



Parent Link
Child Protection Policy
Procedures & Guidance

**Parent Link
Child Protection Policy**

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Parent Link Child Protection Statement

1. Parent Link will strive to ensure that children, young people and vulnerable adults are protected at all times by:
 - a) Only providing safe and non-threatening activities provided by suitably qualified or experienced staff.
 - b) Will ensure that staff working with children have undergone or are currently going through the process of being checked by the Criminal Records Bureau.
 - c) That all activities have under gone a risk assessment and that proper parental consent has been sought where appropriate.

General Procedures and Guidance

2. This document lays down those responsible for the implementation of child protection procedures for Parent Link and for individual departments, including:
 - a) The role of the competent person
 - b) The new events process, indoor and outdoor
 - c) Definitions of vulnerable or at risk

1.1 What is significant harm?

The Children Act 1989 introduced the concept of significant harm as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in the family life in the best interest of the children. However even when this threshold has been reached it emphasised that parents or carers should be informed of and if possible give consent to this intervention unless it is clear that to do so would increase it is clear that to do so would increase the risk to the child.

Once it is clear that a child may be or is suffering from significant harm, Parent Link is under a duty to make enquires as to the legitimacy of this concern. This will be addressed in Chapter 2.

Defining exactly what significant harm means is difficult, and “Working Together to Safeguard Children” shies away from arriving at a clear definition. However, the following guidance taken from Working Together is helpful.

“ Consideration of the severity of ill treatment may include the degree and extent of physical harm, the duration and frequency of abuse and neglect and the extent of pre-meditation, degree of threat and coercion, sadism, and bizarre or unusual elements in child sexual abuse.

Each of these elements has been associated with more severe effects on the child, and/or relatively greater difficulty in helping the child overcome the adverse impact of the ill treatment. Sometimes a single traumatic event may constitute significant e.g. a violent assault, suffocation or poisoning. More often, significant harm is a compilation of significant events both acute and longstanding, which interrupt, change or damage the child's physical and psychological development. Some children live in family and social circumstances, where their health and development are neglected. For them it is the corrosiveness of long-term emotional, physical or sexual abuse that causes impairment to the extent of constituting significant harm. In each case it is necessary to consider any ill treatment alongside the family's strengths and support.

1.2

In making your own judgement about whether or not the concerns which you have about a child and their family meet the criteria for likely or actual suffering of significant harm, the chances of you having the whole picture about this child and the family are remote.

This is why the government has introduced the **Assessment Framework** which provides the way in which all agencies who have involvement with the family can contribute their information and their understanding to the whole picture of whether a child is in need and/or whether a child is in need of protection.

1.3

In deciding what to do then about the concerns, which you have about a child, you need to be able to answer three questions:

What information and understanding can I contribute to a whole picture, which will help identify whether a child is in need and/or in need of protection.

Have I recorded this information in a way, which evidences my concerns?

How much do the parents or carers know about my concerns? If I have not informed them can I still justify this on the basis that to do so would place the child at increased risk of significant harm?

Taking these points in turn:

1.4

What information and understanding can I contribute to a whole picture, which will help me identify whether a child is in need and/or in need of protection?

This question is important for two reasons:

Firstly, you may be so concerned about what you see or hear from a child or their parents that you believe the criteria for significant harm has been met and action should be taken. However, it may be that when all aspects of the picture are put together the family is considered to be in need of support rather than compulsory intervention.

Secondly, the piece of information, which you have, may give you cause for some concern but not enough to meet the criteria of significant harm. However, when all aspects of the picture are put together it may become apparent that this child is suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm and action does need to be taken.

Your responsibility therefore is not to make a judgement about whether or not the threshold of significant harm has been reached; it is to provide the best information possible in order to ensure that this judgement is made on the basis of as a full picture as possible about the family.

There are a number of different ways in which your concerns may have arisen:

1.4.1 A child tells you that they have been hurt in some way

The possibility of this happening can cause anxiety both because the child's story of abuse is difficult to hear and there is a fear of getting in wrong some way for the child. There are three important points to remember:

- The child has chosen to tell you and is likely to have worked out in their head what they were going to say. Your task then is to let the child tell their story in their own words.
- Carefully record what the child says in its own words. If it has not been possible or appropriate to do that while the child is talking ensure that you do so at the earliest opportunity
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you and explain that you or someone else within your agency will now need to take action to ensure that the child is safe. Never promise confidentiality and remember that the children almost always tells an adult about what is happening to them because they want it to stop. Reassurance that they can be kept safe is often enough to help a child feel ok about you telling some one else. Tell the child what action you have taken and what will happen next if you know.

1.4.2 Injuries observed on a child

All children receive bumps and bruises in the course of day-to-day activity. Injuries which may give concern include the following:

- Bruises on parts of the body which are not normally affected by falling over, bumping into things etc.
- Burns and scalds.
- Other unusual marks/injuries.

Your responsibility in any of these circumstances is to try to ascertain whether or not there is a satisfactory explanation either from the child directly or from the parent/carer if appropriate remember that your task is to contribute information, not to make a judgement about significant harm. It is therefore important that if you have any doubt whatsoever about the injuries or the explanation given, a referral should be made to Social Services as soon as possible.

1.4.3 A Child's Behaviour or Appearance Gives Causes for Concern

This is potentially the most difficult area in which to decide whether a Child is or may be suffering significant harm. However, there are some basic points to bear in mind:

- Remember that your concerns are only part of the picture. Passing these concerns on to Social Services may make an important contribution to an assessment about whether this is a child in need and/or in need of protection.
- Your concerns should increase if the way the child presents persists over a period of time, worsens over time or changes radically
- The information which you are able to contribute to an assessment will be much more useful if you have been able to share your concerns with the child's parents or carer as early as possible.

1.4.4 Your involvement with a parent or carer may give rise to concern about their parenting capacity.

This is likely to be of particular relevance to staff working in services for adults. EG: Adult Mental Services, Drug and Alcohol Advisory Services, etc. Working Together to Safeguard Children and the Assessment Framework emphasise the importance of Adult Services "keeping the child visible when working with parents who are vulnerable, under stress or temporarily incapacitated in some way".

The information which you have about an adult's attitude to parenting or capacity to parent adequately in light of their own difficulties may contribute significantly to an assessment of whether their children are in need and/or in need of protection. The family is much more likely to receive services which provide relevant support if all agencies involved with the family communicate with each other and build up a full picture of the needs of both children and the adults.

1.4.4 You are concerned that a professional might be involved in abuse.

If you have concerns then it is important to take action. In such circumstances staff should be expected to report concerns as per their own agencies reporting/ whistle blowing policies. A protocol on Allegations of Abuse against professionals is being developed.

1.5 Have I recorded this information in a way, which evidences my concerns?

Reference has already been made above to the importance of carefully recording the concerns that you have about the child and all their family. This is important for two reasons.

- 1.5.1 Firstly, it ensures that the information is accurate and comprehensive. This is particularly relevant in cases of neglect and emotional abuse where the concerns are likely to accumulate over time and where a chronology of significant events can be critical to an assessment of need and risk.

1.5.2 Secondly, good practice, which now underpinned by European Convention on Human Rights, requires that the reasons for decisions regarding intervention in a person's life are able to be evidenced and justified. This is particularly the case when compulsory intervention is required and all of us are accountable for our decisions, and the actions which we take as a result. This process is given much more clarity by careful recording.

1.6 How much do the parents or carers know about my concerns? If I have not informed them can I justify this on the basis that to do so would place the child at increased risk?

**Parent Link
Reporting Form
Concerns over Child Safety**

Person Reporting _____

Organisation / Dept _____

Contact Number _____

Time / Date of incident _____

Location of incident _____

Name of witnesses (if applicable) _____

Outline details (to include name of child if possible) _____

(Continue on separate sheet if needed)

Actions Taken _____

Sheet No _____ of _____

Signed _____ **Date** _____

Attention: When Completed this form must be placed in a sealed envelope marked 'strictly confidential'

Some Safety Considerations

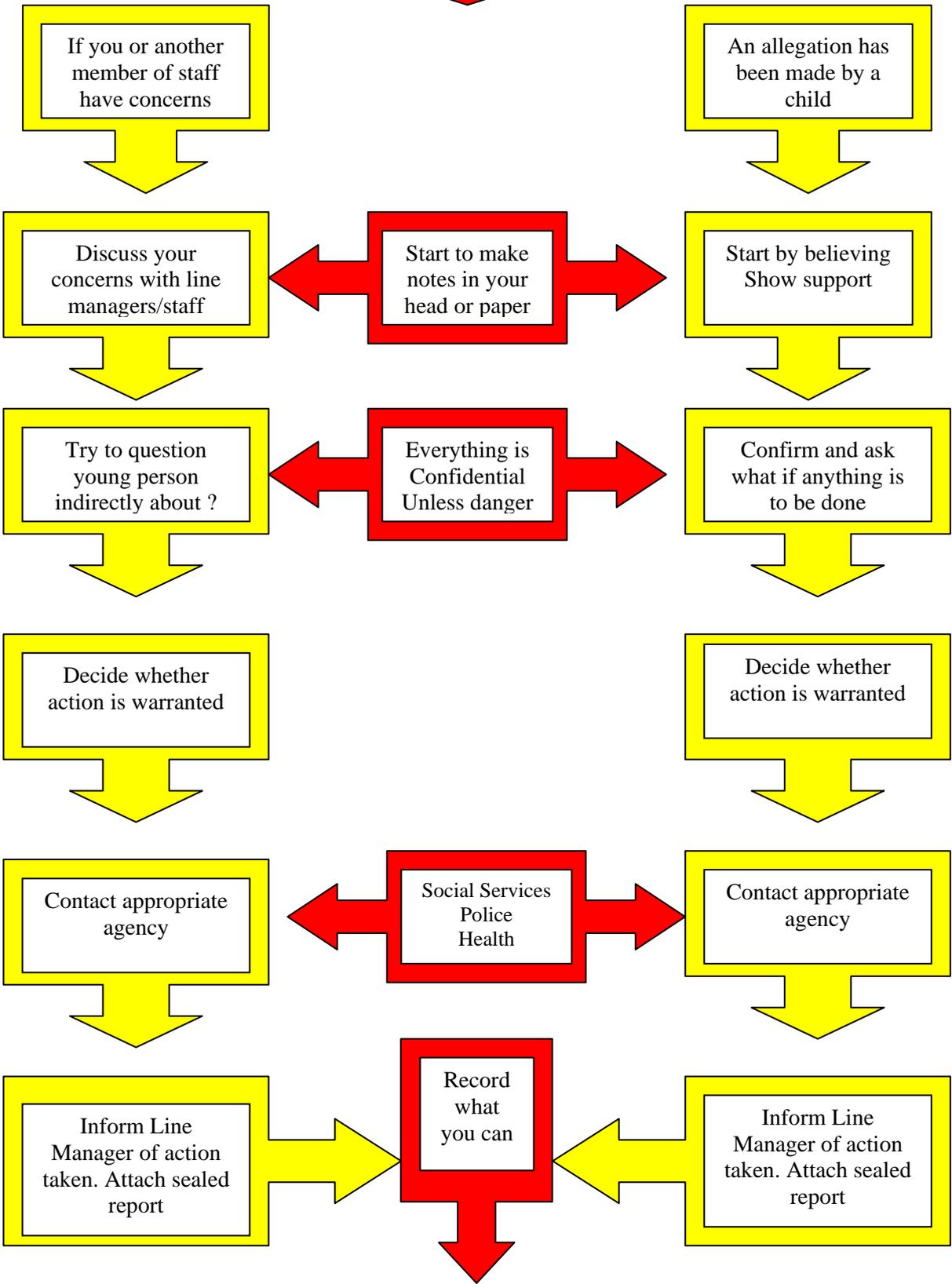
- Staffing: Are staff CRB checked?
Do staff have experience of working with children?
Do staff have an illness or condition which may be of concern?
Do staff have recognised qualifications?
What training have staff had if not qualified.
Are there sufficient staff to child ratios?
Has a responsible officer / adult been nominated?
- Location: Has the location been visited before the children arrive?
Has a risk assessment been carried out for the location?
Is the site insured and run by an established organisation?
Is the site accessible by other members of the public?
Is there vehicle access to the site?
Does traffic have access to the site / right of way?
Is the site fit for purpose?
Are there hazards which are known about?
Is the site available for the duration needed?
What facilities are available at the site?
Has permission been sought and obtained to use the site?
- Transport: Hire or self drive?
Reputable company from County Council approved list?
Qualified County Council mini bus driver?
Seat belts and staff on board?
Facilities needed on board?
Duration of travel & rest stops?
Parking available at destination?
- Activity: Is activity aimed at right age group?
Are appropriately qualified and experienced staff in charge?
Run by group or run by providers?
Insurance cover by activity provider?
Health & Safety Policy of activity provider?
Method of operation?
Appropriate managers informed?
Sufficient notice for activity to potential users?
- Children: Do any of the group have special needs?
Have parental consent forms been obtained?
Number of children involved?
Staffing ratios adopted for age group?
Contact details and medical requirements?
Comfort breaks?
Refreshments and feeding arrangements for children?
What clothing are children required to wear or take?
Activity as group, individual, rotation?
Minimum / Maximum numbers needed?

NOTICE OF ACTIVITY

To be completed by all Parent Link staff organising their first activity or taking young people away from designated premises.

Activity	Location	Date	Duration	Detail
Officer Responsible	Staffing Required	Risk Assessments	Parental Consents	Medical Questionnaires
		Attach to this form	Attach copies to this form	Attach copies in sealed envelop to this form
Method of Travel	Approved provider	Cost	Contingency	Contact Details
i.e. coach, car, taxi				Mobile. Location of activity. Other staff mobiles
Insurance	Manager	Manager Signature	Signature	BOX 1
All activities must be covered by insurance. A copy of Parent Links policy is available	Your line manager must be informed of all activities. Failing that the Chair must be notified		Sign & date Box 1. This indicates that you have complied with all the above information.	

What to do if you have concerns



DON'T ASSUME SOMEONE ELSE WILL DO IT

**Parent Links
Child Protection Policy
January 2006**

- 1 Ensure staff making contact with children as part of Parent Links provision are suitable to do so.

Recruitment

Parent Link is responsible for the recruitment of suitable staff including volunteers. It will:

- Appoint paid staff only with CRB certificates less than 12 months old. Where work with children is involved, special attention will be given to obtaining:
- Previous employment history and references – including references from at least one person who has experience of the applicant’s work or contact with children.
- Evidence of relevant training, qualifications and experience.
- Evidence of the applicant's knowledge of important childcare matters such as the needs of children, the National Standards and equal opportunities.
- Evidence that they are mentally and physically fit to care for children.
- Evidence that they can provide warm and consistent care for children.
- Evidence that they have read understood and will comply with this guidance.
- Ensure Enhanced Disclosure checks are carried out via the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB). This is to ensure that there are no convictions or other issues that might put the safety and welfare of a child at risk. Ordinary CRB checks will be renewed every 2 years thereafter.

All Parent Link staff who come into contact with children in the course of their work should have an Enhanced Disclosure Certificate, renewed with an ordinary disclosure certificate every 3 years thereafter.

Where it is difficult to recruit sufficient qualified and experienced staff (such as for short term posts) Parent Link will ensure:

- Staff have proper qualifications and experience.
- Other staff have been adequately briefed about their role and duties.
- The deployment of permanent, experienced staff ensures adequate guidance and support to less experienced colleagues.
- No-one is left to supervise children alone – ie at all times there are at least one other appropriately experienced and qualified adults to supervise except in an emergency situation.
- No-one without a current CRB disclosure certificate is left alone with children.
- Volunteer recruitment requires the same rigorous approach in terms of references, CRB checks and other evidence that volunteers are suitable to work with children.

2 Parent Link staff will behave appropriately in the presence of children, will not put themselves at risk, ensure they can meet required adult: child ratios, ensure proper practices are used when taking photographs of children.

Responsibility for children

- Parent Link staff should never assume the role of *in loco parentis*, which means person having legal responsibility in the absence of parent(s) or regular carers, teachers or youth workers. During regular school hours, schools or educational establishments act *in loco parentis*. Outside school hours, parents/carers retain their responsibility whether those carers/parents are present or not. However all staff still have a duty of care to children whilst engaged in events and activities and must remember the principle that the welfare of the child is paramount.
- DFES guidelines on health and safety for pupils on education visits states ‘the [school or other] group leader remains responsible for pupils even when not in direct contact with them’.
- Marketing materials and face to face enquiries by parents/carers should always make it clear that Unit staff never take on the responsibility of looking after other people’s children *in loco parentis*. The age of the children which an event or activity is aimed at should be made clear.
- Staff will not take sole charge or responsibility for a child. They should always avoid a situation of being alone with a child. If they are asked to be alone with a child, for example by a teacher or parent, they should politely refuse to do so, except in an emergency.
- Staff should always avoid working in a private or unobserved situation with children. Staff should always encourage open communication with no secrets. Staff should maintain a safe and appropriate distance from children, ie it is not appropriate for staff to cuddle, hug or kiss children.
- Wherever possible there should be a mixture of sexes among the staff at events and activities. This can be helpful should issues such as first aid application arise.
- Staff should provide excellent role models, including not smoking, swearing or drinking alcohol in the company of young people.

Staff should never do the following:

- 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.
- Accompany a child into the toilet cubicle.
- Allow children to sit on your knee.
- Make arrangements to contact a child outside the museum/leisure centre/other premises.
- Do things of a personal nature for children or disabled adults that they can do for themselves.
- Invite or allow children to stay with you at your home unsupervised.
- Allow allegations of abuse made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted on. PLEASE SEE SECTION 3 OF THIS POLICY FOR WHAT TO DO IF ALLEGATIONS ARE MADE.

They should try to avoid holding a child's hand whilst trying to find their parent and if they are distressed do try and comfort them in a non-contact manner. However, there will be occasions where it will be necessary to hold a child's hand; when this happens try and ensure you are visible to other adults.

Incidents that must be reported/recorded

If any of the following occur, report it to your line manager or the Child Protection Co-ordinator (see Section 3). You should also ensure the parents/carers of the child are informed unless it involves allegations of abuse (see Section 3).

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

Unaccompanied children

Children under 8 must always be accompanied by a carer or parent on designated premises or at any activity or event. Parent Link staff must refuse to allow unaccompanied children under 8 to participate if the parent or carer cannot stay with them. If they turn up unaccompanied, their parents/carers must be contacted, or failing that, the Police. An older brother or sister does not count if they are under 18 years of age.

Children between the ages of 8 and 18 can join in activities without their parents/carers being present but their parent/carer ALWAYS retains their role as *in loco parentis*. It is never devolved to staff and parents/carers must be made aware of this before events, activities etc. Parent Link staff reserve the right not to allow children aged 8 -18 to be left without their parent/carer. Proper arrangements must always be made for parents/carers to deliver and pick up children at the beginning and end of activities, events etc. Children should never be left to wander off when an event or activity is finished.

There may be situations where a child under 8 is found unaccompanied on premises or at an event. If this should happen:

- Try to avoid being left alone with the child. Try to ensure colleagues are present when you are dealing with unsupervised children.
- Encourage the child to remain on the premises or at the event until you have been able to contact a parent or carer or the Police, or finally Social Services. Children under 8 should not normally be allowed to leave alone.
- Ask the child if they are expecting to be collected by an adult. Even if the child is expecting to be collected soon, do not wait until closing time before taking the next step.
- Try to contact the parent or carer; see if the child can give you an address or telephone number.
- If attempts to contact the parent/carer fail, see if the child can give you the details of a relative or close family friend to contact. However, do not release a child into the care of someone (other than Police or Social Services) unless you are sure that they are the parent or carer or the parent/carer has given permission. Children should only be allowed to leave in the care of another child if that child is of the age and competence to be able to accept responsibility for their own or another's safety and you have permission from the parent/carer, or the child arrived in the care of that other child.
- If all attempts fail, contact the local Police.

Unsupervised/uncollected children at closing time

- Tell parents they have 20 minutes to collect their children after a session finishes before staff will try and contact them.
- Schedule events to end at least half an hour before the premises officially close.
- Staff should be prepared to check on the child's situation with the support of another member of staff – are they waiting for a parent or carer to collect them or are they expected to go home alone? This should be established when they arrive.
- Staff should telephone the child's home from the premises to clarify the situation if necessary.
- Staff should wait for the parent/carer to collect the child and then explain this policy to them.
- If a parent or carer cannot be contacted then the Police should be contacted to help and to make sure the child has not been reported as missing.
- Under no circumstances should a child be escorted home by a member of staff.
- The incident should be reported to the relevant senior manager or Child Protection Co-ordinators at the earliest opportunity.

Lost children

If there is a child lost at an activity, do not broadcast their name. Announce that a child is lost and await parents/carers to come forward. Check beforehand with the child their name and the names of the parents/carers who are with them. If no one comes to collect them by the end of the activity/event, call the Police.

Name labels

Children participating in Parent Link events and activities should not wear a name badge as this can help potential child abusers to make contact with children. They can wear a badge identifying the school or group they come from and its emergency contact number.

Staff ratios and deployment

- All activities must be risk assessed to determine an appropriate ratio of responsible adults to children. Having determined what that ratio is, Parent Link cannot run the said activities without this ratio being in place. Staff will be negligent their duty of care if they determine a ratio and then ignore it.
- Parent Link staff will ensure there are always sufficient staff and CRB checked responsible adults so that minimum ratios are maintained at all times. These people should work directly with children. There should be at least 2 responsible adults at any one time.
- Regular volunteers who may be taken into account in staffing ratios are people whom the Unit expects to attend on a planned and regular basis and who have a CRB enhanced disclosure certificate.
- The minimum indoor ratios are:
 - For children aged 0–2 1 responsible adult to every 3 children
 - For children aged 2 1 responsible adult to every 4 children
 - For children aged 3–5 1 responsible adult to every 3 children
 - For children aged 6–10 1 responsible adult to every 8 children
 - For children aged 11–18 1 responsible adult to every 10 children

Photography and Child Protection

- Parental/carer permission must be sought for all photographs including children. Parent Link has forms for obtaining consent. All staff taking photos should use the consent forms wherever possible. Ideally get a parent or carer to sign the form. However, in the case of young people aged 16 or over they can sign the form themselves as long as you can be certain that they fully understand what they are giving consent to. When taking pictures of children in particular, it is important to ensure that the resulting images cannot be construed as being provocative in any way. You should ensure that the subjects are suitably dressed.
- Unless you specifically need to take a picture of an individual child, think about whether or not there could be problems with a specific child or children being identifiable. Ensure if you are taking pictures of children that you have identified yourself to the parents, event organiser and/or facility owner. Make sure you have their consent to take photos.
- A photograph which has parental consent to be used for a particular purpose should not be used for another purpose without returning for further parental consent.
- Avoid placing images with children on the web as they can be appropriated and abused in the pornographic industry.

Consent

Staff will keep copies of written consents given for photographs until all copies (hard and electronic) are no longer wanted and have been destroyed. It is advisable to check permission is still in place every 3 years for photographs in long-term use.

3 Parent Link will ensure that staff comply with local child protection procedures approved by the Area Child Protection Committee and ensure that all adults working and looking after children are able to put the procedures into practice.

- **The protection of the child is the first priority. Their safety and welfare is the paramount consideration in deciding what action needs to be taken. Respect should be shown for the child's rights, wishes and feelings.**
- The law governing Child Protection is contained in the Children Act 1989 which states that a local authority has a duty to take action when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child who lives, or is found, in their area is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'.
- Coping with concerns about the possible abuse of a child is very stressful for all involved, however your first responsibility is to the child. This means that every member of staff needs to know about signs of abuse and what to do if concerns arise about possible abuse or neglect.
- Anybody in any capacity, including members of the public, can raise concerns about child abuse. Parent Link will support staff who raise concerns about child abuse in good faith and in accordance with Parent Link procedures.

What is child abuse?

There are many different types of child abuse and many ways in which abuse can occur. It can happen to children at any stage of development from birth until they are able to act independently. In law, young people are children up to their 18th birthday.

The main forms of abuse are:

- ***Physical abuse*** - Where a child is physically hurt, injured or killed. This can involve hitting, shaking, squeezing, burning and biting. It also includes giving a child poisonous substances, inappropriate drugs and alcohol, and attempted suffocation or drowning. In some cases, excessive force may be used when feeding or changing a child's nappy.
- ***Sexual Abuse*** - Where children (girls and boys) are sexually abused by adults or other children who use them to meet their own sexual needs. This might be sexual intercourse and also includes fondling, masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse and exposing children to pornographic material - including videos.
- ***Neglect*** - Where parents or carers fail to meet the basic and essential needs of their children to have food, clothes, warmth and medical care. Leaving children alone and unsupervised is also an example of neglect. Parents refusing to give love and affection to their children is an example of emotional neglect.
- ***Emotional abuse*** - Where constant lack of love and affection, or threats, verbal attacks, taunting and shouting can lead to a loss of confidence and self esteem, making a child become nervous and withdrawn.

Why might you worry?

- Is the child doing something that is unusual for the child?
- Is the child over-friendly with strangers?

- Do you recognise any or some of these behaviours in the child?
 - frequent mood changes
 - unusual eating patterns, ie always hungry
 - change in appearance
 - quiet and withdrawn, a loner
 - never wants to go home
 - tired looking
 - seductive behaviour
 - frequent bruises (particularly to fleshy parts)
 - gives the impression of being unloved and unhappy.

What about the parents?

The child's parents could well be trying to attract attention to themselves by an initial cry for help. In instances of abuse, both the child and the parents need help. Some parents are very relieved to know that their problem has been recognised. Others, unfortunately, may deny that a problem exists or become elusive if they feel that they are under suspicion.

What to do if there are allegations of abuse against a member of staff or the incident involves the designated person

Again, remember it is the child's welfare, which must be of paramount importance.

Refer the matter to a designated person so that the appropriate child protection procedures can be followed and if necessary the disciplinary processes can be followed. The designated person must inform the Social Services, the Police or the NSPCC and the appropriate National Governing Body lead officer for child protection.

If your concern is about the designated person, then seek advice from another senior member of staff who should ensure that the child protection procedures are implemented and the Social Services, the Police or the NSPCC are informed (as well as NGB lead officer).

It is important to understand that a member of staff reporting a case of child abuse, particularly by a colleague, may undergo a very high degree of stress, including feelings of guilt for having reported the matter. It is, therefore, very important to ensure that appropriate counselling and support is available for staff in such a situation.

All employees and volunteers are also entitled to be protected against harassment and abuse by it from a service user or another employee. Organisations managing coaches and volunteers are encouraged to recognise this and make arrangements to appropriately safeguard individual's rights.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only. This includes the following people:

- The designated person
- The parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused
- The person making the allegation
- Social Services/Police
- Lead Child Protection Officer for NGB
- The alleged abuser (and parents if abuser is a child)*

* Social Services should always be consulted on who should approach alleged abuser/s.

Is it really likely to happen?

It is appreciated that in most Parent Link designated premises, contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults is unlikely to be prolonged and the above symptoms may well not be apparent whilst participating in Parent Link activities so staff will not be aware of them.

However, a child, young person or vulnerable adult could still disclose abuse to a member of staff or accuse them of it. As the Multi-Agency Child Protection Procedures state, 'children will often confide in relative strangers who are in a position of trust but not seen as authority figures'.

It is always possible that a child, young person or vulnerable adult may arrive with very visible signs of abuse which raise concerns with staff, so it is essential to be aware of, and act on, the following procedures.

What to do if child abuse is reported or suspected

It does not matter when the alleged abuse is reported to have taken place. The procedures below remain the same.

Do's and Don'ts

Remember that children are vulnerable individuals who do not always communicate their anxieties or concerns in 'usual' ways. This is particularly important if a child has special needs or disabilities.

If you suspect child abuse, or receive a referral from the public:

Do

- realise that your and their concerns could be significant and should be passed on. Tell the Child Protection Co-ordinator of your concerns or, if they are not available, go direct to Social Services, but try not to be 'over-dramatic'. Write down what you

Don't

- examine the child. It is not up to you to decide if abuse has occurred.

concerns are.

Do • keep calm

Don't • ask leading questions - allow the child to tell their own story.

If a child tells you something has happened:

Do • allow the child to do the talking.

Don't • postpone or delay the opportunity to listen. Don't stop a child who is freely recalling significant events.

Do • listen - take the child seriously.

Don't • ask leading questions.

Do • remain calm and caring. Reassure them that they have done nothing wrong, either in relation to the abuse or in reporting it.

Don't • allow your own feelings (such as anger, pity or shock) to surface.

• approach or accuse the alleged abuser.

Do • allow the child to finish.

Do • record the conversation as soon as possible afterwards (it is very important to use the child's own words). See sample forms (Appendix 3).

Don't • make false promises (that you will keep 'the secret', for example)

• interpret what you have been told, just record it.

• take care to record the date, timing, setting and persons present as well as what was said.

• make sure you take the name and address of the child, their telephone number and date of birth.

• state why the information given constitutes a child protection concern.

• make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.

• record a description of any visible injury or behaviour

change.

- also record all subsequent actions and events until Social Services or the Police take over.
 - the person writing the report should sign and date it. Alert your line manager and a Child Protection Co-ordinator and give them a copy of the report.
- Do**
- share your concerns. Inform the Child Protection Co-ordinator, line manager or Social Services as soon as possible.
- Do**
- tell the child what you are going to do. You must tell the child that you have to tell Social Services what they have told you and that it will not be possible to protect their confidentiality, even if they would like you to.
 - reassure them that adults have a responsibility for their care and safety.
 - if a child discloses, staff should stay with the child and help them to repeat what they have said to a social worker or the Police. They should stay with the child to support them through the first stages of disclosure.

Contacts

Social Services, Youth Development Service, Under Eights Officer, EWO

Staff will not be contravening the Data Protection Act if they disclose names and addresses to the Social Services or the Police in these circumstances.

Staff Accused of Abuse

It is important that staff avoid putting themselves in situations that may lead to allegations being made against them in the first place` (please see Section 2).

If a member of Parent Link staff is accused of child abuse, the matter will be dealt with as laid down in corporate policy. The process followed will be the disciplinary process and the member of staff concerned would be suspended immediately whilst an investigation took place. The investigation could be a criminal investigation, a child protection investigation and/or a disciplinary investigation. Internally, if Parent Link concluded that the employee had abused a child it would be regarded as gross misconduct.

If the behaviour of a staff colleague towards children causes you concern or abuse by a member of staff is reported by anyone:

- Do not ignore your concerns or the allegation.
- Do not confront the person about whom you have concerns.
- Discuss your concerns immediately with the Child Protection Co-ordinator, who will ensure proper assessment and if necessary that an investigation takes place. If they are not available, go to the Head of Service. If they are not available contact Social Services immediately.
- Do not worry that you have been mistaken. It is better to have discussed it with someone with the experience and responsibility to make an assessment.

Making a Referral

When making a referral it is important that you have thought through your concerns. However, the lack of availability of some of the information below is not reason to delay the referral.

Factual Information about the child

- Names and dates of birth/ages of child
- Ethnicity
- Disability
- Home address
- Names of those who hold parental responsibility

Factual information about the suspected/alleged abuser

- Names and contact details (if known)
- Relationship to child

Referrer's connection to family

- State your involvement
- Is the child/family aware that you are making this referral?

Source and nature of concerns

- Is it something you have seen?
- Is it based on the concern of another, if so, whom?
- Is it based on the child's behaviour, an injury, what the child has said?
- Has this concern developed over time or just today?
- What evidence do you have to support your concern? This may include what the child has said to you directly. If so, are you aware if the child has also spoken to anyone else?
- Who do you believe to be the source of harm/potential harm to the child?

- Are there other children in the family or other children about whom you have concerns?
- In your opinion does the child need immediate protection?
- Ensure that senior staff in your agency are informed that a referral has been made, if not already aware, and that any other procedures of your agency are followed.
- Forward the referral and any other recording (in writing) within 24 hours
- Be prepared to attend (or report to) a strategy meeting if required. If preferred you have right to remain anonymous when making the referral.

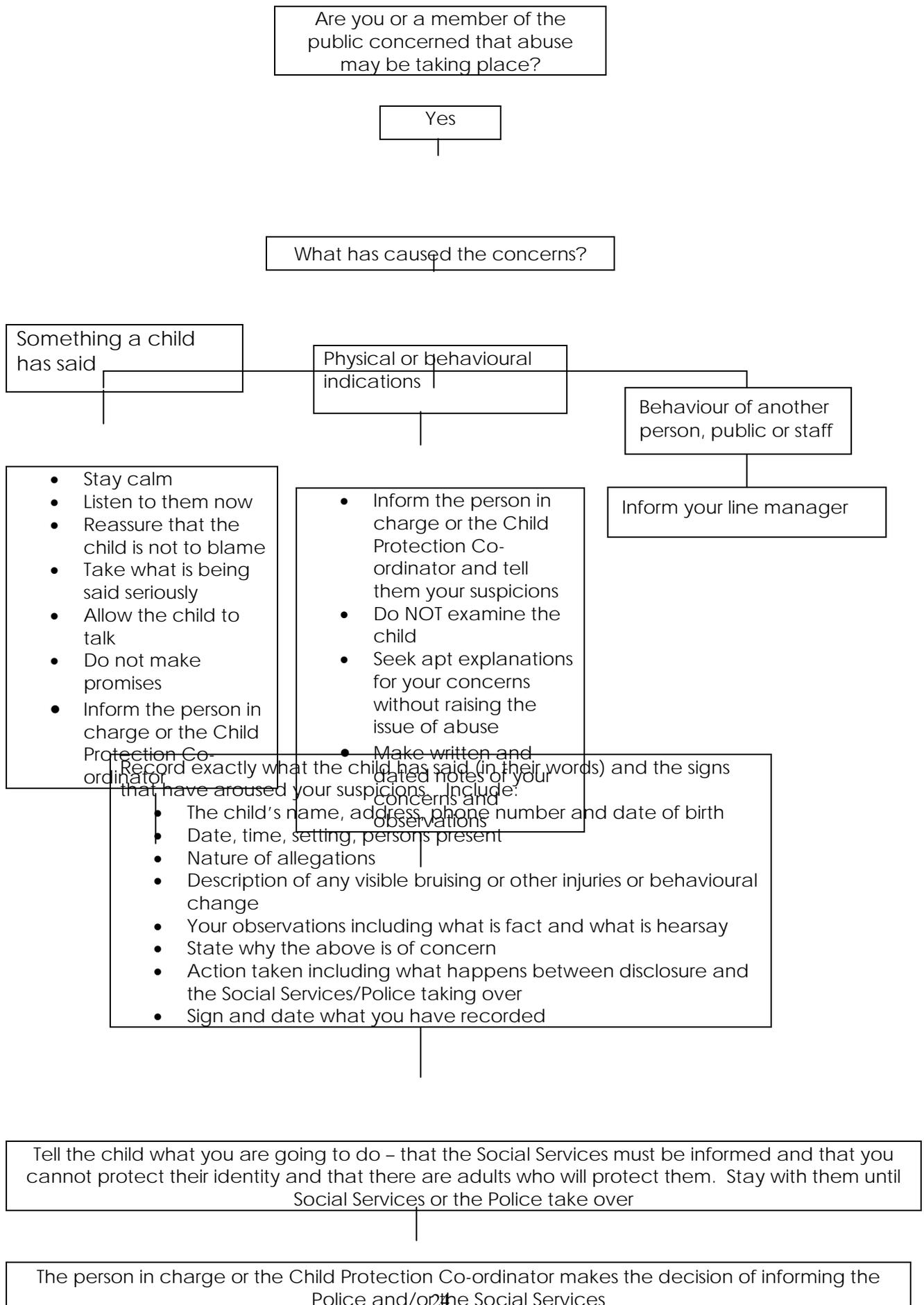
Standards

- Referrals should be made without undue delay.
- Referrals should be followed up in writing within 24 hours.

It may be that an allegation may relate to behaviour below the threshold of significant harm, such as a smack on the hand, or verbal abuse towards a child. If in doubt, the Child Protection Co-ordinator should check with Social Services whether an action is poor practice or abuse. Whilst this behaviour would not be referred to Social Services, it should be investigated under Parent Links disciplinary procedures.

- However, if an allegation is made against a member of staff which is not just poor practice, the Head of Service or Child Protection Co-ordinator should refer the matter to Social Services for investigation.

Appendix 2



Appendix 3

Incident Report Form

Date	Venue
Time	Persons Present
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): please describe	
Has the child been spoken to?	

Who by?	
What was said to the child and what did the child say? In child's own words, be clear what is fact and what is hearsay.	
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 your Duty Manager who must forward it to Parent Link's Child Protection Officer Who will then forward to Social Services.

Appendix 4

SAMPLE SELF DECLARATION FORM

You have the right of access to information held on you and other rights under the Data Protection Act 1984.

Part A

Title	First Name	Surname	Any previous names by which you may have been known -
Address:			
Postcode:			
Telephone number (s):			
E-mail address:			

Postcode MUST be completed

Date of Birth

--	--	--	--	--	--

Sex	M		F	
-----	---	--	---	--

Current club (s)	Position	Start date
	Coach/Helper/Team Manager/Chaperone/Other *	
	Coach/Helper/Team Manager/Chaperone/Other *	
	Coach/Helper/Team Manager/Chaperone/Other *	

*** Please delete as appropriate**

Club	Date	Club	Date

I confirm that I have seen identification documents relating to this person, and I confirm to the best of my ability that these are accurate. **Please detail which documents:**

Signature of club secretary or other designated Officer:

Print Name: **Date:**

Part B

Self Declaration (for completion by the individual named in Part A)

- 1. Have you ever been convicted of any criminal offences? YES/NO***
If yes, please supply details of any criminal convictions:

.....
.....

NOTE: You are advised under the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (exceptions) order 1975 as amended by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions Amendment) Order 1986 you should declare all convictions including 'spent' convictions.

- 2. Are you a person known to any social services department as being an actual or potential risk to children? YES/NO ***
If yes, please supply details:

.....
.....

- 3. Have you had a disciplinary sanction (from a sports or other organisations governing body) relating to child abuse? YES/NO ***
If yes, please supply details:

.....
.....

* Delete as appropriate

IMPORTANT

I have read and understood the information leaflet regarding the Organisation's Child Protection List.

I hereby consent to the organisation undertaking police and/or social services checks against me.

I understand that the information contained on this form, the results of police and social services checks and information supplied by third parties, will be included on the Organisation's Child Protection List, may be notified to my club/organisation and may be supplied by the Organisation to other persons or organisations who have an interest in child protection issues.

Signed by the above named individual:

Date:

Appendix 5

PHOTOGRAPHER REGISTRATION FORM

In line with the Parent Links Child Protection Policy and Procedures we request that any person wishing to engage in any video, zoom or close range photography registers their details either beforehand or at the event information before carrying out such photography. We reserve the right to decline entry to any person unable to meet or abide by these conditions.

Event you would like to take photographs at:

Name of company (if taking photographs in a professional capacity):
.....

Full name of person taking photographs:

Address:
.....

Postcode:

Telephone number (s) H: W:

Date of Birth:/...../.....

E-mail address:

Are you related to any participants taking part in the event? Yes No

Name of participants whom you are related to:

Signature: **Date:**

Thank you for your co-operation in completing and returning this form.