



**wesport**

INSPIRING ACTIVE LIVES

# Safeguarding Children Policy & Procedures

Last Reviewed & Updated: October 2023

# Contents

Introduction: Safeguarding Children and Young People for the West of England Sport Trust	2
Communication	2
1. Policy Statement	3
Wesport Duty of Care	3
Principles	3
Summary of Trust Responsibilities	4
2. Recruitment, Employment and Deployment of Wesport staff and volunteers	6
Training	6
West of England Sport Trust Case Management Group	7
3. Promoting Good Practice with Children and Young People	8
Introduction	8
Good Practice Guidelines	8
Code of Conduct and Ethics:	10
4. Recognition of Poor Practice, Abuse, and Bullying	11
Poor Practice	11
Abuse	11
5. Responding to a Disclosure and Allegations	11
6. Monitoring and Evaluation	19
Monitoring and Appraisal	19
Review	19
Appendices	20
Appendix A: Essential Local Contacts	20
Recognising Signs of Abuse	23
Appendix C: Wesport Incident Record Form	28

## Introduction: Safeguarding Children and Young People for the West of England Sport Trust

This is the Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures for the West of England Sport Trust (Wesport – the Trust). Wesport is registered as a Company Limited by Guarantee 05794916 with Charitable status 1114495. Wesport as a strategic partnership plays an influencing role in relation to safeguarding children and young people. Wesport is committed to continually promoting the adoption of effective and consistent safeguarding policies and procedures in line with current policy.

Wesport is committed to promoting the safety and welfare of children and young people engaged in sporting activities across the West of England. It aims to contribute to safeguarding children by:

- Continuing to uphold the requirements of the Standards for Safeguarding and Protecting Children in Sport (2003)
- Meeting the requirements of the 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018' document. Recognising that Wesport may be called upon to join local multi agency safeguarding arrangements and that if asked Wesport has a duty to cooperate. Continuing to identify a Trustee as Safeguarding Board Champion and ensuring that staff are aware of where to escalate concerns.
- Implementing and demonstrating best safeguarding practice when staff, coaches, deliverers, volunteers or others are providing services, activities and programmes for children and young people on behalf of Wesport.
- Working with partners to establish and implement agreed, consistent minimum safeguarding standards for sport and physical activities across the West of England.
- Requiring those individuals or organisations that are funded or commissioned to provide any services for children and young people to effectively address and adhere to Wesport's safeguarding criteria (all minimum operating standards will be checked for compliance).
- Maximising its influence to promote safeguarding practice and principles within its wider partnership roles and relationships
- Establishing clear lines of communication for any safeguarding issue

### **Communication**

To ensure the successful implementation of this policy it is essential that Wesport communicates to the sporting community and networks of the West of England their commitment to safeguard children and young people, and that this is openly displayed and available to all. The policy will be made available through the Wesport website so that the network of organisations, coaches, volunteers, deliverers, children and young people and their parents / carers are able to access the information and understand how it is intended that the policy will be implemented, and that they understand the process to follow should an issue arise.

# 1. Policy Statement

## **Wesport Duty of Care**

Wesport recognises that sport and physical activity can and does have a very powerful and positive influence on children and 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. 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 young people first and adopt practices that support, protect and empower them.

Most young people happily and safely participate in sport under the watchful and concerned care of dedicated coaches and deliverers. However, the reality is that abuse does take place in sport and in some cases coaches (deliverers) have been convicted and it is essential that systems are in place to ensure coach, deliverer and volunteer recruitment, induction and education takes child protection issues into consideration. In addition to this, it is important that coaches, deliverers, volunteers and staff are in a position to recognise and respond to signs of abuse outside of the sporting context.

Wesport recognises that it has a duty of care towards children and young people and can help to protect them from poor practice and abuse.

## **Principles**

Wesport recognises that:

- The welfare and safety of children and young people in any activities organised by or in association with Wesport is the primary concern (the Children Act 2004 defines a young person as under the age of 18)
- All children and young people whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.
- All suspicions and allegations need to be taken seriously responded to swiftly and appropriately, and investigated thoroughly.
- It is the responsibility of the child protection experts to determine whether or not abuse has taken place but it is everyone's responsibility to report any concerns.
- All children and young people have the right to be safe and to be treated with dignity and respect.
- The policy needs to be visible and made available to staff, coaches, deliverers and volunteers of Wesport to understand their responsibility and the procedures they are required to adhere to.
- The policy needs to be visible and made available to parents / carers and organisations within the network of activities to understand the procedures being adhered to.

## **Summary of Trust Responsibilities**

Wesport will:

- Accept the moral and legal responsibility to implement procedures to provide a duty of care to protect all children and young people and safeguard their wellbeing and protect them from abuse, whilst they are engaged in any activity provided by Wesport.
- Respect and promote the rights, wishes and feelings of children and young people.
- Promote a culture that ensures that all children and young people are listened to and respected as individuals.
- Ensure that all staff, deliverers, coaches and volunteers are recruited through safe recruitment practices, trained appropriately with in-date safeguarding training (usually within 3 years of the event), and supervised if and when required.
- Ensure that staff job descriptions and appraisals are linked to safeguarding delivery as appropriate to the role.
- Ensure that parents / carers, children, young people, staff and volunteers and relevant organisations are provided with information about this Policy, what it does and what they can expect from Wesport.
- Ensure that parents / carers, children and young people, staff and volunteers and relevant organisations are provided with clear procedures to voice their concerns or lodge complaints if they feel unsure or unhappy about anything.
- Respond to allegations and concerns appropriately and implement the appropriate disciplinary and appeals procedures
- Not tolerate poor practice in dealing with child welfare.
- Maintain confidentiality and ensure information is shared as appropriate with other agencies in all cases involving child protection in line with current legislation.
- Ensure that the inclusion of adequate safeguarding arrangements is a key element of all commissioning, funding or Trust agreements.
- Produce guidelines and service level agreements for events/programmes organised, commissioned or funded by the Trust.
- Lead on the production, monitoring and review of this Safeguarding Children Policy and Implementation Procedures.
- Meet the requirements of 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2018

**To minimise the risk of a child or young person being abused, Wesport will:**

- Have a clear policy and guidelines for all staff, coaches, deliverers, volunteers, participants and parents/carers.
- Follow policy guidelines on recruitment
- Publicise the Safeguarding Children Policy and Guidelines.
- Ensure appropriate child protection / safeguarding training is undertaken by all staff, coaches, deliverers and volunteers.
- Have a clear policy and guidelines for events organised by the Trust.

- Have a clear anti-bullying policy and guidelines.
- Have in place photography guidelines
- Have in place guidelines for online communication and the use of social media
- Have in place a Code of Conduct and Ethics for all Staff, Coaches, Deliverers, Volunteers and participants.
- Have in place a Whistle Blowing Policy and Procedures. Publicise external Whistle Blowing Advice Lines. (For example NSPCC)



## 2. Recruitment, Employment and Deployment of Wesport staff and volunteers

It is important that all reasonable steps are taken to prevent unsuitable people from working with children. This applies equally to paid and unpaid, full and part time staff, coaches, volunteers and officials.

This will include the following checks – Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) check, level appropriate to eligibility and guidance in relation to regulated activity (as required by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012). References and qualifications in addition to a formal induction and verification of qualifications (if appropriate).

All staff, coaches, deliverers, and volunteers delivering on a regulated activity basis will undergo a check through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). In the case of those already checked by other parties Wesport will require details from the individual to ensure that a check can be made via the online portal. If, however this is not possible due to the fact the individual has not signed up to the system then a new DBS check will need to be carried out. All DBS Checks will be renewed every three years.

Employees who require a check will not be deployed into regulated activity until all checks are confirmed and completed.

### **Training**

Wesport recognises that checks are only part of the safeguarding children and young people process. Appropriate training will enable individuals to recognise their responsibilities with regard to their own good practice and the reporting of suspected poor practice / concerns of possible abuse.

Both those working directly with children and young people and those responsible for dealing with safeguarding and child protection issues will be supported by training to raise awareness and to support the work they are undertaking. All coaches, deliverers and volunteers working and commissioned on behalf of Wesport are expected to be suitably qualified and will have attended a UK Coaching 'Safeguarding and Protecting Children workshop'. Club personnel, officials, volunteers and coaches who are not in paid employment through the partnership work of the Trust are also required to attend this training in order to meet minimum operating standards. It is expected that this training will be updated every three years.

Appropriate and relevant Safeguarding Children training will be made available to the relevant personnel. Designated Officers will attend Child Protection in Sport (CPSU) Lead Officer Training and any other training required to undertake their role.

All Wesport employees will undergo a separate safeguarding induction process, which will familiarise them with the Safeguarding Children Policy and Implementation Procedures, other relevant policies as well as identifying relevant training. All coaches and deliverers are also made aware that as a coach or deliverer commissioned on behalf of Wesport they are expected to abide by any relevant specific codes of conduct, guidelines, policies, and procedures.

### **West of England Sport Trust Case Management Group.**

Wesport has in place a Case Management Group. The membership includes The Chief Executive Officer, Lead Safeguarding Officer and Deputy Safeguarding Officer. There may be occasions where the Safeguarding Lead for Welfare and Safety is asked to attend a specific meeting.

The Purpose of the Case Management Group is:

1. To make decisions on the initial approach to all reported cases related to the welfare of and protection of children and young people. Principally these relate to the route a case will take internally and/or external referral to statutory agencies but may also include making decisions in relation to concerns arising from information gathered from the recruitment process.
2. To make initial decisions as to what level each case will be dealt with i.e. minor poor practice which may be referred back to a club or organisation, complaints /disciplinary procedures with advice, or suspected abuse of a child which requires dealing with through disciplinary procedures.
3. To advise relevant individuals within the West of England Sport Trust about actions they may need to take, such as disciplinary actions.
4. To monitor and review progress on all cases and to identify any trends emerging which may require a review/revision of existing policies and procedures.



### 3. Promoting Good Practice with Children and Young People

#### **Introduction**

Child abuse, particularly sexual abuse, can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation. It is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with your judgement about any action to take. Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and the sporting environment. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with young people in order to harm them. A coach, instructor, teacher, official or volunteer may have regular contact with young people and be an important link in identifying cases where a young person needs protection. (From Guidelines for Governing Bodies of Sport and Local Authorities, NCF, NSPCC)

All suspicious cases of poor practice should be reported via the safeguarding procedure outlined in section 5.

#### **Good Practice Guidelines**

All personnel in sport should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to promote the welfare of children and reduce the likelihood of allegations being made. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate within sport.

##### ***Good Practice means:***

- Always working in an open environment – avoid private or unobserved situations. Encourage an open environment (e.g. no secrets)
- Treating all children and young people equally, and with respect and dignity
- Always putting the welfare of each young person first – before winning or achieving goals
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with performers (e.g. it is not appropriate to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them)
- 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 should be provided openly and according to guidelines provided by the National Governing Body of Sport (NGB). Care is needed as it is difficult to maintain hand positions when the child is constantly moving. Young people should always be consulted and their agreement gained. Some parents are becoming increasingly sensitive about manual support and their views should always be carefully considered.
- Keeping up to date with the technical skills, qualifications and insurance in sport
- Involving parents / carers wherever possible, e.g. for the responsibility of their children in the changing rooms. If groups have to be supervised in the changing rooms, always ensure parents / carers / teachers / officials work in pairs
- Ensuring that if mixed teams are taken away, they should always be accompanied by a male and female member of staff. NB However, same gender abuse can also occur

- Ensuring that at tournaments or residentials, adults should not enter children's rooms or invite children into their rooms
- Being an excellent role model – this includes not smoking, drinking alcohol, or taking drugs in the company of young people
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of children and young people – avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing the individual against their will
- Recognising the additional vulnerabilities of children & young people as applicable, and managing them accordingly

***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 in the organisation 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 taking children alone on car journeys, however short

**The following should never be sanctioned.**

***You should never:***

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- Share a room with a child or young person
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- Take a child or young person to your home where they will be alone with you.
- Allow a child or young person to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child or young person, even in fun.
- Fail to act on and record allegations made by a child or young person.
- Do things of a personal nature for a child or young person they can do for themselves.
- Invite or allow a child or young person to stay with you at your home unsupervised
- Constantly shout at and taunt a child or young person to "keep control".
- Use inappropriate language
- Communicate directly with a child or young person through a mobile phone or social media outside of the activity.

***Be Aware:***

It may sometimes be necessary for coaches, deliverers, officials, staff or volunteers to carry out actions of a personal nature for a child or young person, particularly if the individual is young or disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and written consent of parents / carers and the players involved.

There is a need to be responsive to a person's reactions. If a person is fully dependant 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 a child to carry out particular activities. Avoid taking on the responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained.

If you accidentally hurt a person, he / she seems distressed in any manner, appears to be sexually aroused by your actions, or misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done, report any such incident as soon as possible to another colleague and make a brief written note of it. Parents / carers should be informed of the incident.

### **Code of Conduct and Ethics:**

Wesport as a strategic partnership is not always a direct deliverer of sport however there is a requirement for all coaches, deliverers and volunteers working on behalf of the partnership to sign up to a Code of Conduct and Ethics. This will ensure minimum operating standards are adhered to at all times. The code of conduct and ethics specifies that all those who have direct responsibility for running and/or providing activities understand and are encouraged to demonstrate the specific expectations of Wesport at all times.

To ensure, in planning and running sports activities for children and young people, consideration is given to providing an appropriate staffing/ supervision ratio of adults to participants. Wesport expects that supervision ratios meet those specified in any NGB guidance. This is included within the Code of Conduct and Ethics. This is to minimise any risks to participants, enhance the benefits they draw from the activity, reassure parents / carers, and provide some protection for those responsible for providing the activity in the event of concerns or incidents arising.

### **Additional Policies and Guidelines**

Wesport is committed to providing a safe environment for children and young people to participate in sport and physical activity. It is important to ensure that all potential factors are taken into consideration. By taking this into account Wesport is ensuring that relevant policies and guidelines are in place to reduce the potential opportunities that may occur from a certain situation. The following policies / guidelines are in place:

- Anti Bullying Policy
- Photography guidelines
- Communications Policy and Social Media Guidelines.

## 4. Recognition of Poor Practice, Abuse, and Bullying

### **Poor Practice**

Child abuse can and often does occur outside of the family setting. For those who are experienced in working with child abuse, it is still not always easy to recognise a situation where child abuse may be or already is occurring. Whether in a paid or voluntary capacity, staff and volunteers working within sporting activities or events are not expected to be experts at recognising the signs of abuse.

They do, however, still have a responsibility to act if they do have any concerns about the behaviour of anyone involved within an activity / event towards a young person, or about a young person's experiences away from the sports environment, and to then follow the procedures as outlined in this document.

Allegations may relate to poor practice where an adult's or another young person's behaviour is inappropriate and may be causing concern to a young person. Poor practice includes any behaviour which contravenes the Code of Conduct and Ethics which infringes an individual's rights and / or is a failure to fulfil the highest standards of care. Poor practice is unacceptable in the sporting environment and will be treated seriously and appropriate actions taken.

### **Abuse**

The four main forms of abuse are:

- Neglect,
- Physical Abuse,
- Sexual Abuse
- Emotional Abuse

Detailed Information on the forms of abuse and recognising signs of abuse is outlined in appendix B

## 5. Responding to a Disclosure and Allegations

The following actions should be taken by anyone who has concerns about a child or young person's welfare. If a child or young person says or indicates that he / she is being or has been abused, or information is obtained or observations are made which gives concerns that a child or young person is being or has been abused, the response should be immediate. The procedures which have been developed to deal with allegations of suspicions about abuse are based on the fundamental principles that the welfare of the child is paramount.

### **Responding to a disclosure.**

Immediate action should be taken if a young person reports that they, or another young person, is concerned about someone's behaviour to them - this is termed a disclosure. The person who has received this information should:

- ask the child or young person open questions, whilst taking great care to not ask leading questions and ensure that the child or young person does not feel like they are being interrogated
- listen carefully to all the information that is disclosed
- react calmly so not to frighten or deter the child or young person
- tell the child or young person that they are not to blame and reassure them that they were right to tell
- ensure the safety of the child or young person – if they need immediate medical treatment, call an ambulance, inform doctors of concerns and ensure that they are aware that it is a child protection issue
- reassure the child or young person but do not make promises of confidentiality which might not be feasible in the light of any subsequent developments
- do not contact the parent / carer until advice is sought from Social Services

Reaction to a report of abuse is extremely important; therefore, the following actions should be avoided:

- panic
- allowing shock or distaste to show
- probing for more information than is offered
- speculating or making assumptions about what may have happened
- making comments about the alleged abuser
- making any approach or comment to the alleged abuser
- making promises or agree to keep secrets – be honest with the child / young person that is involved

The next steps following a disclosure:

- Make contact with the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer (DDSO) if this hasn't already taken place.
- Complete an Incident Report Form (see Appendix C) the DSO will arrange with you the best way to do this. A copy should not be kept as confidentiality should be maintained on a strictly 'need to know' basis and relevant documents stored in a secure location. It is extremely important to ensure that the Incident Report form (Appendix C) is completed in full in order to not delay any potential investigations due to a lack of necessary information.
- DSO to make contact with the relevant Children's Social Care Department. NOTE: if you are unable to contact the DSO or Deputy immediately, call Children's Social Care on the appropriate Unitary Authority telephone number, see Appendix A In this event, ensure that the DSO is informed that this has occurred, and the completed Incident Report Form is sent to the DSO at the earliest convenience.

- If the situation arises where Children's Social Care have to be contacted directly, a record should be made of the member of staff who dealt with the enquiry, together with the time and date of call, in case a follow up is needed. Any referral made by telephone to Children's Social Care must be confirmed in writing within 24 hours by the DSO.

The responsibilities of the DSO include:

- acting as a central point of contact for internal / external individuals / agencies
- ensuring two-way communication links with National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs), Unitary or Local Authorities (UAs or LAs), Wesport and other related and relevant organisations or parties.
- Cooperating with any Multi Agency Local Safeguarding arrangements.
- receiving reports of child abuse, passing these on to Children's Social Care or the Police and following up such referrals in writing
- providing advice and guidance for individuals who are unclear about the seriousness of their concerns
- clarifying which other agencies or organisations that need to be informed of relevant details and ensuring this takes place in accordance with agreed protocols
- providing advice and support to staff in the aftermath of a referral of concern
- ensuring that where appropriate the Trust's disciplinary and complaints procedures are invoked – with particular reference to decisions about temporary suspension while investigations (internal and or external) are being carried out.

### **Sharing concerns with Parents / Carers**

There is always a commitment to work in partnership with parents, guardians 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, there may be a reasonable explanation. He / she may have experienced an upset in the family, such as a parental separation or divorce or bereavement. However, there are circumstances in which a child might be placed at even greater risk if such concerns were shared (e.g. where a parent, guardian 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 Officer as soon as possible and recorded. Parents **should not** be contacted if the concern is about sexual abuse. This will be done by Children's Social Care and the police at an appropriate time.

### **Responding to an allegation against Staff or Volunteers**

Staff and volunteers, for this purpose include anyone working for and on behalf of Wesport with children and young people in a paid or voluntary capacity. It is crucial that those involved in providing sporting activities / events are aware that all allegations will be taken seriously and appropriate action taken.

Allegations which arise may relate to poor practice where behaviour is inappropriate and may be causing concern to a child or young person.

The following steps should be followed when an allegation is made against a Wesport member of staff or volunteer:

- Concerns should be reported to the DSO and an Incident Report Form completed
- The DSO should form a view about whether in the interests of a child or young person the information warrants immediate referral to Children's Social Care or Police.
- Any allegation which may be related to an employee's / volunteer's work must be reported immediately to the Wesport Chief Executive and any other Senior Manager, if applicable, by the DSO.
- The employee / volunteer may need to be suspended from work whilst the matter is investigated.
- Suspension will not be automatic and the decision will take into account the relevant circumstances.
- The reinstatement of an individual will follow procedures operated by Wesport following the conclusion of any investigations (both internal and external).

### **Types of Investigation**

When there is a complaint of abuse against a member of staff, coach, official or volunteer, the following types of investigation may occur:

- **Criminal** - Police
- **Child Protection** - Social Services / Police
- **Internal** - Wesport

It is also a possibility that civil proceedings could be initiated by the individual affected, or by their family, or indeed the person who has been accused.

### **Allegations of Non-Recent Abuse**

There are situations that may arise where an allegation of abuse is made some time after the event has happened, this may be months or on occasion even years.

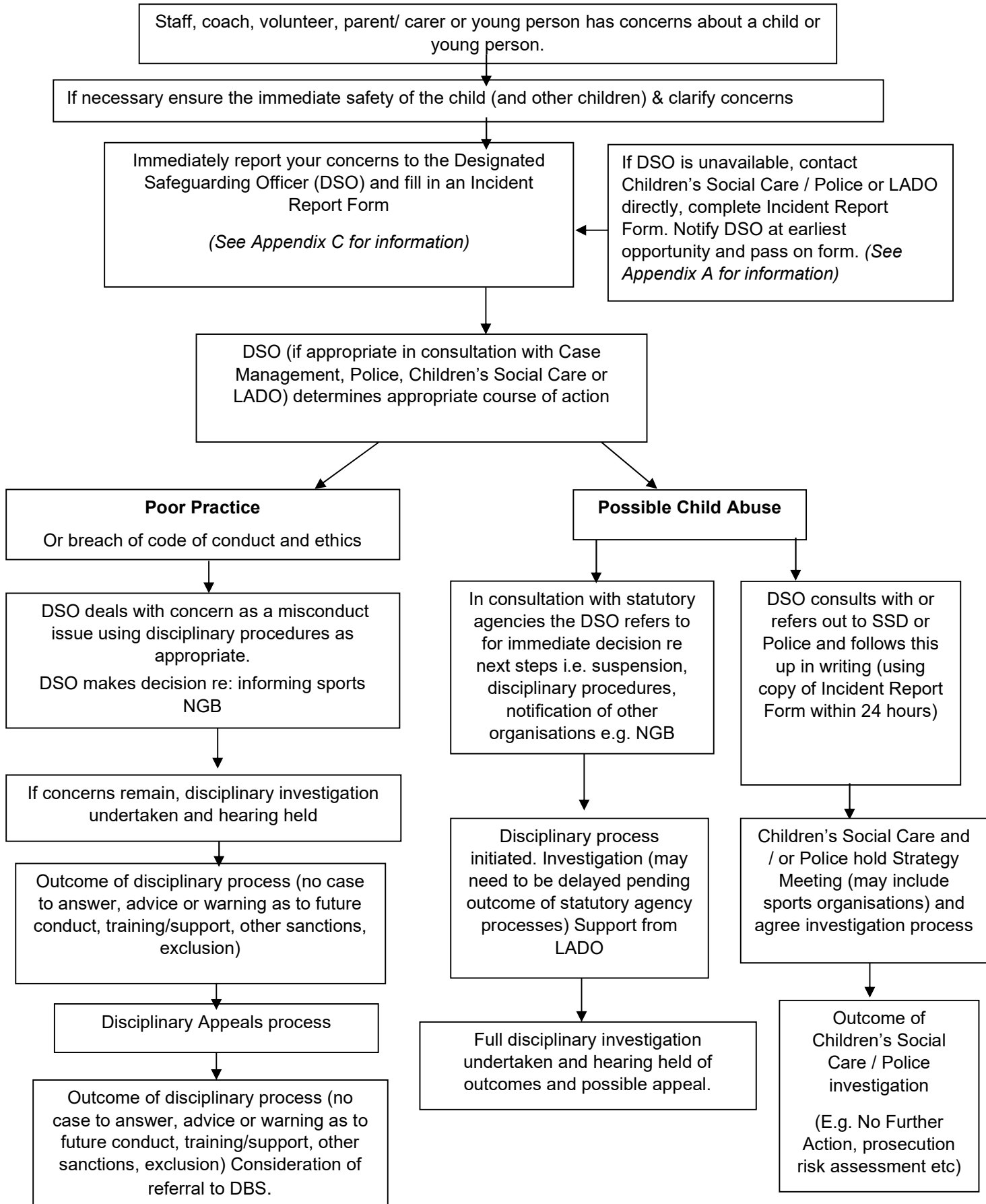
(Non-recent abuse is when an adult was abused as a child or young person under the age of 18.)

Where an allegation such as this is made Wesport will follow the procedures as outlined earlier in this policy. The allegation should still be investigated as other children and young people within or external to the sporting environment could potentially be at risk from the accused. Anyone who has a previous criminal conviction for offences related to abuse is automatically excluded from working with children; this is reinforced by the details of the Protection of Children Act 2004.



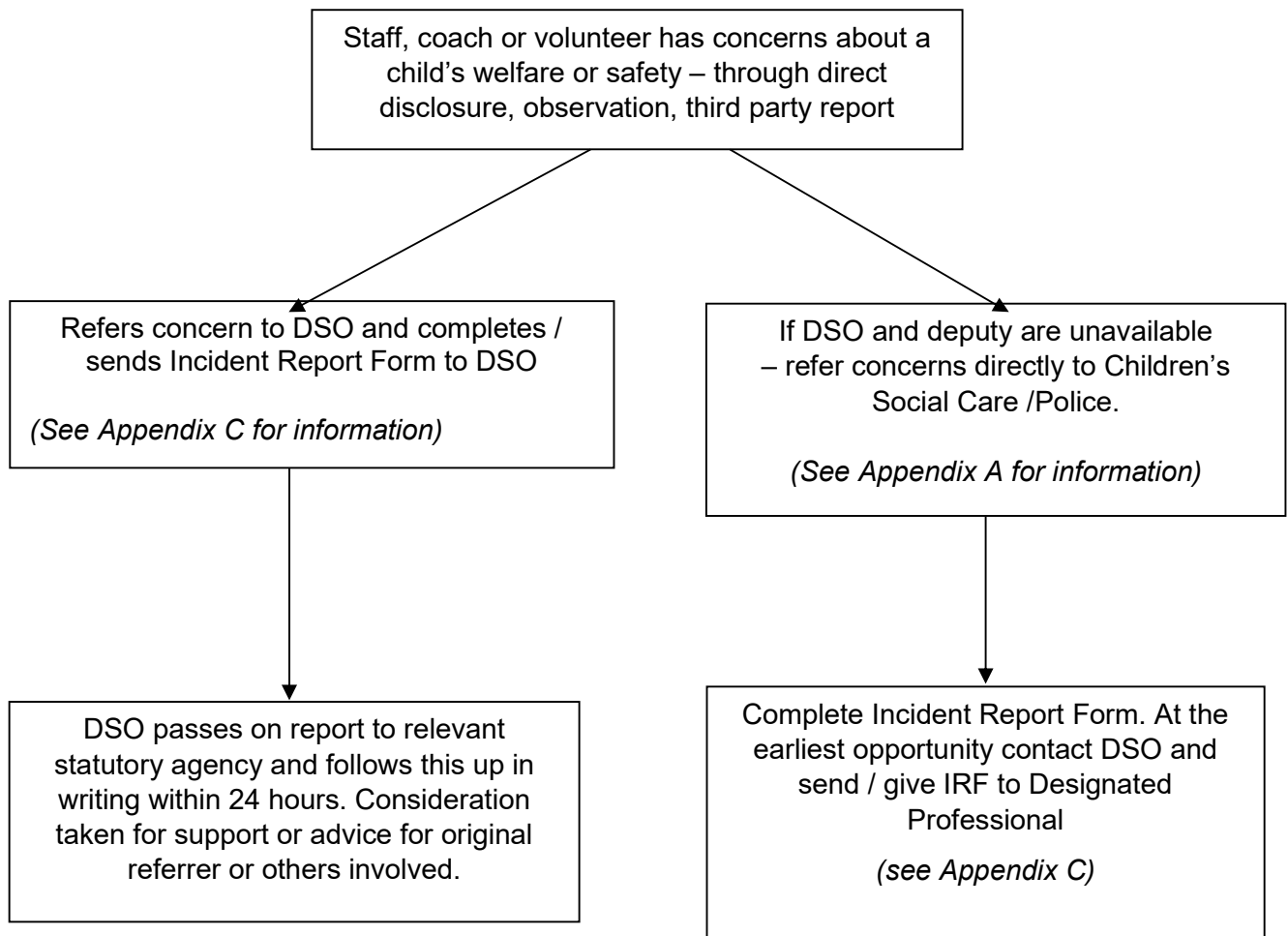
# Reporting allegations against a member of staff, coach, deliverer or volunteer

This guide is designed to inform the most appropriate action to take in relation to concerns about the behaviour of members of staff, coaches or volunteers **within sport**



# Reporting concerns arising from the disclosure of abuse

## **Away from sport**



### **Designated Safeguarding Officer**

- The Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) will be the nominated person trained in safeguarding & child protection procedures within Wesport.
- The Designated Safeguarding Officer will be the person to whom staff, coaches, officials and volunteers can refer to when they have concerns about the welfare or safety of a child or young person.
- Where this person is not immediately accessible the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer will take on this role.
- Where neither of these are available, staff, coaches, officials and volunteers will be asked to contact the Children's Social Care Department in the Local Authority area where the child or young person lives. Any staff member, coach, official or volunteer who has a concern about the welfare of a child, or to whom a child makes an allegation of abuse or possible abuse, should consult with the Designated Safeguarding Officer **within 24 hours** of the concern or allegation coming to light.

If people are not sure about the seriousness of their concerns they can contact the Designated Safeguarding Officer to discuss and clarify concerns.

### **The Role and Responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Officer**

The Designated Safeguarding Officer will be the designated professional who will lead the responsibility for dealing with any concerns about the protection of children and young people. Their role will be to:

- Assist the organisation to fulfil its responsibilities to safeguard children and young people at local level. Meeting the requirements of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018.
- Assist the organisation to implement its safeguarding plan at local level.
- Be responsible for contacting Designated Professionals in each Local Authority or other partner organisations e.g. National Governing Bodies.
- Maintain contact details for local statutory agencies. (*See Appendix A for information*)
- Make links with local statutory agencies (Police and Children's Social Care) and Local Safeguarding Arrangements.
- Receive reports of child abuse, pass these onto Children's Social Care and Police, and follow such referrals up in writing.
- Make a decision about whether reported concerns should be dealt with on the basis of being poor practice (i.e. handled internally) or as possible child abuse (i.e. referred out)
- Provide advice and support to local clubs and organisations regarding safeguarding and poor practice.
- Maintain secure filing and storage system of locally held records related to poor practice/child abuse cases providing advice and support to staff in the aftermath of a referral of concerns.

- Make decisions about temporary suspension while investigations (internal and / or external) are being carried out, if necessary consulting with statutory agencies.
- Maintain links with statutory agencies during the course of the investigation.
- Ensure confidentiality is maintained.
- Advise national organisation regarding local contacts/procedures during safeguarding investigations.
- Provide resources and (where appropriate) safeguarding / child protection training for local clubs, organisations, coaches and people working with children and young people and sport.
- Promote anti-discriminatory practice

#### Concerns children share about what is happening outside of sport, e.g. home, school:

- If someone in the Partnership receives information about possible child abuse away from the sport environment this should be reported immediately to the DSO who will pass the issue on to the relevant Children Social Care department. This should be recorded on an incident report form. (Appendix C)
- Children should never be interviewed.
- Always try to ascertain the young person's wishes but never promise confidentiality.

#### Noting and confidentiality

- The DSO will meet with the person to whom a child discloses information about alleged abuse or the person who observed the alleged abuse to write down information known at that stage e.g. time alleged abuse took place, location of alleged abuse, people involved, and details of actions constituting alleged abuse. (*See Appendix C for information*)
- If there is no further action, this information is to be kept confidentially on file. The DSO will maintain a system for keeping all records confidentially.

#### Action to be taken by the Trust while safeguarding investigations are undertaken:

- No member of the Trust should inform the alleged abuser until the Children's Social Care Department recommends that this contact is made.
- The Children's Social Care Department may recommend whether the member of staff will be suspended, without prejudice, pending an investigation. Where it is an unpaid club member whether this be officials, coaches, volunteers or staff members the sports club may be advised to suspend the person without prejudice, pending an investigation.
- Wesport will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended (in line with constitutional powers) pending further Police and Children's Social Care inquiries.
- Irrespective of the findings of the Children's Social Care or Police inquiries, Wesport must assess all individual cases under the appropriate misconduct / disciplinary

procedure to completion, 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, Wesport must reach a decision based on the balance of probabilities in relation to continued risk, and all available information. The welfare of children will always remain paramount.

- Where the person concerned is a coach, the action may be found to be poor practice rather than abuse. In this case training will be offered to a coach not employed by the partnership of the Trust, or a club will be encouraged to use an alternative coach. Where the coach is employed by the Trust, a decision will be made whether to train the coach, or terminate their employment with the Trust.

The Wesport procedure should be used:

- For all allegations against Trust staff
- When disclosure happens during Wesport activity
- When a child discloses to a Wesport member of staff
- When possible abuse is observed during Wesport activity

## **6. Monitoring and Evaluation**

### **Monitoring and Appraisal**

Wesport will set up a system for all staff, officials, coaches and volunteers to be given the opportunity to give and receive feedback on the implementation of the Safeguarding Children Policy.

It is important that good communication and liaison is maintained between the local statutory Agencies, Local Safeguarding Arrangements and relevant organisations i.e. National Governing Bodies of Sport to ensure consistent actions are taken.

### **Review**

A formal review of this document and the policy guidelines it contains will be held every 3 years by the Designated Officers and the Trust Board (Board Champion)

A review will be held earlier than the 3 years in light of any changes to legislation, function of partnership or incidents that have occurred which will reflect on the Safeguarding Children Policy.

## Appendices

### **Appendix A: Essential Local Contacts**

- **Wesport Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO):**

Melonie Gregory

Tel: 0117 3286250

Mobile/Out of Hours: 07919 211719

**Wesport Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO):**

Steve Nelson

Tel: 0117 3286250

Mobile/Out of Hours: 07919 211724

Sarah Casselden

Tel: 0117 3286250

Mobile / Out of Hours:

Nikki Stephens

Tel: 0117 3286250

**Police**

- 999 (emergency) or 101 (non-emergency)

#### **Bath and North East Somerset Council**

New Number 0300 247 0201

Emergency Duty Team 01454 615165 (Out of Hours and Weekends)

#### **Bristol City Council**

First Response Team 0117 9036444

Emergency Duty Team 01454 615165 (Out of Hours and Weekends)

Local Area Designated Officer (LADO) – [LADO@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:LADO@bristol.gov.uk) 0117 9037795

#### **South Gloucestershire Council**

Tel: 01454 866000 (Monday – Thursday 9am – 5.30pm and Friday 9am – 4.30pm)

Tel: 01454 615165 (Out of Hours and Weekends)

**North Somerset Council**

Tel: 01275 888808 (Care Connect)

Tel: 01454 615165 (Out of Hours and Weekends)

**Essential National Contacts**

**NSPCC**

24 Helpline: 0808 800 5000

Email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

**Childline UK**

Helpline: 0800 1111

**Child Protection in Sport Unit**

3, Gilmore Close,

Beaumont Leys

Leicester, LE4 1EZ

Tel : 0116 3665580

Email : [cpsu@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:cpsu@nspcc.org.uk)

website : [www.thecpsu.org.uk](http://www.thecpsu.org.uk)

**DBS Customer Helpline**

0800 1448 221

[www.dbschecks.org.uk](http://www.dbschecks.org.uk)



## **APPENDIX B: Main Forms of Abuse and Recognising the Signs**

Note that this list is not exhaustive.

- **Neglect** – where adults fail to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, it is likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development (e.g. failure to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.) It may also include refusal to give children love, affection and attention. Neglect in sport could include a teacher or coach not ensuring children were safe, exposing them to undue cold, heat or to unnecessary risk of injury.

*Examples of neglect in a sport situation could include a coach failing to ensure that children are safe and comfortable, or exposing them to undue cold or to unnecessary risk of injury*

- **Physical abuse** – where adults and or other young people physically hurt or injure children by hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, biting, or scalding, suffocating, drowning or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after e.g. factitious illness by proxy or Munchausen's syndrome by proxy.

*Examples of physical abuse in sport may be when the nature and intensity of training and competition exceeds the capacity of the child's immature and growing body; where drugs are used to enhance performance or delay puberty.*

- **Sexual abuse** – where girls and boys are abused by adults (both male and female) or other young people who use children to meet their own sexual needs. This could include full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse and fondling. Showing children pornographic material (books, videos, pictures) is also a form of sexual abuse.

*In sport, coaching techniques that involve physical contact with children could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed. The power of the coach over young performers, if misused, may also lead to abusive situations developing.*

- **Emotional abuse** – is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children to feel frightened or in danger by being constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted which may make the child very nervous and withdrawn. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child.

*Emotional abuse in sport may occur if children are subjected to constant criticism, name-calling, sarcasm, bullying or unrealistic pressure to perform to high expectations consistently. This can often be through the use of social media.*

### **Recognising Signs of Abuse**

The first indication that a child is being abused is not necessarily the presence of a severe injury. Concerns that a child is being abused may be raised by the sign of bruises or marks on a child's body or by remarks made by a child, his/her parents or friends, the observation of a child's behaviour or reactions, from an awareness that a family is under stress and may need help with caring for the children or from a number of other factors.

***Remember, it is not your role to determine if a child is being abused but it is your responsibility to record and report your concerns following the procedures outlined in this document.***

The following information will help you to be more alert to the signs of possible abuse:

### **Neglect**

Neglect includes not only poor physical care and inattention to the child's basic needs e.g. for regular feeding, cleanliness and clothing but also a failure to provide the necessary stimulation to sustain behavioural and emotional development.

#### **Warning signs include:**

- Poor growth for which no medical cause is found, with a dramatic improvement on normal diet away from home
- Unkempt, dirty appearance
- Medical needs of child not met – failure to seek medical advice for illness, severe untreated nappy rash, missed immunisations
- Development delay
- Lack of social responsiveness
- Self-stimulating behaviour such as head banging or rocking
- Repeated failure to prevent injury, accidental or otherwise.

### **Physical Abuse**

The following is not a comprehensive or definitive list, but it provides a guide to the more common non-accidental injuries, which may indicate situations where more expert advice should be sought.

Clusters of signs may be more important than any one sign on its own. Much depends on the answers you receive to questions asked to make sense of what has been seen or reported.

### **Bruises:**

- Symmetrical bruised eyes are rarely accidental, although they may occur where there is an injury to the head or nose and blood seeps from the injury site to settle in the loose tissue around the eye (striking as discipline, expecting performance above a child's development level etc.). A single bruise may be the result of an accident or abuse.

- Bruising in or around the mouth (especially in small babies).
- Grasp marks on arms - or chest of a small child.
- Finger marks (e.g. you may see 3-4 small bruises on one side of the face and one on the other).
- Bruising on opposite sides of the body is rarely accidental.
- Outline bruising (e.g. belt marks, handprints).
- Linear bruising (particularly on the buttocks or back).
- Bruising on soft tissue with no obvious explanation.
- Different age bruising (especially in the same area e.g. buttocks).

Most falls or accidents produce one bruise on a single surface - usually a bony protuberance. A child who falls downstairs generally has only one or two bruises. Bruising in accidents is usually on the front of the body as children generally fall forwards. In addition, there may be marks on their hands if they have tried to break their fall.

The following are uncommon sites for accidental bruising:

- back of legs, buttocks (except, occasionally, along the bony protuberances of the spine)
- mouth, cheeks, behind the ear
- stomach, chest
- under the arm
- genital, rectal area
- neck

### **Bites:**

These can leave clear impressions of the teeth. Human bites are oval or crescent shaped. If the distance is more than 3 cm across, an adult or older child with permanent teeth must have caused them.

### **Burns and scalds:**

It can be very difficult to distinguish between accidental and non-accidental burns. However, remember:

- A responsible adult checks the temperature of the bath before a child gets in.
- A child is unlikely to sit down voluntarily in too hot a bath and cannot accidentally scald its bottom without also scalding its feet.
- A child getting into too hot water of its own accord will struggle to get out again and there will be splash marks.
- Small round burns may be cigarette burns (but may be friction burns, and accidental, if along the bony protuberances of the spine)

### **Scars:**

Children may have scars, but notice should be taken of an exceptionally large number of differing age scars (especially if coupled with current bruising), unusual shaped scars (e.g. round ones from possible cigarette burns), or of large scars that are from burns or lacerations that did not receive medical treatment (some medical conditions can cause scarring).

### **Fractures:**

A child with a fracture is usually in very considerable pain, and generally will not be moving the part that is fractured. There is usually swelling, and possibly discoloration over the site of a fracture. However, children sustain fractures relatively easily, and small children may not always be distressed following a fracture. It can therefore be difficult for a parent to be aware that a child has been hurt.

### **General Points:**

Some bruises and marks may seem insignificant by themselves but repeated injuries, even of a very minor nature, may be symptomatic of a family in crisis and, if no action is taken, the child may be injured more seriously.

Any organisation caring for a child is entitled to expect a parent to tell them if there is anything wrong with a child. It is important not to investigate under any circumstances. If there is doubt, you should seek advice.

### **Possible Behavioural Signs:**

- Fear of parents being approached for an explanation
- Aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts
- Flinching when approached or touched
- Reluctance to get changed, for example wearing long sleeves in hot weather
- Depression
- Withdrawn behaviour
- Running away from home

### **Sexual Abuse**

Below is a list of behavioural signs which have been known to act as indicators of sexual abuse. However, it is important to realise that many of these signs could equally be indicative of a range of different problems.

There are very few physical signs of sexual abuse and the majority of those will require a medical diagnosis or forensic evidence. Pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease are examples.

Because those who sexually abuse children take great care to ensure that they have the compliance and silence of the child, it is very difficult to know what is happening unless a child tells someone. It is important that anything a child says, which may indicate they have been abused, is taken very seriously and is referred to those who are skilled in the investigation of the abuse of children.

### **Possible Behavioural Signs:**

- Mood changes, tantrums, aggression, sudden school difficulties
- Insecurity
- Sleep and eating disorders
- Poor self-esteem, anxiety, depression, despair
- Withdrawal, secretiveness
- Poor peer relationships
- Lies, stealing, arson
- Running away
- Suicide attempts, self-poisoning, self-mutilation
- Unexplained money, gifts
- Premature understanding of sex, inappropriate sex play
- Seductive behaviour, promiscuity
- Abuse of solvents, drugs, alcohol

### **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse may take the form of failure to meet a child's need for affection, attention and stimulation (even though good physical care may be provided) or there may be constant verbal abuse, rejection, scapegoating, threats of violence or attempts to frighten the child. Conversely, some parents may be so over-protective and possessive that they prevent normal social contact or normal physical activity. Both states can be difficult to document or evaluate, but may have crippling long-term effects on a child's development.

### **Children suffering from emotional abuse may exhibit these behavioural symptoms:**

- excessively clingy or attention seeking behaviour
- low self esteem
- apathy
- fearful or withdrawn
- constantly seeking to please
- over-ready to relate to anyone, including strangers



### **Appendix C: Wesport Incident Record Form**

#### WESPORT INCIDENT RECORD FORM

Your name:
Your contact number:
Your position:
Child / Young Person's name:
Child / Young Person's address:
Child / Young Person's contact number:
Ethnicity:
<b>Does the child have a long-standing illness or disability?</b> <i>(By long-standing this means anything that has troubled the individual over a long period of time or that is likely to affect them over at least one year.)</i>
Parents/carers names and address:
Child / Young Person's date of birth:
Date, time and place of incident:
Your observations:



Exactly what the child / young person said and what you said: (Remember, do not lead the individual or promise confidentiality – record actual details. Continue on separate sheet if necessary)

If concerns are raised by a third party who are they? Name, Organisation, Position, contact details) and what have they said?

Any other relevant information?

Action taken so far:

External agencies contacted (date & time)

<p><b>Police:</b></p> <p>yes/no</p>	<p>If yes – which:</p> <p>Name and contact number:</p> <p>Details of advice received:</p>
<p><b>Children Social Care:</b></p> <p>yes/no</p>	<p>If yes – which Unitary Authority area:</p> <p>Name and contact number:</p> <p>Details of advice received:</p>
<p><b>NGB:</b></p> <p>Yes/no</p>	<p>If yes – which NGB:</p> <p>Name and contact number:</p> <p>Details of advice received:</p>
<p><b>Unitary Authority:</b></p> <p>Yes/no</p>	<p>If yes – which:</p> <p>Name and contact number:</p> <p>Details of advice received:</p>

<b>School:</b>  Yes/no	If yes – which:  Name and contact number:  Details of advice received:
<b>Other</b> (e.g. NSPCC):  Yes/no	If yes – which:  Name and contact number:  Details of advice received:

Signature:  Print name:
Date:

**SEND OR HAND THIS FORM (in envelope marked Private & Confidential, and within 24 hours) TO THE PERSON TO WHOM YOU INITIALLY REPORTED YOUR CONCERNS:**

**NORMALLY, THIS WOULD BE:**

MELONIE GREGORY, Wesport, The Vassall Centre, Gill Avenue, Fishponds  
Bristol, BS16 2QQ

**TEL: 0117 3286251 Mobile/Out of Hours: 07919 211719**

**[Safeguarding@wesport.org.uk](mailto:Safeguarding@wesport.org.uk)**

The West of England Sport Trust (Wesport)  
The Vassall Centre  
Gill Avenue  
Fishponds  
Bristol BS16 2QQ

Tel: 0117 3286250  
[www.wesport.org.uk](http://www.wesport.org.uk)

**This information is available in alternative formats on request.**