

## Useful Contact Numbers



### SOCIAL SERVICES

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**Area Office (Duty Desk)**  
Kingsway, Bedford 01234 223599

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**Head of Childrens Services** 01234 363222  
Social Services Dept, County Hall, Bedford

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**Emergency Out-of-Hours Duty Team** 0870 2385465

### POLICE

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**Family Protection Team** 01234 271212  
Greyfriars, Bedford

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**Bedfordshire Police Headquarters**  
Woburn Road, Kempston, Bedford 01234 841212

### NSPCC

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110/112 Legrave Road, Luton 01582 424888

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**National Helpline** 0800 800500

### CHILDLINE

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**National Helpline** 0800 1111

BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

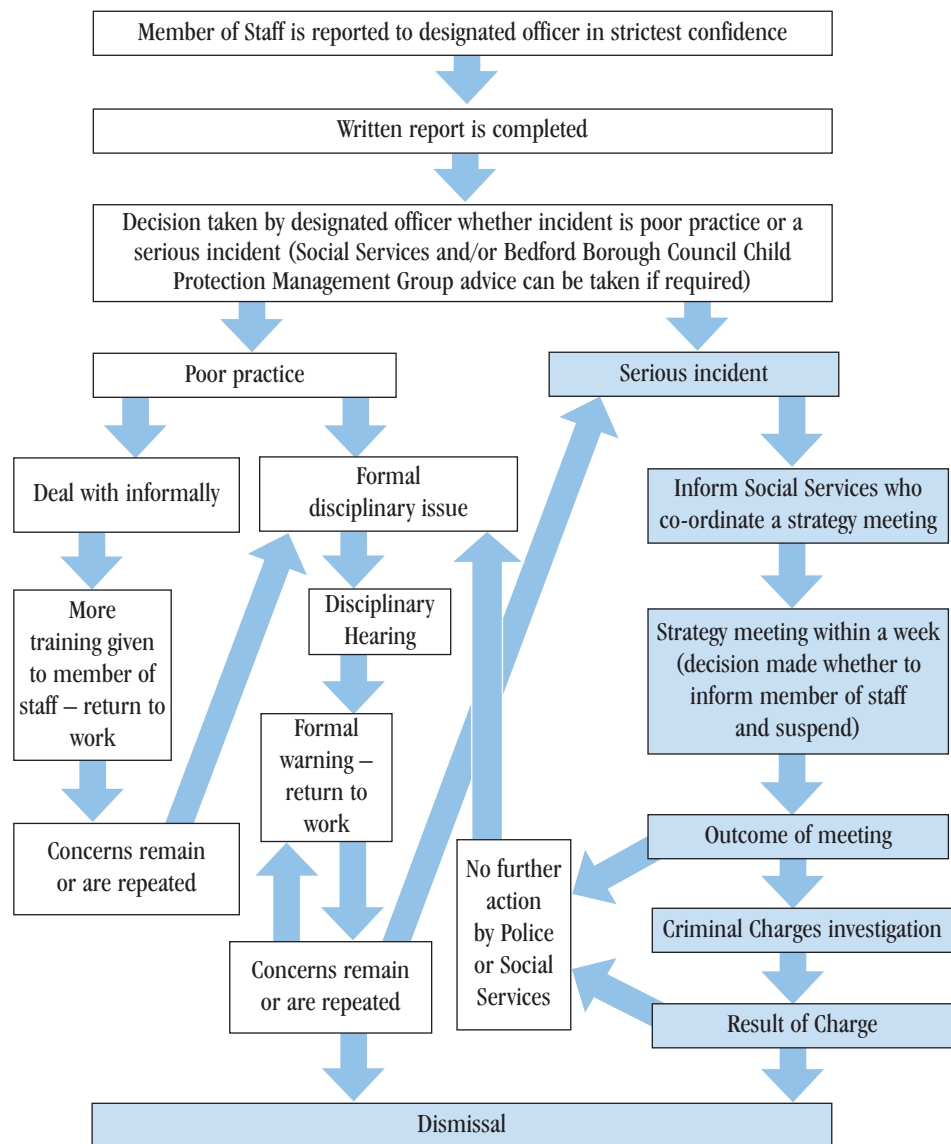
# Child Protection Policy

DRAFT 1/12/05



## Appendix C

### Flow Chart showing the steps taken if a member of staff or volunteer is accused of child abuse



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**Useful Addresses and Telephone Contacts**

## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1 Why have a Policy?

Bedford Borough Council has an obligation to ensure that when given the responsibility for \*children and young people that \*\*staff provide them with the highest possible standards of care. The Bedford Borough Council Child Protection Policy aims to provide clear and concise guidance to ensure the safety of all children involved in Bedford Borough Council activities.

### 1.2 Definitions Within the Policy

- \* The term “children” or “child” is used throughout this document as a generic term for young people under the age of 18 years (BUT under the age of 16 if the young person is employed). The policy may also apply to young people and adults over the age of 18 who may be vulnerable by the nature of any impairment or disability.
- \*\* The term “staff” is used within this document as a generic term to refer to any person working for the Borough Council in any capacity and includes volunteers, part-time staff, sports coaches, temporary workers and work placement students working with younger children.

## 2.0 Policy Statement

*Bedford Borough Council believes*

1. The safety and welfare of children should always be of paramount importance, whatever the circumstances.
2. That everyone with a role in working with children has a responsibility to safeguard and promote a child’s welfare particularly when it comes to protecting children from abuse.
3. That ALL children have equal rights to protection from harm and recognises the additional vulnerability of some children and the extra barriers they may face to getting help, because of their race, gender, age, religion or disability, sexual orientation, social background or culture.
4. Special care is needed in dealing with children whose age, inexperience or physical condition makes them particularly vulnerable to abuse.
5. Sufficient training must be made available to staff to provide them with the necessary knowledge to ensure good practice is always maintained. Training must also be available to enable staff to recognise potential signs of abuse and which organisations to contact.
6. All hirers/clubs that use Bedford Borough Council facilities should operate to the standards/procedures outlined in the Bedford Borough Council Child Protection Policy.

## Appendix B

### Bedford Borough Council Child Protection Disclosure Form

*It is acceptable to use this form as a guide to the information you are required to obtain and as a format for your own report*

Have you:

- Reassured the child if appropriate
- Been honest and not made promises you cannot keep
- Explained why you may have to tell other people
- Avoided closed questions and asked as few questions as possible
- Encouraged the child to use their own words
- Read back the form to the child to check you have understood what has been said

Your observations: .....

Your Name: .....

Exactly what the child said and what you said: .....

Your Position: .....

Child’s Name: .....

Child’s School .....

Child’s Address: .....

Parent/Carers Name / Address and contact phone

number(s) .....

Child’s Date of Birth: .....

Any action you may have taken so far.....

Signature .....

Date.....

#### Remember to Maintain Confidentiality.

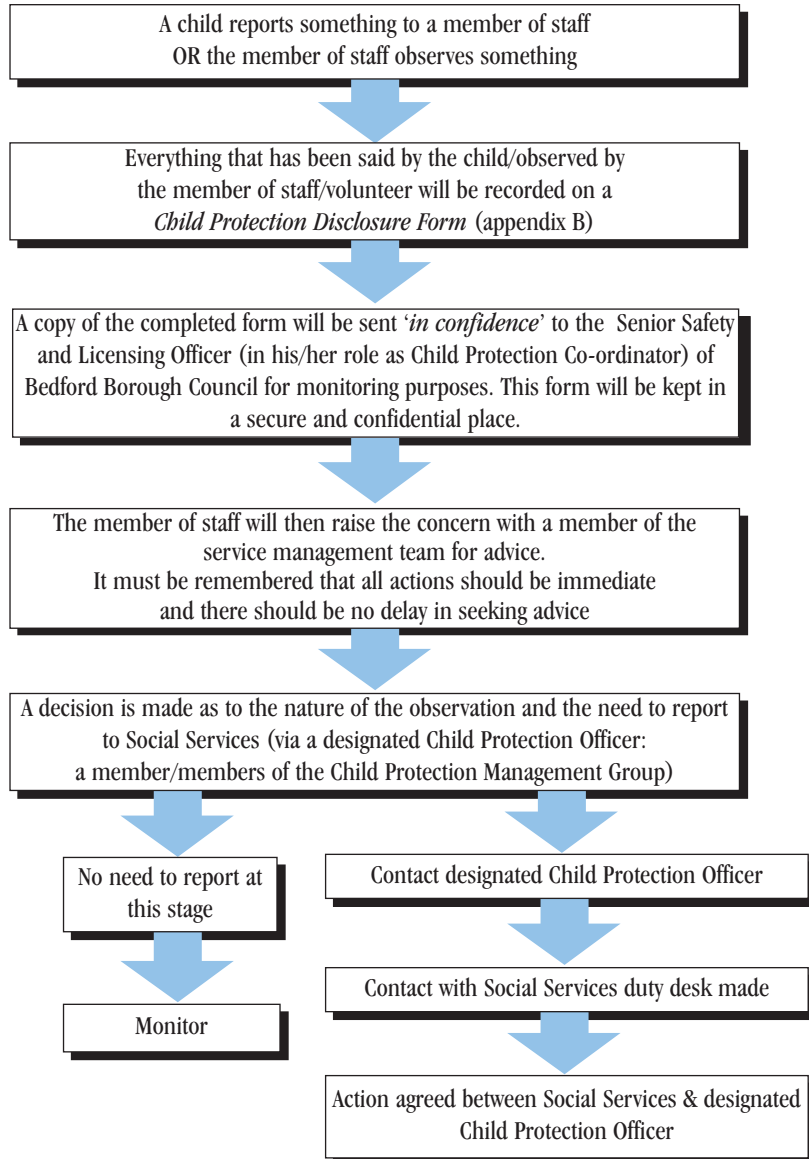
*Do not discuss with anyone other than those that need to know. Store information in accordance with Data Protection Act 1998*

A copy of this form (or your report) should be sent in confidence to: Senior Safety and Licensing Officer, Bedford Borough Council, Room 436, Town Hall, Bedford

## Appendix A

### Responding to Suspicions or Allegations :

#### *Procedure/Concerns about Parents/Carers/Responsible Adult*



## 3.0 Recruitment/Screening/Profiling of Staff

### 3.1 Equal Opportunities Recruitment Policy

The Council's recruitment procedures are IIP accredited and designed to ensure the selection process is fair and that all appointments are made on merit.

### 3.2 Why have a Screening & Profiling Process?

#### 3.2.1 Screening of Staff

Bedford Borough Council recognises that anyone

may have the potential to abuse children in some way and that all reasonable steps should be taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children. Anyone who works on Bedford Borough Council programmes/activities and will have or is likely to have sole charge of children at anytime is required to have a satisfactory enhanced disclosure through the Criminal Records Bureau.

## 4.0 Hire of Facilities and Photographic Images

4.1 All Bedford Borough Council facilities (parks/buildings) will ensure that hirers and users are aware of the Council Child Protection Policy and consequently provide them with a summary of this document. All hirers will be expected to operate to the standards/procedures outlined in the document and will sign to show that they agree to this as part of the Council booking agreement.

If Council staff have concerns about the operating procedures and/or feel that the policy is not being adhered to by any hirer, they have the right to terminate the session/ booking immediately. The session/ booking will not be able to restart until staff have agreed that the policy is being met in full by the hirer.

4.2 A copy of the guidelines for use of image recording equipment should be displayed at

the point of entry to each facility.

4.3 The policy guidelines for the use of photographic/image recording equipment with Council facilities are:

- a) any person wishing to use image recording equipment should be asked to register at reception providing details of name, address and equipment intended to be used.
- b) Athletes and parents should be informed that if they have any concerns they can report these directly to the organiser.
- c) Concerns regarding inappropriate or intrusive image recording should be reported to the event organiser or official and recorded in the same manner as any other Child Protection concern.

## 5.0 Grants to Organisations

5.1 Any organisation working with young people (or is likely to have contact with them) and applies to Bedford Borough Council for funding is expected to have (or be working

towards) a Child Protection Policy and must send a copy of this with any application made.

## 6.0 Awareness training for Staff

### 6.1 Commitment to Training

Any staff who work directly with children or whose work may involve any form of contact with them or manage staff and/or programmes that involve children will undertake training to a level relevant to their work. The training will be in the form of one day awareness courses or more in depth two/three day courses as appropriate to staff. The Bedfordshire local "Safeguarding Children Board" or NSPCC will advise on the portfolio of training available.

All staff should receive appropriate training to raise their awareness of the Borough Council Child Protection Policy and take away informative literature to support their knowledge.

The Child Protection Policy will form part of the induction process for all new staff employed by Bedford Borough Council and all staff will be issued with a copy of the policy.

### 6.2 Recognising Abuse

#### 6.2.1 What is abuse?

Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm. It commonly occurs within a relationship of trust or responsibility and represents an abuse of power or a breach of trust. Abuse can happen to a child regardless of their age, gender, race or ability.

#### 6.2.2 Types of abuse

Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.

\* **NEGLECT** - where adults fail to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, 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 could include a teacher not ensuring children were safe, exposing them to undue cold, heat or to unnecessary risk of injury.

\* **PHYSICAL ABUSE** - where adults 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. illness 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) 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) or talking to children in a sexually explicit manner is also a form of sexual abuse.

In sport, coaching techniques, which 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. In Museum/Gallery costume sessions abuse could take place as a staff member or volunteer helped a child to dress.

\* **EMOTIONAL ABUSE** - is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and

confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

#### 7.2.6 Allegations of previous abuse

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (e.g. by an adult who was abused as a child by a member of staff who is still currently working with children). Where such an allegation is made, follow the procedures as detailed above and report the matter to the Social Services or the Police. This is because other children may be at risk from this person. Any person convicted of sexual abuse against a child can be excluded from working with children for life; the Criminal Records Bureau would hold this information. Any person who is banned from working with children and attempts to do so, and any organisation who employs a person who is banned commits a criminal offence. This is reinforced by the details of the Protection of Children Act 1999.

### 7.3 Bullying

#### 7.3.1 Action if bullying is suspected

If bullying is suspected, the same procedure should be followed as set out in the Section 7.2 relating to responding to suspicions or allegations. All settings in which children are provided with services or are

living away from home should have rigorously enforced anti-bullying strategies in place.

#### 7.3.2 Action to help the victim and prevent bullying

Take all signs of bullying very seriously.

- Encourage all children to speak and share their concerns (It is believed that up to 12 children per year commit suicide as a result of bullying, so if anyone talks about or threatens suicide, seek professional help immediately). Help the victim to speak out and tell the person in charge or someone in authority. Create an open environment.
- Investigate all allegations and take action to ensure the victim is safe. Speak with the victim and the bully(ies) separately.
- Reassure the victim that you can be trusted and will help them, although you cannot promise to tell no one else.
- Keep records of what is said (what happened, by whom, when).
- Report any concerns to a Child Protection Officer from the list identified on the Council's intranet.

#### 7.3.3 Action Towards the Bully(ies):

- All incidents of bullying will be investigated rigorously and support given to all parties as appropriate. It is recognised that all cases are different and that actions taken should aim to prevent a re-occurrence of the incident.

## 8.0 Monitoring & Reviewing the Policy

Reviewing and evaluating the Child Protection Policy is a vital part of the process. The Council will evaluate the levels of awareness, perceptions and attitudes of staff as well as incidents and processes on a six monthly basis through the setting up of a Child Protection Management Group with clear,

agreed terms of reference.

Information about the Council's commitment to safeguard children will be openly displayed along with information for children / adults about where to go for help in relation to child abuse.

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- a) **The Beds & Luton Area Child Protection Committee 'Manual of Child Protection Procedures'**
- b) **The current Bedford Borough Council disciplinary procedures**

male and female member of staff. (NB. However, same gender abuse can also occur)

- Ensuring that at residential events, adults should not enter children's rooms or invite children into their rooms.
- Being an excellent role model – this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of young people and disabled adults (eg. avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will).
- Securing parental consent in writing to *act in loco parentis*, if the need arises to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid and / or other medical treatment.

- Keeping a written record of any accident or injury that occurs according to agreed procedures for each institution, along with the details of any treatment given and informing parents or teachers of the injury/treatment.
- Requesting written parental consent if staff/volunteers are required to transport young people in their cars.
- Having agreed guidelines and good practice procedures for taking, using and storing film, photographs or images of identifiable children which includes seeking permission from parents or guardians beforehand for all potential uses of the images.

If a person is fully dependent 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 any of the following occur you should report this immediately to another colleague and record the incident. You should also ensure the parents or person responsible for the child (e.g. their teacher are informed).

- If you accidentally hurt a child.
- If he/she 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.

## 7.2 Responding to Suspicions or Allegations

### 7.2.1 Concerns about parents/carers/responsible adult

It is not the responsibility of our staff, or those working in affiliated organisations, to take responsibility or to decide whether or not child abuse is taking place.

However, there is a responsibility to protect children in order that appropriate agencies can then make enquiries and take any necessary action to protect the young person. If any member of staff notices something which concerns them about a child, or the child has said something to a member of staff, this is the laid out procedure that the Bedford Borough Council Staff will follow in relation to concerns about parents / carers of children.

#### (See Appendix A)

### 7.2.2 Procedures to follow

- a) Everything that has been said by the child/observed by the member of staff will be recorded on a **Child Protection Disclosure**

**Form. (see appendix B)** The completed records will be kept confidential within a secure location. A copy of the completed form will be sent "in confidence" to the Senior Safety and Licensing Officer (in his/her role as Child Protection Co-ordinator) of Bedford Borough Council for monitoring purposes.

This disclosure form and / or report along with the copy of any Social services referral form generated will be held by the Senior Safety and Licensing Officer (in his/her role as Child Protection Co-ordinator) for a maximum of three years. After this period it will be securely disposed of (shredded) unless there is an ongoing case relating to paperwork that is being stored.

- b) We will ensure that the information is as factual as possible and does not contain assumptions or personal comments.
- c) We will record the dates and times when these events/situations have happened. Giving the child time to talk and taking care not to interpret what the child's meaning is, recording only what they say.
- d) If there has been an explanation given to a member of staff for injuries or behaviour, we will ensure that it is included.
- e) Members of staff will then immediately raise the contents of the Child Protection Disclosure Form, in the first instance, with one of the appropriate service management team (for advice).
- f) A decision is then made by the relevant senior manager regarding the need to consult a Council designated Child Protection Officer and then Social Services (via a Council designated Child Protection Officer)
- g) A designated Child Protection Officer will then determine the needs to refer the issue to Social Services (discussion and support at this stage is available through the Bedford Borough Council Child Protection Management Group and its members)

## 7.0 Poor practice, abuse & bullying procedures

### 7.1 Poor 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 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 excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others;
- Avoid taking children to your home.

#### 7.1.2 Practice never to be sanctioned

The following should never be sanctioned.

*You should never:*

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay;
- Share overnight accommodation 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*;
- Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon;
- 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.

*NB. It may sometimes be necessary for staff to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are young or are disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents, teachers and the children involved. There is a need to be responsive to a person's reactions.*

- h) If it is agreed that action is needed the designated officer will then consult the Social Services duty desk based at the Kingsway offices of Bedfordshire County Council. (This number and other useful contacts are listed on the back cover. The nominated officer and Social Services will then agree on the next course of action.

It is important to note that this is only a process of observation and at no point will staff seek abuse.

**The responsibility is to ensure concerns are reported appropriately, it is not staff's responsibility to investigate concerns.**

***The Council assures all staff that it will fully support and protect anyone who, in good faith (without malicious intent), reports his / her concerns that a child may be being abused.***

### 7.2.3 Concerns about members of staff

The following circumstances may lead a member of staff to suspect that a fellow member of staff is abusing a child.

- An allegation is made by a child or adult.
- A member of staff notices inappropriate behaviour by another member of staff.

### 7.2.4 Procedures to follow

The flow chart attached (*appendix C*) illustrates the steps that need to be taken in cases where allegations are made about members of staff.

- a) a **Child Protection Disclosure Form (see appendix B)** should be completed and contact made with a member of the service management team. A decision will then be made to contact a designated Council Child Protection Officer.
- b) The designated officer should be informed of situations where they are unsure if the allegation constitutes abuse or not and they are unclear of what action to take. The designated Child Protection Officer can discuss issues at this stage with a member or members of the Bedford Borough Council Child Protection Management Group. If there is still any doubt advice may be sought by

the designated officer from Social Services.

- c) There may be circumstances when the allegations are about poor practice. All incidents including poor practice must be recorded and kept on file in a secure location. Access to these files will be strictly limited. This is because it may be one of a series of instances that cause concern.
- d) Where there is a complaint against a member of staff an investigation will take place. If the allegation is deemed by the designated officer to be of a serious nature a child protection investigation will be undertaken by Social Services and Police.  
A strategy meeting will be co-ordinated by Social Services (at which point it will be decided when / if to inform the member of staff).

- e) It may be decided that the member of staff should be suspended during the investigation. Following the investigation, if it is determined that child abuse has not taken place there may still be some form of disciplinary action taken (according to Council disciplinary procedures).

- f) Consideration, in line with disciplinary procedures, must also be given to appropriate support for any accused member of staff during the procedure. The results of the Police child protection investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation, but not necessarily. A criminal investigation will always take priority and take into consideration that the welfare of a child is paramount.

It is acknowledged that the feelings generated by the discovery that a member of staff or volunteer is, or maybe abusing a child, will raise concerns amongst other staff and volunteers. **The Council assures all staff and volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone who, in good faith (without malicious intent), reports his / her concerns about a colleagues practice or possibility that a child may be being abused.**

### 7.2.5 Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that

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 nervous and withdrawn. A level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child. Emotional abuse may occur if children are subjected to constant criticism, name-calling, and sarcasm, bullying or unrealistic pressure to perform to high expectations consistently.

The above definitions are adapted from Department of Health (1999):

*Working Together to Safeguard Children – A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.*

### 6.3 Promotion of Good Practice Guidelines

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, artist, workshop leader or volunteer may have regular contact with young people and be an important link in identifying cases where a young person needs protection.

All suspicious cases of poor practice should be reported following the guidelines in this document. All personnel should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect themselves from false allegations. The following section

illustrates common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate:

#### 6.3.1 Good practice means:

- Always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging an open environment i.e. no secrets).
- Treating all young people/disabled adults 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 from children (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 learning, creative activity and sport fun and enjoyable, and promoting fair play.
- Only touching children when it is absolutely necessary in relation to the particular activity.
- Ensuring that if any form of touching is required, it should be provided openly. Young people should always be consulted and their agreement gained. e.g. in sport, care is needed, as it is difficult to maintain hand positions when the child is constantly moving. 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 teachers, parents/carers wherever possible (e.g. for the responsibility of their children in changing rooms). If groups have to be supervised in the changing rooms, always ensure parents/teachers/coaches/officials work in pairs.
- Ensuring that if mixed sports teams are taken away, they should always be accompanied by a