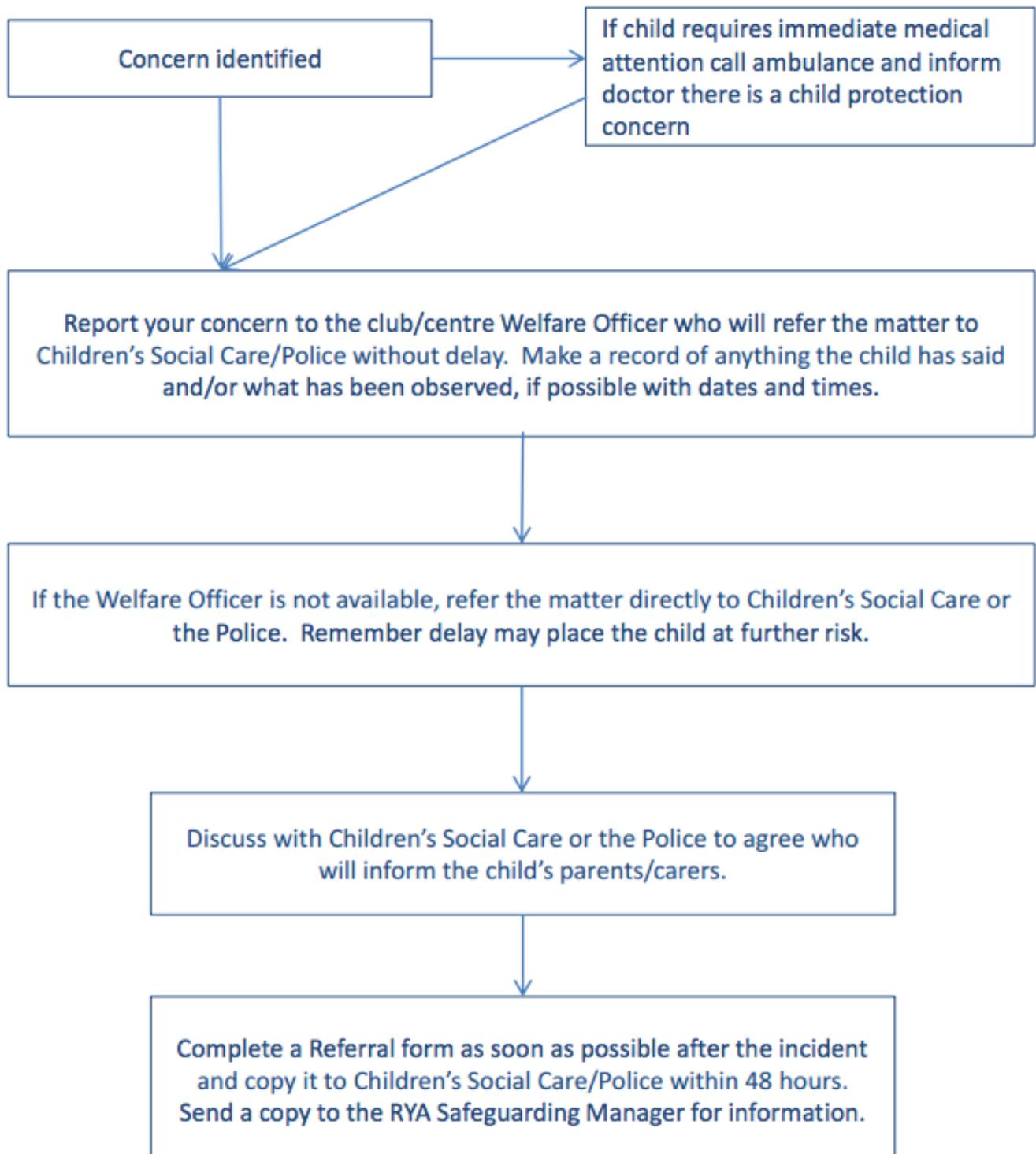
General information is also available on the NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit website: sportprotects.org.uk

AREA OF HRCST RESPONSIBILITY

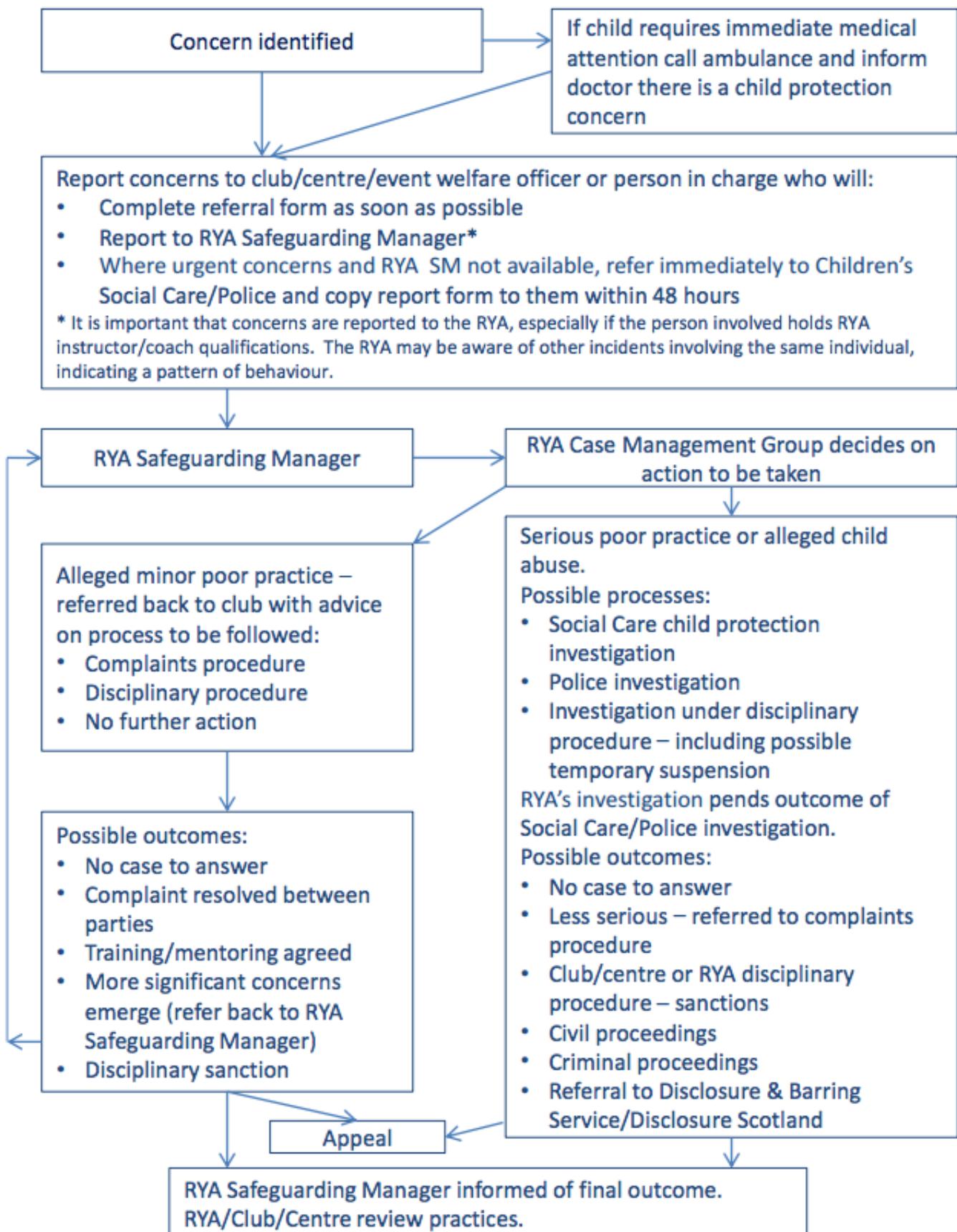
The parent, guardian, school coordinator or designated school volunteer is responsible for the safety and security of all children and vulnerable adults in their care until they are handed over to a member of senior HRCST staff. We do not allow children or vulnerable adults to be dropped off or picked up from the car parks on either side of the river. Everyone should be escorted to a senior member of staff and handed over face to face. We will not release a child after training until we are satisfied that he or she will be safely in the hands of a responsible adult so please endeavor to be prompt for pick-ups.

Reporting Procedures

If you are uncertain what to do at any stage, contact the RYA's Safeguarding Manager on 023 8060 4104 or the NSPCC free 24-hour helpline 0808 800 5000.



1. Concern about a child outside the sport environment



2. Concern about the behavior of someone at a club/centre