

Shukokai Karate Federation

Draft

Child Protection Policy

June 2018

1 Introduction

Throughout this document the Shukokai Karate Federation is referred to as “SKF”. “Club” and “club’s” refers to the karate clubs who are affiliated to the SKF.

SKF, as a sporting organisation, has developed this Policy for implementation throughout its clubs. SKF recognises the need to make provision for children and young persons, and acknowledges its moral and legal responsibility to ensure that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount; and
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse; and
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately; and
- All staff (paid /unpaid) working within our sport have a responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate officer; and
- The Children’s Act 1989 defines a child as a person under the age of 18.

SKF is committed to working in partnership with all agencies to ensure best practice when working with children and young people who, within our clubs, are the majority.

Adopting best practice will help to safeguard those participants from potential abuse as well as protecting coaches and other adults in positions of responsibility from any potential allegation of abuse.

This document is binding and provides procedures and guidance to everyone within SKF, whether working in a voluntary or professional capacity.

2 Policy Statement

SKF has a duty of care to safeguard all children involved in all forms of karate from harm. All children have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account. As such SKF will strive to ensure the safety and protection of all children involved in our sport through general adherence to the Child Protection guidelines ratified and adopted by the English Karate Federation (“EKF”) and approved by Sport England and the NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit.

The policy should be implemented by member clubs and is applicable to all within the SKF.

Sport can and does have a very powerful and positive influence on people especially young people. Not only can it provide opportunities for enjoyment and achievement; it helps to develop and enhance valuable qualities such as self-esteem, leadership and teamwork. SKF must ensure that for those positive experiences to take place that sport, in the hands of those who have the welfare of young people uppermost in their mind, has proper procedures and practices to support and empower them.

3 Policy aims

- The aim of the Child Protection Policy is to promote good practice:
- Providing children and young persons with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of SKF clubs and instructors.
- Ensure that all incidents of poor practice and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- Allow all staff /volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.
- The policy recognises and builds on the legal and statutory definition of a child.
- The distinction between ages of consent, civil and criminal liability are recognised but in the pursuit of good in the delivery and management of SKF, a young person is recognised as being under the age of 18 years [Children’s Act 1989].
- SKF recognises that persons above the age of 18 may be vulnerable to undue influence by adults in positions of responsibility, for example junior International athletes aged Under 21years.
- SKF will provide a suitably experienced and qualified individual to act as their Child Protection Officer and commit to a series of awareness raising and training seminars and workshops to assist them in fulfilling their role and will use the EKF template forms and reporting sheets.
- Confidentiality will be upheld in line with the Data Protection Act 1984, the Human Rights Act 2000 and the EKF Whistle Blower’s Policy.

4 Promoting Good Practice

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 a judgement about the appropriate action to take. Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and the sporting environment. It is a fact of life that 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. All cases of poor practice should be reported following the guidelines in this document.

When a child enters an SKF club having experienced abuse outside the sporting environment, sport can play a crucial role in improving the child's self-esteem. In such instances and where specifically advised of such circumstances, the SKF club must work with the appropriate agencies to ensure the child receives the required support.

5 Good Practice Guidelines

All those involved in Martial Arts should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to safeguard children and young people and protect themselves from false allegations. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate within Martial Arts:

5.1 Good practice means:

- Always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication).
- Treating all young people/disabled adults equally, and with respect and dignity.
- Placing the welfare and safety of the child or young person first above the development of performance or competition.
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with students (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.
- Where any form of manual or physical support is required, it should be provided openly.
- Keeping up to date with the technical skills, qualifications and insurance within Karate.
- 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/teachers/coaches/officials work in pairs.
- Ensuring when mixed teams are taken away, they should always be accompanied by male and female member of staff (NB however, same gender abuse can also occur).
- Ensuring that at tournaments or 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 within the training/competition environment.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of young people and disabled adults – avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against them.
- Securing parental consent in writing to act in loco parentis, if the need arises to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid.
- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.
- Requesting written parental consent if club officials are required to transport young people in their cars.

Martial Arts Instructors need to understand the added responsibilities of teaching children and also basic principles of growth and development through childhood to adolescence. Exercises should be appropriate to age and build. Instructors should not simply treat children as small adults, with small adult bodies.

There is no minimum age for a child beginning Martial Arts, as the build and maturity of individuals varies so much. However, the nature of the class must be tailored to consider these factors.

In general, the younger the child, the shorter the attentions span. One hour is generally considered sufficient training time for the average 12-year-old or below. Pre-adolescent children have a metabolism that is not naturally suited to generating anaerobic power, and therefore they exercise better aerobically, that is, at a steadily maintained rate. However, they can soon become conditioned to tolerate exercise in the short explosive bursts that more suit Karate training.

Children should not do assisted stretching - they generally don't need to, and there is a real risk of damage with an inconsiderate or over-enthusiastic partner.

Children should be carefully matched for size and weight for sparring practice.

Great care must be taken, especially where children train in the proximity of adults, to avoid collision injury.

Children should not do certain conditioning exercises; especially those, which are heavy, load bearing, for example weight training or knuckle push-ups. Children should not do any unreasonably heavy impact work but should concentrate on the development of speed, mobility, skill and general fitness.

5.2 Practices to be avoided

The following should be avoided except in emergencies. If a case arises where these situations are unavoidable (e.g. the 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), it should be with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge in the club or the child's parents.

Otherwise, avoid:

- Spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others.
- Taking or dropping off a child to an event.
- Avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others.
- Avoid taking children to your home where they will be alone with you.

5.3 Practices never to be sanctioned

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.

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 or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children, e.g. if they are young or are disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents and the students. 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/assisting to carry out particular activities. Avoid taking on the responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained.

5.4 Incidents that must be reported / recorded:

If any of the following occur, you should report this immediately to another colleague and record the incident. You should also ensure the parents of the child are told if:

You accidentally hurt a child or young person.

He/she seems distressed in any manner.

A student appears to be sexually aroused by your actions.

A child or young person misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

Contained within the EKF Club guidelines document (available online) are some practical ways in which you should help safeguard children and young people who take part in Karate training within your Association:

Coach Ratios.

Changing room awareness.

Dealing with injuries and Illness.

Collection of children by Parents/carers

Discipline issues

Physical contact issues.

Sexual Activity issues.

Participants in the club with disabilities

5.5 Use of Photographic Filming Equipment at SKF Events

There is no intention to stop people photographing their children, club mates, or photography and video being used as an educational tool but this is in the context of appropriate safeguards being in place.

There is evidence that some people have used sporting events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young and disabled sportspeople in vulnerable positions. It is advisable that all clubs be vigilant with any concerns to be reported to the Club Child Protection Officer. Any parent who wishes to photograph their child must seek permission from the instructor or competition organiser. Official photographers must be registered with the event organiser and wear identification.

If, prior to an event, a child's parent or guardian indicates that they do NOT give their consent for the taking of photos of their child or publication of the same, then appropriate steps, including the possibility of barring all photography at the event, must be taken to protect that wish.

5.6 Videoing as a coaching aid:

There is no intention to prevent club coaches and teachers using video equipment as a legitimate coaching aid. However, performers and their parents/carers should be aware that this is part of the coaching programme and care should be taken in the storing of such films.

SKF also follows closely the guidance issued by the Child Protection in Sport Unit advising that:

- Where students are used in promotional material the appropriate consent is obtained or models and or illustrations are used.
- Avoid using the first name and surname together, of individuals in a photograph.
- If the student is named, we do not use their photograph without first obtaining the appropriate consent.
- If the photograph is used, we do not name the individual, without first obtaining the appropriate consent.

5.7 Recruitment and training of staff and volunteers:

Advertising will reflect the aims of SKF key responsibilities of the role and necessary experience and our open and positive stance on child protection and equity will be implicit. Pre-application information will be sent, and an application form is necessary for all posts. Following short-listing formal interviews will be held and the successful applicant will only be allowed to take up their post and duties once their DBS check has been cleared by SKF.

SKF recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children. It is essential that the same procedures be used consistently for all posts whether staffs are paid or voluntary, full time or part time.

Under the Protection of Children Act 1999, all individuals working on behalf of, or otherwise representing, an organisation are treated as employees whether working in a paid or voluntary capacity.

Pre-selection checks must include the following:

- All volunteers/staff should complete an application form. The application form will elicit information about an applicant's past and a self-disclosure about any criminal record.
- Consent should be obtained from an applicant to seek information from the Criminal Records Bureau.
- Two confidential references, which will include one, regarding previous work with children. These references shall be taken up and confirmed through telephone contact.

- Evidence of identity should be provided (e.g. passport or driving licence with photo).

Interview and induction

All employees (and volunteers) will be required to undergo an interview carried out to acceptable protocol and recommendations within the EKF recruitment and selection policy. All employees and volunteers should receive formal or informal induction, during which:

- A check should be made that the application form has been completed in full (including sections on criminal records and self-disclosures).
- Their qualifications should be substantiated.
- The job requirements and responsibilities should be clarified.
- Child protection procedures are explained, and training needs are identified.

5.8 Defining Child Abuse

Child abuse is when an adult harms a child or young person. There are four main type of abuse:

1. Physical abuse: This includes being hit, kicked, shaken or punched, or given harmful drugs or alcohol.
2. Emotional abuse: This includes being called names all the time, being threatened or being shouted at or made to feel small.
3. Sexual abuse: This includes being touched in a way you don't like by an adult or young person, being forced to have sex, or being made to look at sexual pictures or videos. For some disabled children, it includes if a person helping them to use the toilet touched them more than was needed.
4. Neglect: Is when a child is not looked after properly, including having no place to stay, or not enough food to eat, or clothes to keep them warm. It also includes if the child is not given medical care when they need it, including medication. For some disabled children, it could include if their carer took away the things they needed for everyday life - like their wheelchair or communication board or not helping a disabled child who needed help using the toilet.

5.9 Bullying:

This is also a form of abuse. Bullying includes hitting or threatening a child with violence, taking their things, calling them names or insulting them, making them do things they won't want to do, and deliberately humiliating or ignoring them.

5.10 Common Signs of Abuse

Every child is unique, so behavioural signs of abuse will vary from child to child. In addition, the impact of abuse is likely to be influenced by the child's age, the nature and extent of the abuse, and the help and support the child receives. However, there are some behaviours that are commonly seen in children and young people who have been abused:

- The child appears distrustful of a particular adult, or a parent or a coach with whom you would expect there to be a close relationship.
- He or she has unexplained injuries such as bruising, bites or burns - particularly if these are on a part of the body where you would not expect them.

- If he or she has an injury which is not explained satisfactorily or properly treated.
- Deterioration in his or her physical appearance or a rapid weight gain or loss.
- Pains, itching, bruising, or bleeding in or near the genital area.
- A change in the child's general behaviour. For example, they may become unusually quiet and withdrawn, or unexpectedly aggressive. Such changes can be sudden or gradual.
- If he or she refuses to remove clothing for normal activities or wants to keep covered up in warm weather.
- If he or she shows inappropriate sexual awareness or behaviour for their age.

Some disabled children may not be able to communicate verbally about abuse that they may be experiencing or have witnessed. It is therefore important to observe these children for signs other than 'telling'.

These signs should be seen as a possible indication of abuse and not as a confirmation. Changes in a child's behaviour can be the result of a wide range of factors.

Visible signs such as bruising or other injuries cannot be taken as proof of abuse. For example, some disabled children may show extreme changes in behaviour, or be more accident prone, as a result of their impairment. A child or young person may also try to tell a person directly about abuse. It is very important to listen carefully and respond sensitively.

SKF has a responsibility to act on any concerns.

6.1 Responding to suspicions or allegations

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in the SKF, in a paid or unpaid capacity to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. This is the role of the child protection agencies.

However, there is a responsibility for all involved in Martial Arts to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities. Advice and information is available from the local Social Services Department, The Police or the NSPCC 24-hour Help line 0800800 5000

SKF assures all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child.

Where there is a complaint against a member of staff there may be three types of investigation

A criminal investigation,

A child protection investigation,

A disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

The results of the Police and child protection investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation, but not necessarily.

6.2 Action

Concerns about poor practice:

If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice, the Child Protection Officer will deal with it as a misconduct issue.

If the allegation is about poor practice by the Child Protection Officer, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to the relevant officer who will decide how to deal with the allegation and whether or not to initiate disciplinary proceedings.

Concerns about suspected abuse:

Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported to the club's Child Protection Officer, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.

The club's Child Protection Officer will refer the allegation to the social services department, which may involve the Police, or go directly to the Police if out-of-hours.

The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible BUT ONLY following advice from the Social Services department.

The club's Child Protection Officer MUST also notify the Shukokai Karate Federation's Child Protection Officer who in turn will inform the EKF Lead Child Protection Officer who will deal with any media enquiries.

If any Child Protection Officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the appropriate Manager or in his/her absence the EKF Lead Child Protection Officer who will refer the allegation to social services.

6.3 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 club or SKF Child Protection Officer.
- The parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused.
- The person making the allegation.
- Social services/police.
- The EKF Lead Child Protection Officer.
- The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child). *Seek social services advice on who should approach the alleged abuser.*

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).

6.4 Support to deal with the aftermath of abuse

Consideration should be given to the kind of support that children, parents and members of staff may need. Use of helplines, support groups and open meetings will maintain an open culture and help the healing process. The British Association for Counselling Directory is available from The British Association for Counselling, 1 Regent Place, Rugby CV21 2PJ, Tel: 01788 550899, Fax: 01788 562189, Email: bac@bacp.co.uk, Internet: www.bacp.co.uk

Consideration should be given to what kind of support may be appropriate for the alleged perpetrator.

6.5 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 or by a member of staff who is still currently working with children).

Where such an allegation is made, the SKF should follow the procedures as detailed above and report the matter to the social services or the police. This is because other children, either within or outside sport, may be at risk from this person. 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 1999.

6.6 Action if bullying is suspected

If bullying is suspected, the same procedure should be followed as set out in 'Responding to suspicions or allegations' above.

6.7 Action to help the victim and prevent bullying in sport:

- 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.
- 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 the club's or SKF's Child Protection Officer or the school (wherever the bullying is occurring).

6.8 Action towards the bully (ies):

- Talk with the bully (ies), explain the situation, and try to get the bully(ies) to understand the consequences of their behaviour. Seek an apology to the victim(s).
- Inform the bully (ies)'s parents.
- Insist on the return of 'borrowed' items and that the bully (ies) compensate the victim.
- Provide support for the victim's coach.
- Impose sanctions as necessary.
- Encourage and support the bully (ies) to change behaviour.
- Hold meetings with the families to report on progress.
- Inform all organisation members of action taken.
- Keep a written record of action taken.

6.9 Concerns outside the immediate sporting environment (e.g. a parent or carer):

Report your concerns to the club's or SKF's Child Protection Officer, who should contact social services or the police as soon as possible.

See below for the information social services or the police will need.

If the appropriate Child Protection Officer is not available, the person being told of or discovering the abuse should contact social services or the police immediately.

Social services and the relevant Child Protection Officer will decide how to involve the parents/carers.

The club's or SKF's Child Protection Officer should also report the incident to the EKF Governing body. The governing body should ascertain whether or not the person/(s) involved in the incident play a role in EKF DLC and act accordingly.

Maintain confidentiality on a need to know basis only.

7 Information for social services or the police about suspected abuse:

To ensure that this information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern, which should include the following:

The child's name, age and date of birth of the child.

The child's home address and telephone number.

Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else.

The nature of the allegation. Include dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information.

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

A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Also, any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes.

Details of witnesses to the incidents.

The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.

Have the parents been contacted?

If so, what has been said?

Has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details.

If the child was not the person who reported the incident, has the child been spoken to? If so, what was said?

Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details.

Where possible referral to the police or social services should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact who took the referral should be recorded.

If you are worried about sharing concerns about abuse with a senior colleague, you can contact social services or the police direct, or the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline on 0808 800 5000, or Childline on 0800 1111.

8 Flow chart of action to take if there are concerns about a child's safety or welfare

The following action should be taken if there are concerns:

The club's or the Shukokai Karate Federation's Child Protection Officer should always inform the EKF Lead Child Protection Officer on the appropriate form provided within 24 hours.

What to do if there are concerns:

ARE YOU CONCERNED ABOUT THE BEHAVIOUR OF A MEMBER OF STAFF, VOLUNTEER, OR CARER?

YES

IS IT SERIOUS POOR PRACTICE OR AN ALLEGED BREACH OF THE CODE OF ETHICS AND CONDUCT?

YES

COULD IT ALSO BE CHILD ABUSE ?

YES

IF AFTER NOTIFYING THE EKF LCPO, IT IS AGREED APPROPRIATE THE CLUB CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER WILL DEAL WITH IT AS A MISCONDUCT ISSUE, THE CLUB CPO WILL REFER TO THE ASSOCIATION CPO.

IF CONCERNS REMAIN, REFER TO THE EKF LCPO, WHO WILL DECIDE HOW TO HANDLE THE ISSUE IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE ASSOCIATION CPO

REPORT YOUR CONCERNS TO THE CLUB CPO (UNLESS –SEE BELOW) & REFER DIRECTLY TO THE EKF LCPO WITHIN 24 HOURS WHO IN CONSULTATION WITH THE CLUB CPO WILL FACILITATE REFERRAL OF THE CONCERNS TO SOCIAL SERVICES WHO MAY INVOLVE THE POLICE

DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE INVESTIGATION

POSSIBLE OUTCOMES

- POLICE ENQUIRY
- CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS
- REFERRAL BACK TO DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE
- CIVIL PROCEEDINGS

IF THE ALLEGATION OR CONCERN RELATES TO THE CLUB OR ASSOCIATION CPO, REFER DIRECTLY THE EKF LCPO, WHO MAY THEN REFER THE MATTER TO SOCIAL SERVICES AND OR THE POLICE

IN ALL CASES ENSURE THAT EKF LCPO IS CONTACTED WITHIN 24 HOURS OF THE INITIAL REPORT POSSIBLE OUTCOMES OF DISCIPLINE HEARING

1. NO CASE TO ANSWER
2. ADVICE OR WARNINGS AS TO FUTURE CONDUCT
3. SANCTIONS
4. FURTHER TRAINING AND SUPPORT

9 Further Information

Information passed to the social services or the police must be as helpful as possible, hence the necessity for making a detailed record at the time of the disclosure/concern. Information should include the following:

1. Name of child
2. Age of child and date of birth
3. Race and Ethnic origin of the child
4. Relevant disability or special needs
5. Home address and telephone number
6. Is the person making the report expressing their own concerns or those of someone else?
7. If it is not the child making the report has the child concerned been spoken to? If so what has been said?
8. What is the nature of the allegation? Include dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information.
9. Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.
10. Describe any visible bruising or other injuries, behavioural and indirect signs
11. Record the details of witnesses to the incident/s.
12. The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.
13. Have the parents been contacted? If so what has been said?
14. Has anyone else been consulted? If so record details.
15. Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details.

False allegations of abuse do occur, but they are rare. You should always take immediate action if a child says or indicates that he or she is being abused, or you have reason to suspect that this is the case. This may involve dealing with the child, his parent or carer, colleagues at your club / organisation, teachers, external agencies or the media.

Children who are being abused will only tell people they trust and with whom they feel safe. As a coach you will often share a close relationship with students and may therefore be the sort of person in whom a child might place their trust. Children want the abuse to stop. By listening and taking what a child is telling you seriously, you will already be helping to protect them.

It is useful to think in advance about how you might respond to this situation in such a way as to avoid putting yourself at risk.

10 Timing and Location:

It is understandable that the child may want to see you alone, away from others. The child may therefore approach you at the end of a session when everyone is going home, or may arrive deliberately early at a time when they think you will not be busy. However, a disclosure is not just a quick chat, it will take time and usually has further consequences. Bear in mind that you may also need to attend to other students / children, check equipment or set up an activity – you cannot simply leave a session unattended. Therefore, try to arrange to speak to the child at an appropriate time.

Location is very important. Although it is important to respect the child's need for privacy, you also need to protect yourself against potential allegations. Do not listen to the child's disclosure in a completely private place – try to ensure that other members of staff are present or at least nearby.

All records should:

1. Be written as soon as possible, signed and dated.
2. Clearly distinguish between fact, observation, allegation and opinion
3. Note the name, date, the event, a record of what was said, and any action taken in cases of suspected abuse
4. Be held separately from main records
5. Be exempt from open access

11 Responding to the Child:

- Do not panic – react calmly so as not to frighten the child
- Acknowledge that what the child is doing is difficult, but that they are right to confide in you.
- Reassure the child that they are not to blame.
- Make sure that, from the outset, you can understand what the child is saying.
- Be honest straight away and tell the child you cannot make promises that you will not be able to keep.
- Do not promise that you keep the conversation secret. Explain that you will need to involve other people and that you will need to write things down.
- Listen to and believe the child; take them seriously.
- Do not allow your shock or distaste to show.
- Keep any questions to a minimum but do clarify any facts or words that you do not understand – do not speculate or make assumptions.
- Avoid closed questions (i.e. questions which invite yes or no answers).
- Do not probe for more information than is offered.
- Encourage the child, to use its own words.
- Do not make negative comments about the alleged abuser.
- End the disclosure and ensure that the child is either being collected or is capable of going home alone.
- Do not approach the alleged abuser.

RECORD OF DISCLOSURE FORM

Date.....

Your Name.....Position Held.....

Name:(child).....Age..... D.O.B.....

Address.....

.....Postcode:..... Tel.....

Race.....Ethnic Origin.....

Relevant special needs.....

Name and address of person reporting (if different to above)

.....

.....

Date:.....Time:.....Place (of disclosure).....

What the child said:

Your own observations:

Any actions or advice given that you have decided to take: (Parent */Police/Social Services/C.P.S.U./Local Authority/Other*)

Your name..... Signature.....

Licence No:..... Association/Club reference Number.....