

Procedure for Responding to Concerns About A Child

1. Concerns about the General Welfare of a Child (NOT involving concerns about child abuse)

Scottish Volleyball is committed to working in partnership with parents/carers whenever there are concerns about a child. Parents/carers have the primary responsibility for the safety and well-being of their children.

Where the concern does not involve the possibility of abuse, worries may be discussed with parents/carers. For example, if a child seems withdrawn, he/she may have experienced an upset in the family, such as a parental separation, divorce or bereavement. Common sense is advised in these situations.

Any significant, untoward or unusual incidents which cause concern about the welfare of a child should be recorded on the *Significant Incident Form* and reported to *Scottish Volleyball* Safeguarding & Wellbeing Protection Officer as soon as possible. Parents/carers should also be informed of the circumstances as soon as possible.

Advice should be sought from *Scottish Volleyball* Safeguarding & Wellbeing Protection Officer if there is any uncertainty about the appropriate course of action where there are concerns about the general welfare of a child.

2. Concerns about the Abuse of a Child

What to Do if a Child Tells You about Abuse

No member of Scottish Volleyball shall investigate allegations of abuse or decide whether a child has been abused.

Allegations of abuse must always be taken seriously. False allegations are very rare. If a child says or indicates they are being abused or information is obtained which gives concern that a child is being abused, the information must be responded to on the same day in line with the following procedure.

2a Respond

- React calmly so as not to frighten the child.
- Listen to the child and take what they say seriously. Do not show disbelief.
- Reassure the child they are not to blame and were right to tell someone.
- Be aware of interpreting what a child says, especially if they have learning or physical disabilities which affect their ability to communicate or English is not their first language.
- Do not assume that the experience was bad or painful - it may have been neutral or even pleasurable.
- Avoid projecting your own reactions onto the child.
- Avoid asking any questions. If necessary, only ask enough questions to gain basic information to establish the *possibility* that abuse may have occurred. Only use open-ended, non-leading questions e.g. Who? Where? When?

- Do not introduce personal information from either your own experiences or those of other children.

Avoid:

- Panicking.
- Showing shock or distaste.
- Probing for more information than is offered.
- Speculating or making assumptions.
- Making negative comments about the person against whom the allegation has been made.
- Approaching the individual against whom the allegation has been made.
- Making promises or agreeing to keep secrets and giving a guarantee of confidentiality.

Observation/Information from an individual or agency

- A concern or possible abuse of a child may be observed by another child or adult and information can come from an individual or another agency/organisation.
- Where there is uncertainty about what to do with the information, directly from a child's disclosure or from someone else, *Scottish Volleyball Wellbeing & Protection Officer* must firstly be consulted for advice on the appropriate course of action.
- If *Scottish Volleyball's* Child Protection & Wellbeing Officer is unavailable or an immediate response is required, the police and social work services must be consulted for advice. They have a statutory responsibility for the protection of children, and they may already hold other concerning information about the child. Record any advice given.

2b Record

Make a written record of the information as soon as possible using the *Significant Incident Form*, completing as much of the form as possible. The following information will help the police and social workers decide what action to take next:

- Child's name, age and date of birth.
- Child's home address and telephone number.
- Any times, dates or other relevant information.
- Whether the person making the report is expressing their own concern or the concerns of another person.
- The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any injuries occurred *using the child's own words*.
- The nature of the concern (include all the information obtained during the initial account e.g. time, date, location).
- A description of any visible (when normally dressed) injuries or bruising, behavioural signs, indirect signs (do not physically examine the child).
- Details of any witnesses.
- Whether the child's parents/carers have been informed.
- Details of anyone else who has been consulted and the information obtained from them.
- If it is not the child making the report, whether the child has been spoken to, if so what was said *using the child's own words*.

- The child's views on the situation.

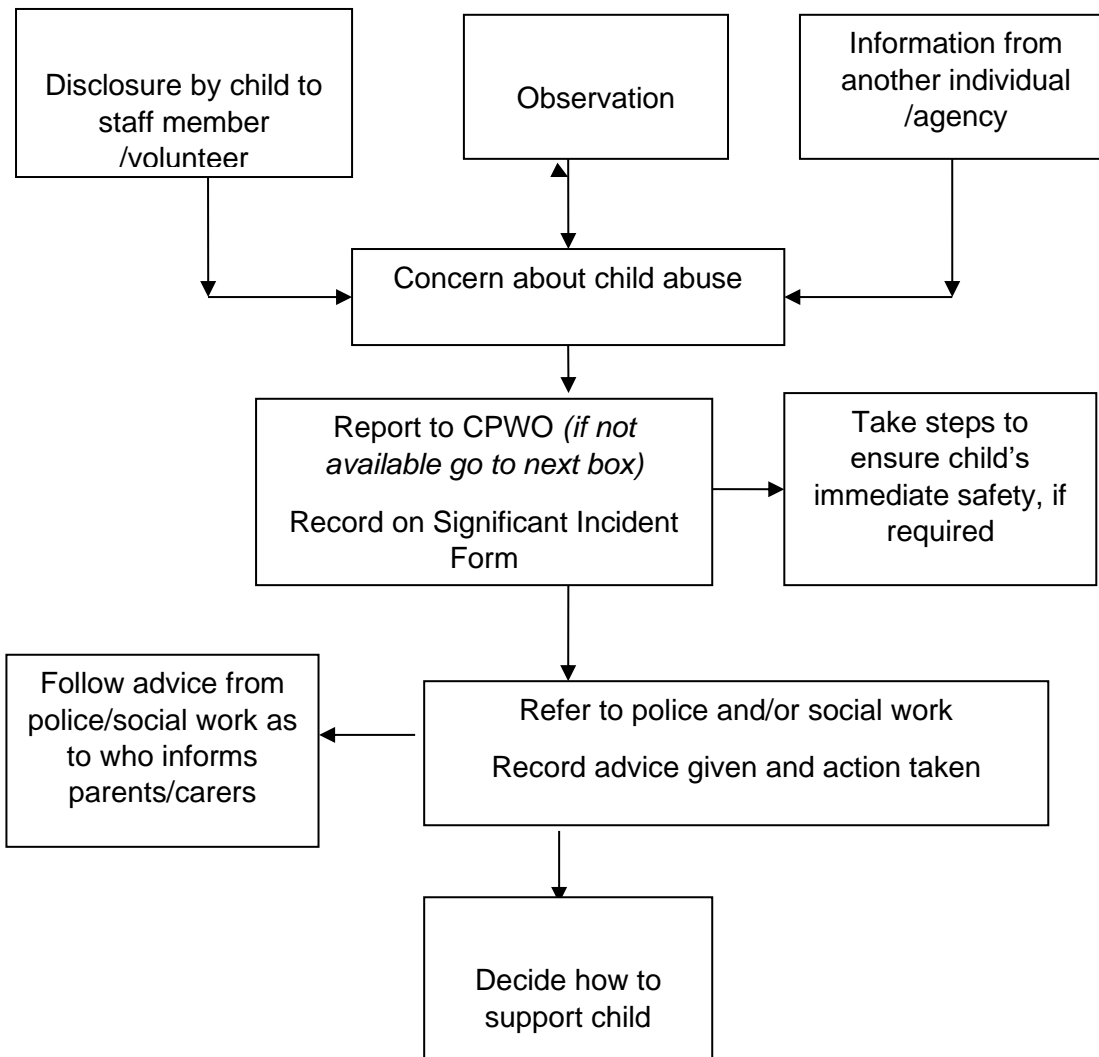
If completing the form electronically, do not save copies to the hard drive, disk or pen drive. Print a copy, sign and date and then delete immediately. Pass the record to social work services or the police and to the *Scottish Volleyball* Child Protection & Wellbeing Officer that day.

2c Sharing Concerns with Parents/Carers

Where there are concerns that the parents/carers may be responsible for or have knowledge of the abuse, sharing concerns with the parents/carers may place the child at further risk.

In such cases advice must always firstly be sought from the police or social work services as to who informs the parents/carers.

RESPONDING TO CONCERNS ABOUT A CHILD FLOWCHART



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