

Locks Sailing Club Welfare Policy

Policy and Procedures to ensure the welfare of the junior membership

Policy statement:

Locks Sailing Club supports the policy of the RYA to safeguard children and young people taking part in boating from physical, sexual or emotional harm. The club will take all reasonable steps to ensure that, through appropriate procedures and training, children participating in junior activities do so in a safe environment. We recognise that the safety and welfare of the child is paramount and that all children, whatever their age, gender, disability, culture, ethnic origin, colour, religion or belief, social status or sexual identity, have a right to protection from abuse.

Purpose of the policy:

- to protect children, both on and off the water
- to assure parents that their children are as safe at Locks Sailing Club as they are when taking part in any other sport or leisure activity
- to raise awareness amongst all members and the volunteers who manage and support junior activities so that they know what to do if they are concerned about a child, whether the concern relates to the child's welfare at your site or outside the sport
- to protect coaches, instructors and volunteer helpers by giving them some practical, common sense guidelines to avoid placing themselves in situations where they are open to allegations which could seriously damage their lives and careers
- to protect the organisation, by showing that you have taken 'all reasonable steps' to provide a safe environment.

Roles and responsibilities

Welfare Officer

- To ensure that policies and procedures relating to Safe Guarding legislation are up to date seeking assistance from the RYA when necessary
- Advise the management committee on safe guarding issues
- To ensure that procedures are consistently applied
- Manage any checking processes required
- Be the first point of contact if there are any concerns
- To manage allegations sensitively in accordance with club policy and safe guarding legislation keeping the RYA informed as appropriate
- Access appropriate training for coaches and volunteers as required
- Maintain contact details of local children's services and police

Roles and responsibilities relating to sailing and the handling of boats on and off the water are set out in the Junior Sailing Safety Policy.

Building good practice Culture

Locks Sailing club welcomes children to the club. The club has a strong culture of providing learning about sailing and water safety in a safe and fun way enabling children to develop skills and confidence. Adults listen to and respect the feelings of the youngsters they interact with. Both children and adults feel able to raise concerns, knowing that they will be taken seriously, treated confidentially and will not make the situation worse for themselves or others. All children at the club are treated with respect and their achievements are celebrated.

Minimising risk

The club promotes good practice to minimise situations where adults are working unobserved or could take advantage of their position of trust. Conversely the club recognises the need for all adults to have the necessary training and support in order to carry out their roles confidently and safely.

These are some common sense guidelines to protect youngsters and adults:

- Avoid spending any significant time working with children in isolation
- Do not take children alone in a car, however short the journey
- Do not take children to your home as part of your organisation's activity
- Where any of these are unavoidable, ensure that they only occur with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge of the organisation or the child's parents
- Design training programmes that are within the ability of the individual child.

You should never:

- engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games
- allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form
- allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged, or use such language yourself when with children
- make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun
- fail to respond to an allegation made by a child; always act
- do things of a personal nature that children can do for themselves.

It may sometimes be necessary to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are very young or disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of both the child and their parents/carers. In an emergency situation which requires this type of help, parents should be fully informed as soon as possible. In such situations it is important to ensure that any adult present is sensitive to the child and undertakes personal care tasks with the utmost discretion.

Changing rooms and showers

It is preferable for adults to stay away from the changing rooms while there are children there. However a balance should be struck depending on the situation. If children request assistance with wet suites it is advisable to encourage children to help each other. Extra vigilance may be required if there is public access to the venue. If it is essential, in an emergency situation, for a male to enter a female changing area or vice versa, it is advised that they are accompanied by another adult of the opposite gender.

Information for parents and carers

Parental responsibility

Although clubs have a duty of care to their members, and particularly to young people who cannot take full responsibility for their own safety, parents must be responsible for their children's welfare and behaviour, or designate another adult to take that responsibility, outside formal club-organised activities.

Parents and carers will be expected to provide the club with a medical consent form. This will remain confidential between parents and the Head Coach.

Parents need to be aware that photographs and videos will be taken on the water and may be put into a slide show which will be shown in the club house. Parents are requested to speak to the Head Coach if they do not want their child to be photographed.

Communicating with young people

The world of the internet, social media and apps is constantly and rapidly evolving and it is hard to keep up to date, but it is important for parents and for anyone working with young people to develop some understanding of how they use technology, the risks involved and how to keep them safe. Suggested sources of information, mainly intended for parents but useful for anyone, are:

www.nspcc.org.uk/shareaware www.net-aware.org.uk
www.internetmatters.org www.getsafeonline.org

Club websites and social media

When promoting your club and encouraging your members to interact online, there are a few issues to bear in mind in relation to children and young people:

- follow the RYA guidance on the use of images of children (see Photography section below)
- ensure that the content and language on your site or page, including contributions to blogs, forums etc, is not inappropriate for younger visitors and does not link directly to unsuitable material on other sites
- provide a clear process for parents and others to report inappropriate content or online bullying and to request that content is removed
- have a robust procedure for handling and assessing such a report or request and acting promptly to remove the offending content.

Definitions

What is child abuse?

Child abuse is a term used to describe ways in which children are harmed, usually by adults and often by people they know and trust. It refers to damage done to a child's physical or mental health. Child abuse can take many forms:

Physical abuse where adults or other children:

- physically hurt or injure children (eg. by hitting, shaking, squeezing, biting or burning)
- give children alcohol, inappropriate drugs or poison
- attempt to suffocate or drown children
- in sport situations, physical abuse might also occur when the nature and intensity of training exceeds the capacity of the child's immature and growing body.

Neglect includes situations in which adults:

- fail to meet a child's basic physical needs (eg. for food, water, warm clothing, essential medication)
- consistently leave children alone and unsupervised
- fail or refuse to give children love, affection or attention
- neglect in a sailing situation might also occur if an instructor or coach fails to ensure that children are safe, or exposes them to undue cold or risk of injury.

Sexual abuse. Boys and girls are sexually abused when adults (of the same or opposite sex) or other young people use them to meet their own sexual needs. This could include:

- full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, fondling
- showing children pornographic books, photographs or videos, or taking pictures for pornographic purposes
- sport situations which involve physical contact (eg. supporting or guiding children) could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed. Abusive situations may also occur if adults misuse their power over young people.

Emotional abuse can occur in a number of ways. For example, where:

- there is persistent lack of love or affection
- there is constant overprotection which prevents children from socialising
- children are frequently shouted at or taunted
- there is neglect, physical or sexual abuse
- emotional abuse in sport might also include situations where parents or coaches subject children to constant criticism, bullying or pressure to perform at a level that the child cannot realistically be expected to achieve.

Bullying (including cyberbullying) may be seen as deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated or sustained over a period of time, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. The bully may often be another young person. Although anyone can be the target of bullying, victims are typically shy, sensitive and perhaps anxious or insecure. Sometimes they are singled out for physical reasons – being overweight, physically small, having a disability or belonging to a different race, faith or culture.

Recognising Abuse

It is not always easy, even for the most experienced carers, to spot when a child has been abused. However, some of the more typical symptoms which should trigger your suspicions would include:

- unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries
- sexually explicit language or actions
- a sudden change in behaviour (eg. becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper)
- the child describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him/her
- a change observed over a long period of time (eg. the child losing weight or becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt)
- a general distrust and avoidance of adults, especially those with whom a close relationship would be expected
- an unexpected reaction to normal physical contact
- difficulty in making friends or abnormal restrictions on socialising with others.

It is important to note that a child could be displaying some or all of these signs, or behaving in a way which is worrying, without this necessarily meaning that the child is being abused. Similarly, there may not be any signs, but you may just feel that something is wrong. If you have noticed a change in the child's behaviour, first talk to the parents or carers. It may be that something has happened, such as a bereavement, which has caused the child to be unhappy.

Handling concerns, reports or allegations

This section is primarily for the organisation's designated Welfare Officer, but everyone should be aware of the procedures to follow if there are concerns

A complaint, concern or allegation may come from a number of sources: the child, their parents, someone else within your organisation. It may involve the behaviour of one of your volunteers or employees, or something that has happened to the child outside the sport, perhaps at home or at school. Children may confide in adults they trust, in a place where they feel at ease.

An allegation may range from mild verbal bullying to physical or sexual abuse. If you are concerned that a child may be being abused, it is NOT your responsibility to investigate further BUT it is your responsibility to act on your concerns and report them to the appropriate statutory authorities.

If you are concerned about a club member

If a club member is concerned about a member's attitude towards children then this should be raised in confidence with the Club Welfare Officer. The office will take appropriate action which may include informing the Commodore, if the member has broken club rules, or external agencies if the allegation needs other professional attention.

Handling an allegation from a child

Always:

- stay calm – ensure that the child is safe and feels safe
- show and tell the child that you are taking what he/she says seriously
- reassure the child and stress that he/she is not to blame
- be careful about physical contact, it may not be what the child wants
- be honest, explain that you will have to tell someone else to help stop the alleged abuse
- make a record of what the child has said as soon as possible after the event, using the child's own words
- follow your organisation's child protection procedures.

Never:

- rush into actions that may be inappropriate
- make promises you cannot keep (eg. you won't tell anyone)
- ask leading questions (see 'Recording and handling information' below)
- take sole responsibility – consult someone else (ideally the designated Child Protection/Welfare Officer or the person in charge or someone you can trust) so that you can begin to protect the child and gain support for yourself.

You may be upset about what the child has said or you may worry about the consequences of your actions. Sometimes people worry about children being removed from their families as a result of abuse, but in reality this rarely happens. However, one thing is certain – you cannot ignore it.

Recording and handling information

If you suspect that a child may have been the subject of any form of physical, emotional or sexual abuse or neglect, the allegation must be referred as soon as possible to Children's Social Care or the Police who have trained experts to handle such cases. Do not start asking leading questions which may jeopardise any formal investigation.

A leading question is where you suggest an answer or provide options that only need a 'yes' or 'no' answer, instead of allowing the child to explain things in their own words. An example would be asking 'did X hit you?' instead of 'how did you get that bruise?'. Use open questions such as 'what happened next?'. Only ask questions to confirm that you need to refer the matter to someone else. Listen to and keep a record of anything the child tells you or that you have observed and pass the information on to the statutory authorities (see Sample Document 7 for Referral Form).

All information must be treated as confidential and only shared with those who need to know.

If the allegation or suspicion concerns someone within your club or centre, only the child's parents/carers, the person in charge of the organisation (unless they are the subject of the allegation), the relevant authorities and the RYA Safeguarding Manager should be informed. If the alleged abuse took place outside the sport, the Police or Children's Social Care will decide who else needs to be informed, including the child's parents/carers. It should not be discussed by anyone within the organisation other than the person who received or initiated the allegation and, if different, the person in charge.

Confidential information must be stored securely. It is recommended that it should be retained for at least 3 years and destroyed by secure means, eg. by shredding or burning.

Supporting roles:

Commodore and Club Racing Coach
Sailing Secretary
Welfare Officer

Jack Miller
Gavin Cadmore
Kathy Iles
kathy@ciles.co.uk
07747896050

Club First Aiders

A list of first aiders is on the wall in the corridor by the first aid box.

Club supporting documentation:

Junior registration form
Junior Operating procedures
Junior Safety Sailing Policy

Key RYA supporting documentation:

Flow charts 1 and 2 outlining procedures for volunteers working with children who have concerns.

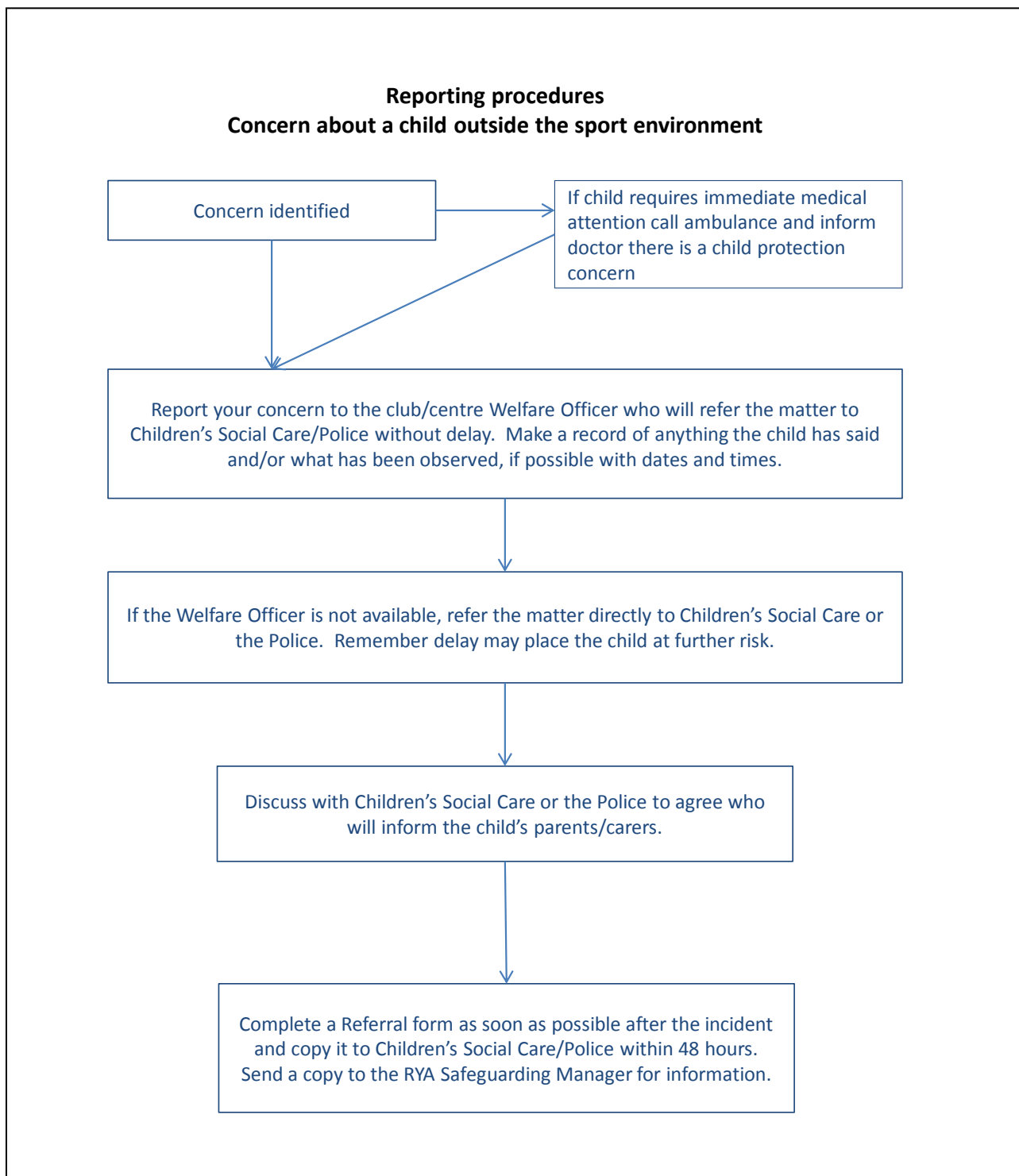
Incident report form to be used by the Welfare Officer when dealing with a complaint or allegation.

Reporting Procedures

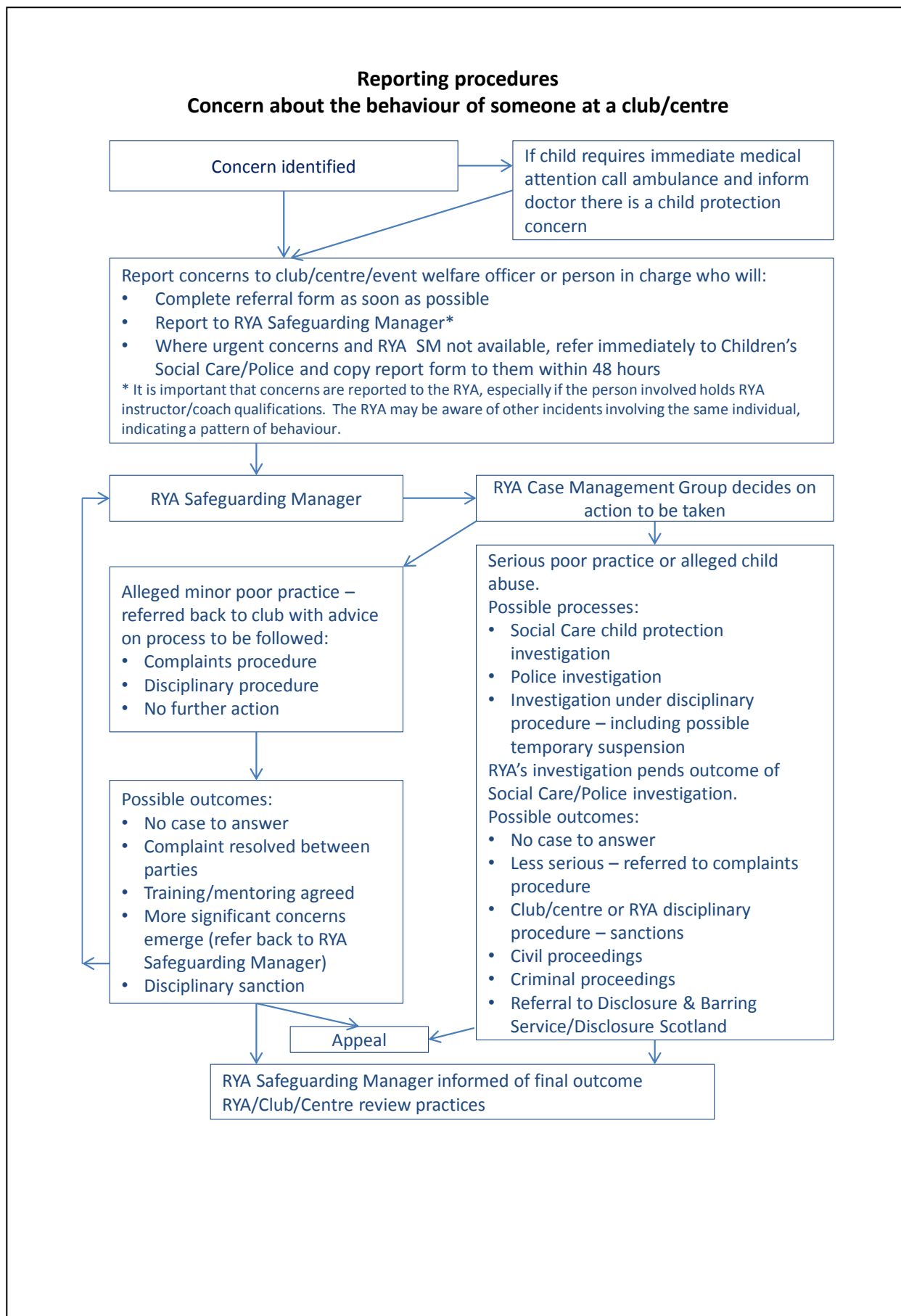
If you are uncertain what to do at any stage, contact the RYA's Safeguarding Manager on 023 8060 4104 or the NSPCC free 24-hour helpline 0808 800 5000.

Details of Children's Social Care departments and emergency duty teams are listed on local authority websites and in local phone books. If you are unable to find the appropriate contact number, call the RYA's Safeguarding Manager or, if a child is at immediate risk, the Police.

Flowchart 1



Flowchart 2



Useful Contacts

NSPCC Helpline

0808 800 5000

E-mail: help@nspcc.org.uk

Website: www.nspcc.org.uk

Childline

0800 1111

Website: www.childline.org.uk

Social Care Services

Your local phone book or the website for your County Council or unitary local authority will list numbers for the Children and Families Services, generally with separate numbers for Children's Social Care and for the Emergency Duty Team (out of hours service).

Royal Yachting Association

Jackie Reid, Safeguarding and Equality Manager

RYA House, Ensign Way

Hamble

Southampton

SO31 4YA

Tel: 023 8060 4104

E-mail: jackie.reid@rya.org.uk

Website: www.rya.org.uk/go/safeguarding

Community text phone (for people with a hearing impairment): 07823 559018

Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU)

England

NSPCC

Tel: 0116 234 7278/7217

Fax: 0116 234 0464

E-mail: cpsu@nspcc.org.uk

Website: www.thecpsu.org.uk

Safeguarding and Child Protection referral form

Date and time of incident	
Name and position of person about whom report, complaint or allegation is made	
Name and age of child involved	
Nature of incident, complaint or allegation (continue on separate page if necessary)	
Action taken (continue on separate page if necessary)	
If Police or Children's Social Care Services contacted, name, position and telephone number of person handling case	
Name, organisation and position of person completing form	
Contact telephone number	
Signature of person completing form	
Date and time form completed	
Name and position of organisation's child protection/welfare officer or person in charge (if different from above)	
Contact telephone number	

This form should be copied, marked 'Private and Confidential', to the RYA Safeguarding Co-ordinator, Jackie Reid, RYA House, Ensign Way, Hamble, Southampton, SO31 4YA and to the statutory authorities (if they have been informed of the incident) within 48 hours of the incident.

