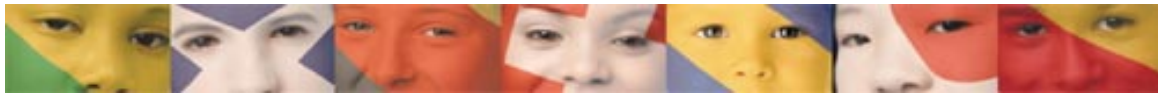




Policy for safeguarding children, young people, members and vulnerable adults at **aberdeen ymca**



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Other sources referred to:

SportScotland, Model Policy and Procedures for Governing Bodies of Sport in Scotland (2002)

Editor:

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Section A

1. Aims of Policy

The aims of this policy are to:

1. To ensure the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults who are members or users of Aberdeen YMCA.
2. To ensure concerns about child abuse are reported promptly to the appropriate authorities.
3. To offer guidance and support to YMCA personnel to assist them in recognising and responding to indicators of possible abuse.
4. To clarify the YMCA's role and responsibilities in protecting children from abuse and ensure that its actions follow agreed best practice.
5. To ensure that the YMCA implements Scottish Executive guidance on child protection.

This policy also aims to:

6. To ensure that parents are satisfied with the safeguards that Aberdeen YMCA has put in place to provide a 'duty of care' to their children.
7. To ensure that the recruitment procedures adopted by Aberdeen YMCA are consistent with the Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003.
8. To provide information on the charitable objectives and purposes of Aberdeen YMCA.

Section A

2. Introduction

"Children have the right to be protected from all forms of violence; they must be kept safe from harm, and they must be given proper care by those looking after them"

(Article 19 ; UN Convention on the Rights of the Child)

Aberdeen YMCA is fully committed to promoting children's rights and those of vulnerable adults, notably their right to be protected from harm, abuse and exploitation and to be fully involved in any decisions that directly affect them as set out in this 'Policy for Safeguarding Children, Young People, Members and Vulnerable Adults at Aberdeen YMCA'.

This policy is based on the legislation, knowledge and guidance relevant to the requirements of the Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003 which came into force on 10 January 2005.

Aberdeen YMCA has a corporate duty of care to implement this policy and procedures to ensure its effective application for safeguarding the welfare of children and vulnerable adults. In recognising that all children and vulnerable adults have the right to be protected from harm and live in a safe environment, this policy, in effect, enables and strengthens YMCA personnel to demonstrate a corporate duty of care, as required by Section 5 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, to safeguard all children and vulnerable adults involved in YMCA activities from harm: *"it shall be the responsibility of a person who is 16 or over and who has care and or control of a child under 16, to do what is reasonable to safeguard the child's health, development and welfare"*^a

For the purposes of this policy children and vulnerable adults are defined as:

Child: A child is defined as anyone less than 16 years of age. 16 to 18 year olds: Young people aged 16 to 18 years are sometimes classified as children in Scotland. In terms of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, a 16 to 18 year old will be regarded as a child if he/she are subject to a supervision requirement through a Children's Hearing. For the purposes of Part V of the Police Act 1997 a child is defined as anyone under the age of 18 years.

Vulnerable Adults: The term Vulnerable Adult refers to any person aged 16 or over whom, for the time being, is unable to safeguard his/her own welfare or properly manage his/her financial affairs, and is in one or more of the following categories:

- A person in need of care and attention by reason of either infirmity or the effects of ageing
- A person suffering from an illness or mental disorder
- A person substantially handicapped by a disability

Vulnerable Adults may be in need of health or social support services and may be unable either to take care of themselves or and to protect themselves from harm or exploitation.

A number of studies suggest that children and vulnerable adults are at increased risk of abuse. Various factors contribute to this such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination,

^a Children (Scotland) Act 2003

isolation and a powerlessness to protect themselves, or adequately communicate that abuse has occurred. In fulfilling our duty of care, Aberdeen YMCA will ensure that all our personnel (staff and volunteers) are carefully selected, screened, trained and supervised. Aberdeen YMCA's Board of Directors have determined that all YMCA personnel are recruited into "child care" positions under Schedule 2 of the Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003. As a consequence, the contents of this policy apply to all YMCA personnel.

Aberdeen YMCA's Board of Directors will endeavour to keep up-to-date with legal and national developments relating to the care and protection of children and vulnerable adults and review this policy:

1. In accordance with changes in legislation and guidance on the protection of children and vulnerable adults or any changes within Aberdeen YMCA.
2. Following any issues or concerns raised about the protection of children or vulnerable adults with Aberdeen YMCA.
3. In all other circumstance, at least annually.

Section A

3. Policy Statement on safeguarding children, young people, members and vulnerable adults at Aberdeen YMCA

1. At Aberdeen YMCA the safety of children, young people, members and vulnerable adults are paramount.
2. At Aberdeen YMCA, we commit ourselves to promoting the nurturing, protecting and safekeeping of all children, young people, members and vulnerable adults. As a consequence we respect their rights, wishes and feelings.
3. At Aberdeen YMCA, we fully support the provisions contained within the Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003 and are committed to fulfilling our obligations and responsibilities as legally obligated to ensure the safety of children, young people, members and vulnerable adults to protect them from abuse.
4. At Aberdeen YMCA, it is the responsibility of all personnel, paid or unpaid, to prevent the physical, sexual and emotional abuse of children, young people, members and vulnerable adults, and to report any abuse suspected or discovered.
5. At Aberdeen YMCA, we will respond to any allegations of misconduct or abuse of children, young people, members and vulnerable adults in line with this policy and procedures. Additionally, we will implement swiftly, the relevant disciplinary, appeals and legal procedures as appropriate.
6. At Aberdeen YMCA, we recognise that our work with children, young people, members and vulnerable adults is the responsibility of the whole YMCA family.
7. The YMCA is committed to recruiting, training, supporting, and supervising all personnel to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect children, young people, members and vulnerable adults from abuse and to minimise risk to themselves.
8. All YMCA personnel working with children, young people, members and vulnerable adults must be familiar with the policy for safeguarding children, young people, members and vulnerable adults and are required to adopt and abide by these procedures in their entirety.
9. All personnel in a position with Aberdeen YMCA will be issued with a copy of this document.
10. Aberdeen YMCA will review and evaluate this policy on an annual basis.

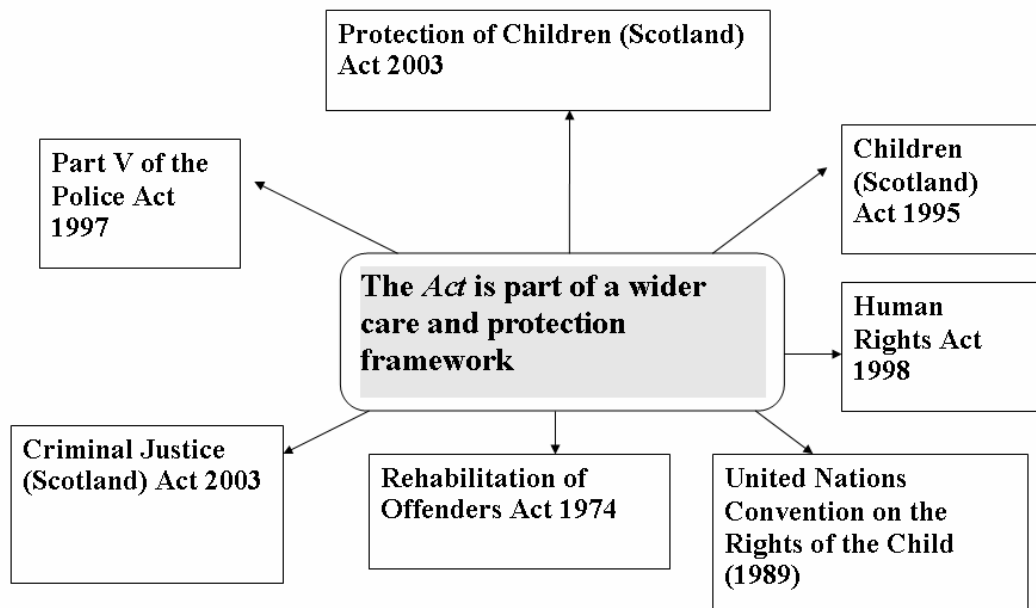
Aberdeen YMCA in conjunction with YMCA Scotland seeks to provide quality programmes aimed at physical, social, mental and spiritual development, especially for young people, to ensure their development and growth, wholeness and maturity in Christ and contribution to the wider community.

Section B

4. Legal Framework

This 'Policy for Safeguarding Children, Young People, Members and Vulnerable Adults at Aberdeen YMCA' and supporting procedures are based on the following legislation and guidance:

- Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003
- Children (Scotland) Act 1995
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions Order) 1975
- Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1995
- Protecting Children 'A Code of Practice for Voluntary Organisations in Scotland Working with Children and Young People', 1995
- Sex Offenders Act 1997
- Sexual Offences (Amendments) Act 2000
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Police Act 1997
- Disclosure Scotland Code of Conduct 'Making Scotland Safer' (2002)
- Disclosure Scotland Code of Conduct 'Protecting the Vulnerable by Safer Recruitment' (2002)
- Protecting Children - A Shared Responsibility: Guidance on inter-agency co-operation, The Scottish Office 1998
- UN Convention of the Rights of the Child 1992



Section B

5. Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults

This code of conduct details the types of practice required by all YMCA personnel when in contact with children or vulnerable adults. The types of practice are categorised into:

- 5.1 Good Practice
- 5.2 Good Practice – You Must Avoid:
- 5.3 Good Practice – You Must Never:
- 5.4 First Aid and Treatment of Injuries.
- 5.5 Transportation of young people and vulnerable adults.

Suspensions or allegations of non-compliance of the Code by YMCA personnel will be dealt with through Aberdeen YMCA's 'Disciplinary Procedure for Misconduct' or through 'Responding to a Suspicion or Allegation of Abuse against YMCA Personnel' policies.

5.1 Good Practice - You Must:

Aberdeen YMCA supports and requires the following good practice by YMCA personnel when in contact with children and vulnerable adults. When working with children or vulnerable adults, all YMCA personnel should:

- 1 Make all programme activities inclusive, enjoyable, fair and safe.
- 2 Plan activities which involve more than one other person present, or at least which are within sight or hearing of others
- 3 Always work in a public environment and avoid situations and actions that could lead to allegations of misconduct:
 - Never having private and unobserved contact with children and vulnerable adults;
 - Ensuring separate sleeping accommodation for leaders and young people;
 - Never exchange or use personal email address or mobile phone numbers;
 - Avoid physical horseplay such as wrestling or tickling;
 - Remembering that someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well intentioned.
- 4 Treat all children and vulnerable adults equally, with respect and dignity.
- 5 Put the welfare of each child or vulnerable adult first before all other interests.
- 6 Be an excellent role model and example that others should follow: including not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of children or vulnerable adults.
- 7 Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- 8 Ensure that if any form of manual or physical support is required for a child or vulnerable adult, it is provided openly, the child or vulnerable adult is informed of what is being done and their consent is obtained.
- 9 Build positive, balanced and supportive relationships based on mutual trust that empower children and vulnerable adults to share in the decision-making process and enable their development.
- 10 Recognise your own power, influence, values and beliefs and ensure these are in line with the law and the clear teaching of the Word of God and not used for personal gain or to the detriment of young people.

- 11 Respect a young person's right to personal privacy yet support their transition from adolescence to independence.
- 12 Provide access for young people to talk to others about any concerns they may have.
- 13 Recognise that special caution is required even in sensitive moments of counselling, such as when dealing with bullying, bereavement or abuse.
- 14 Involve parents, guardians and carers wherever possible.
- 15 Always respect young people for who they are regardless of what they do.

5.2 Good Practice – You Must Avoid:

In the context of your role within Aberdeen YMCA, the following practice (as referred to, in part, in 5.1 (Point 3) above) should be avoided:

- 1 Having 'favourites' – this could lead to resentment and jealousy by other children or vulnerable adults and could lead to false allegations.
- 2 Working in a discriminatory way.
- 3 Using language that discounts or demeans children or young people
- 4 Permitting abusive youth peer activities (eg initiation ceremonies, ridiculing, bullying, etc)
- 5 Spending excessive amounts of time alone with children or vulnerable adults away from others.
- 6 Entering the rooms of children and vulnerable adults when on trips away from home (unless in an emergency situation or in the interest of health and safety). If it is necessary to enter rooms, the door should remain open, if appropriate.
- 7 Allowing yourself to be drawn into inappropriate attention seeking behaviour such as tantrums or crushes
- 8 Doing things of a personal nature for children and vulnerable adults, where possible, that they can do for themselves^b.
- 9 Relying on just your good name to protect you

^b **Important Note:** It may sometimes be necessary for members to do things of a personal nature for children or vulnerable adults, particularly if they are very young or vulnerable. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of the child or vulnerable adult and where possible their parents/guardians. It is important to respect their views. If a person is fully dependent on you, talk with him/her about what you are doing and give choices where possible, 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 or vulnerable adult to carry out particular activities. Do not take on the responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained.

5.3 Good Practice – You Must Never:

In the context of your role within Aberdeen YMCA, the following practice (as referred to, in part, in 5.1 (Point 3) above) must never be sanctioned:

- 1 Never play physical contact games with young people or engage in sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- 2 Never engage in rough or physical contact except as permitted within the rules of the game or competition.
- 3 Never form intimate emotional or physical relationships with children or vulnerable adults.
- 4 Never allow or engage in touching a child or vulnerable adult in a sexually suggestive manner.
- 5 Never allow children or vulnerable adults to swear or use sexualised language unchallenged.
- 6 Never make sexually suggestive comments to a child or vulnerable adult, even in fun.
- 7 Never reduce a child or vulnerable adult to tears as a form of control.
- 8 Never allow allegations made by a child or vulnerable adult to go unchallenged, unrecorded, trivialised or not acted upon.
- 9 Never share a room with a child or vulnerable adult for sleeping accommodation.
- 10 Never invite or allow children or vulnerable adults to stay with you at your home.

5.4 First Aid and Treatment of Injuries:

If, in your capacity as a member of Aberdeen YMCA personnel, a child or vulnerable adult requires first aid or any form of medical attention whilst in your care, then the following good practice must be followed:

- 1 Where practicable all parents/guardians of children under 16 must complete the appropriate Medical Consent section of the Membership Application Form before participating in YMCA Activities.
- 2 Be aware of any pre-existing medical conditions, medicines being taken by participants or existing injuries and treatment required.
- 3 Keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.
- 4 Where possible, ensure access to medical advice and/or assistance is available.
- 5 Only those with a current, recognised First Aid qualification should respond to any injuries.
- 6 Where possible any course of action should be discussed with the child/vulnerable adult, in language that they understand and their permission sought before any action is taken.
- 7 In more serious cases, assistance must be obtained from a medically qualified professional as soon as possible.
- 8 The child's or vulnerable adult's parents/guardians or carers must be informed of any injury and any action taken as soon as possible, unless it is in the child's or vulnerable adult's interests and on professional advice not to do so.

Section B

6. Personnel responsible for policy implementation

All YMCA personnel working with children, young people and members are required by Section 5 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, to safeguard all children and vulnerable adults involved in YMCA activities from harm.^c However certain YMCA personnel have key responsibilities for the implementation, management, review and evaluation of this policy. At present, personnel responsible for policy implementation are:

Aspect of policy:	Responsibility:	Lead Person(s):
Recruitment of Personnel	Board of Directors	John H Fraser Jacqueline Mackintosh Michael G A Will
Lead Signatories	Board of Directors	Jacqueline Mackintosh Michael G A Will
Storage and Access to Records	Board of Directors	Michael G A Will
Training	Leadership Team	Gavin Begg Jacqueline Mackintosh Michael G A Will
Implementing Policy	Leadership Team	Gavin Begg Jacqueline Mackintosh Michael G A Will
Designated person(s) for disclosing suspected or alleged abuse (CP&VA Officer)	Board of Directors	Jacqueline Mackintosh Michael G A Will
Internal review following disclosing of suspected or alleged abuse	Board of Directors	Des Byrne Jacqueline Mackintosh Michael G A Will
Referral to the List	Board of Directors	Jacqueline Mackintosh Michael G A Will
Annual Review of Policy	Leadership Team	Gavin Begg Jacqueline Mackintosh Michael G A Will
Agreed changes to Policy	Board of Directors	Michael G A Will

Note:

On receiving any concerns, the designated person(s) should contact Social Work and/or the Police and act on any advice given. In particular, Social Work and/or Police should be asked whether or not it is appropriate for Aberdeen YMCA's internal reviewers to approach the member of personnel implicated in the allegation as part of the YMCA's internal enquiry.

^c : "it shall be the responsibility of a person who is 16 or over and who has care and or control of a child under 16, to do what is reasonable to safeguard the child's health, development and welfare". Childrens (Scotland) Act 2003.

Section B

7. Security of premises

It is unrealistic to expect that the risk to children, young people and members at Aberdeen YMCA can be eliminated. Practical measures, therefore, that must be adopted to minimise any risks are:

1. All YMCA personnel and visitors must sign the 'Signing In / Signing Out register. It is the responsibility of the Programme Team Leader on duty to ensure that this has taken place in order to control people movement in the building.
2. Maintaining at least one member of the programme team in the Reception / Administration Office to control access via the Security Door in the foyer.
3. Restricting access to children, young people and members by ensuring that the Security Door in the foyer is closed and locked at all times.
4. Restricting access to children, young people and members by supervising entry to the building through any door which people can enter freely.
5. Restricting access to kitchen by young people and member unless supervised and part of an organised programme activity.
6. All rooms within the building which are not being used must be kept locked.
7. All windows, fire-exits and passage ways must be secure, work properly and be free from any obstruction.
8. Make sure that there is access to a telephone during all programme activities.
9. All cash and valuables must be placed in secure areas to deter would be thieves – this includes securing cash in the safe when Reception / Administration Office is vacated.
10. All people working with children and young people within the premises must be familiar with the building, emergency exits, telephone system and what to do if an emergency arises.
11. Training for all programme team members to cultivate a sense of safety awareness is a priority.
12. Emergency exercises for evacuation of building are to be done on a regular basis.

Section B

8. Discipline Policy for Young People and Vulnerable Adults

"He who heeds discipline shows the way to life, but whoever ignores correction leads others astray" Proverbs 10:17

Discipline is an attempt to improve oneself or another by training, rules or ultimately punishment. It is therefore imperative that all Programme Team members are aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to:

- a. knowing the discipline policy
- b. explaining the discipline policy to members
- c. implementing the discipline policy
- d. accounting for actions in the execution of duties

1. The Policy

- a. All Programme Team members will endeavour to follow these procedures of discipline in the running of all clubs and activities under the auspices of the Aberdeen YMCA.
- b. The elementary rules are:
 - no obscene or offensive language
 - no aggressive, violent or threatening behaviour
 - no consumption or being influenced by alcohol or drugs
 - no smoking in the building and mini-bus
 - no gambling
- c. Anyone breaching these rules will be dealt with immediately. Bearing in mind that some types of behaviour, such as deliberate actions (see part 3 below) will necessitate immediate action and not a systematic use of the procedure below. If you feel that you are not competent to deal with the situation, get help immediately from another member of the Programme Team.
- d. Follow the procedure

2. The Procedure

- a. Formal warning;
- b. Second and final formal warning;
- c. Member ejected from the premises for that evening (make entry into the discipline book located within the Administration Office and inform the Programme Team leader for that club);
- d. If required, then call the Police - you must not use physical force;
- e. Parental contact made to inform parent of situation (if parental contact cannot be made, then contact the emergency contact person);
- f. Further breach the same evening in the building or car park = exclusion from next club meeting (exclusion letter to be sent home by member of Leadership Team);
- g. Further breach = exclusion for a week (inform the Executive Chairman and exclusion letter to be sent home by member of Leadership Team);
- h. Any further breaches, then that person will be brought to the attention of the Office Bearers and Board of Directors via the Executive Chairman.

3a. Deliberate Actions

The following actions are deemed deliberate and justify following more stringent procedures:

- Damage to equipment, property and any act of vandalism
- Face to face abuse
- Threatened or actual assault and any unprovoked physical attack
- Theft
- Acts that constitute any safety hazard to self, others or the building
- Any substance abuse or sale

3b. The Procedure

- a. Member ejected from the premises for that evening (make a detailed entry into the discipline book located within the Administration Office and inform the Programme Team leader for that club);
- b. If required, then call the Police - you must not use physical force;
- c. Parental contact made to inform parent of situation (if parental contact cannot be made, then contact the emergency contact person);
- d. Inform the Executive Chairman with immediate effect. (They will take the matter further if it merits it)

4. Advice

- a. Judge every case individually
- b. Do not make threats you cannot or are not prepared to carry out
- c. Do not discipline children or young people in front of their peers
- d. Do not show favouritism
- e. Always seek assistance from another programme team member
- f. Always attempt to be fair
- g. Make sure you know the FACTS before you make any judgement

Section B

9. Bullying

1. A GUIDE FOR MEMBERS

You are entitled to enjoy the YMCA and to feel safe and happy when you are there. Bullying goes against this entitlement and must be stopped. Bullying is WRONG. Nobody has the right to hurt other people by:

- hitting them
- kicking them
- calling them names
- spreading rumours about them
- or doing anything else which is meant to upset them

What to do:

- Talk to someone you trust – a member of YMCA personnel, parent, older friend or relative.
- If you find it difficult to talk to an adult, ask one of your friends to come with you or ask someone to talk to an adult for you.
- Keep trying. If the first person you talk to does not seem to understand – don't give up – speak to someone

else. If you can, write down everything the bullies have done or said to you and try to write down how you feel.

- When you have found someone you trust and who is helpful, you can discuss what you have written with that person.

What not to do:

- Don't try to deal with the problem on your own. It's right to ask for help.
- Don't hit the bullies – you might end up being accused of bullying yourself.
- Don't exaggerate. Always tell the truth about what has happened. If a small part of your story is shown to be untrue this will put everything else into doubt.
- Don't hide what is happening to you. Keeping things secret is the bullies' biggest weapon against you.

2. A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

We want your children to feel that the YMCA is a secure happy and enjoyable environment and we wish to promote the ideas of:

- consideration for others
- compassion for hardship and suffering
- racial harmony
- individual freedom of thought and speech
- equality of opportunity

Bullying goes against all these ideals and can only be dealt with effectively if parents, members and members of YMCA personnel act together. These guidelines are intended to help families who are worried that their children may become involved in bullying either as

victims or bullies. They are also intended as a guide for all adults in our community who witness bullying but feel they do not know how to help.

What to do:

- If you think your child is being bullied or is bullying, you must let us know.
- The best person to speak to is someone you already know and trust. In most cases this will be a member of the YMCA Leadership Team.
- If you do not know anyone in the YMCA, telephone or come to the YMCA and ask to speak to the Executive Chairman or a member of the Leadership Team. Usually you will be able to speak to the a member of YMCA personnel immediately, but if this

is not possible you may ask for an appointment to be made with the Executive Chairman.

- If the bullying is happening outside the YMCA you should also talk to the police.

What not to do:

- Don't ignore your child's worries and concerns.
- Don't tell your child to simply ignore the bullies. This may give your child months of unhappiness.
- Don't tell your child to hit back. This seldom works and may even make things worse.

- What we will do:
- We will work with parents of the bullied child to provide support, confidence and understanding.
- We will contact the parents of the bullies and enlist their support to put a stop to the bullying.
- We will deal seriously with incidents of violence.
- We will work with Community Police in any cases of bullying outside the YMCA.

3. A GUIDE FOR YMCA PERSONNEL

One of the aims of the YMCA is to provide an awareness of the ideals of a better society such as:

- consideration for others
- compassion for hardship and suffering
- racial harmony
- individual freedom of thought and speech
- equality of opportunity
- respect, tolerance and understanding

A common approach to bullying will help us to achieve this aim. Members have been urged to tell us about bullying. Parents have been urged to tell us about bullying.

What to do - if someone tells you about bullying:

- Listen to the member. Take the report seriously
- Make a brief record of the incident. This might be useful later
- Ask if the member has talked to parents

- Advise the member to talk to the lead worker of their YMCA activity and check later that this has happened
- Let the member know that you want to help and that you will always listen
- Keep in touch with the lead member of YMCA personnel
- Contact the Executive Chairman if you feel concerns are not being dealt with seriously

What to do – if you witness or suspect bullying:

- Intervene to stop the behaviour, exercising common sense in relation to “hands-on” to restrain
- Report the matter to the lead member of YMCA activity

What to do – if you feel intimidated or bullied by member behaviour or by another member of YMCA personnel:

- Seek help from a member of the Leadership Team with whom you feel comfortable

4. GENERAL PROCEDURES

- Leadership Team will work closely with parents of victims and bullies
- Incidents of violence will be dealt with seriously
- “Bullying” will continue to be part of YMCA User Forum discussions
- Lead YMCA personnel / Leadership Team staff will keep a record of bullying incidents
- The anti-bullying policy will be reviewed annually

Section B

10. Guidelines for Use of Photographic and Filming Equipment

Historically, photography and video use of children and young people has taken place in YMCA facilities to record events such as sporting competitions, prize ceremonies, excursions, etc. However, modern digital photographic equipment, including the latest generation of mobile phones, offer unprecedented opportunities for misuse. The magnification and manipulation that is possible, together with the fact that there is no need for a third party to develop and print images, is cause for concern. It is therefore necessary that the following guidelines are adhered to when using photographic and filming equipment in the YMCA and at events involving YMCA members.

1. General

- A. For the purposes of these guidelines, the word “photograph” is used to refer to images in any format, moving or still, recorded on any equipment (for example camera, mobile phone, video recorder, dvd recorder, etc)
- B. A notice is displayed in the Reception Area clearly stating photography of any kind is prohibited without permission and that suspicious activity should be reported to the Programme Team Leader.
- C. The use of photographic equipment and photographic mobile phones is forbidden under all circumstances in the following locations:
 1. Changing areas
 2. Toilet and shower areas
 3. Activities involving children in swim wear
 4. Sleeping accommodation on excursions
- D. Parental permission must be sought prior to photographing and recording children, young people, vulnerable adults and members at Aberdeen YMCA. Permission must also be sought from any person aged 12 and over, prior to their photography and recording. Reference should be made to YMCA membership application forms which indicate parental preference in relation to their child being photographed and recorded.
- E. Aberdeen YMCA reserves the right at all times to prohibit the use of photography, film or video at any activity with which it is associated.

2. Photographers

- A. YMCA personnel wishing to record an activity or event must have accreditation and permission from the Executive Chairman or, in their absence, the Programme Team Leader to record images of children, young people, members and vulnerable adults. A declaration must be made about how the images will be used.
- B. Professional photographers / film / video operators wishing to record an activity or event must have accreditation and permission from the Executive Chairman or, in their absence, the Programme Team Leader by providing their professional identification, a copy of which will be kept. A declaration must be made about how the images will be used.
- C. Students or amateur photographers / film / video operators wishing to record an activity or event must have accreditation and permission from the Executive Chairman or, in their absence, the Programme Team Leader by producing their

student or club registration card and a letter from their educational establishment or club outlining their reasons for such. A copy of documents produced will be kept. A declaration must be made about how the images will be used.

- D. All other people including YMCA members, wishing to use photographic / film / video equipment should register their intent with the Executive Chairman or, in their absence, Programme Team Leader.
- E. Proof of permission will be in the form of a signed and stamped Authorised Photographer ID badge.

3. Accreditation Procedure

- A. Accreditation should always be sought in advance of the event, and ideally at least five working days before the event.
- B. A record will be made of the individual's name, address and club.
- C. Professionals should register prior to the event and their identification details be checked with the issuing authority prior to the event.

4. Publicity

The requirement to gain accreditation in advance for the use of telescopic or zoom cameras and video and filming equipment should, where possible, be publicised prominently in event programmes and must be announced over the public address system prior to the start of the event. The recommended wording is:

"In line with Aberdeen YMCA's Child Protection Policy, any person wishing to engage in any video, zoom or close range photography should register their details with YMCA personnel at the reception desk before carrying out any such photography. The YMCA reserves the right of entry to this event and reserves the right to decline entry to any person unable to meet or abide by the promoter's conditions."

5. Concerns

Members, parents and YMCA personnel who have concerns about any photography taking place should contact the Executive Chairman, or in their absence, the Programme Team Leader and discuss it with them. If appropriate, the person about whom there are concerns should be asked to leave and the facility managers should be informed.

6. Use of images of children in publications

Concerns have been raised about the risks posed directly and indirectly to children through the publication of their images on websites and in other publications. Such images can be used as a means of identifying children and making them vulnerable to an individual who may wish to 'groom' that child for abuse. For this reason, care should be taken to avoid including personal information where images are used in line with stated best practice:

- If detailed personal information is used, avoid using a child's image.
- If an image is used, avoid the inclusion of detailed personal information.

(adapted and reproduced from guidelines produced by the Institute of Sport and Recreation Management)

Section B

11. Email and the Internet

Aberdeen YMCA provides children, young people, members and vulnerable adults with free internet access. The Internet is an invaluable resource but sadly, like any technology, it is not immune to abuse. In the virtual world, as in the real one, children, young people, members and vulnerable adults are particularly vulnerable. The following guidelines should be adhered to ensure that children, young people, members and vulnerable adults can use electronic facilities safely.

i **Safe Use and Monitoring of email and the internet for under 18s**

- A. All users of Aberdeen YMCA's internet facilities must have completed an '**Acceptable Use Policy**' which must have been endorsed by a responsible adult.
- B. All users and use of YMCA email and internet facilities must be directly supervised and monitored at all times by having a responsible member of YMCA personnel present in the internet area overseeing activity. No matter what other means are used, this direct supervision will always form a key part of the overall strategy for monitoring and controlling access.
- C. YMCA will use various technological approaches which are available to support this management role, including the use of filtering, blocking and monitoring software.
- D. Under no circumstance must software be downloaded on YMCA computer systems. Permission must be sought for opening email attachments.

ii **Advice for young people** (*poster displayed at internet points in YMCA*)

- A. Keep your personal information confidential. For example don't give your name, age, home address, phone numbers, etc. Use of nasty, suggestive or rude aliases will result in suspension from using computer systems.
- B. Never tell anyone whom you meet on the internet the YMCA name or phone number, unless you have specifically been given permission.
- C. It could be dangerous to arrange to meet anyone in person whom you first met online. The best advice is simply not to do it. Advice about why this is undesirable can be found at Chat Danger (www.chatdanger.com)
- D. If you are in a chat room or using any electronic communication and someone says or writes something that makes you feel uncomfortable or worried, exit the chat room. You should report such to a member of YMCA personnel.
- E. Never respond to nasty, suggestive or rude emails, text messages or other electronic communications. Don't send them yourself otherwise this will result in suspension from using computer systems.
- F. Always be yourself and do not pretend to be anyone or anything you are not.
- G. Don't believe everything you read or see online. Remember that if someone makes you an unbelievable offer, it probably is too good to be true!
- H. Don't download software on YMCA computers as they may contain viruses and put computer system beyond use for considerable time and inconvenience to yourself and others. Permission must be sought for opening email attachments.
- I. Always stay in public areas of chatrooms.
- J. Enjoy surfing!

iii Steps for dealing with possible misuse

- A. If there is a concern that a serious issue is emerging, particular care should be taken to preserve any relevant evidence by ensuring files or records are not deleted.
- B. Complete a 'Abuse of ICT Facilities' form and attach any records of any access violation.
- C. YMCA personnel should be aware that serious incidents may lead to legal action, and that accurate recording of how the policies are monitored and implemented is essential.

iv Safe E-mail

- A. Young people make friends easily, and are often willing to give out personal details like their email address, home address and phone numbers to characters they meet online, especially if the child is using the Internet from a place they think of as "safe", like home or school. It is useful to remind youngsters to be cautious and not reveal personal information too easily.
- B. YMCA personnel should talk frequently to young people about their experience of being online, encouraging them to explain what they do and discussing any problems that come up. In particular, children should understand about "stranger danger" and the importance of not giving away personal information without thinking first. If they do arrange real life meetings with people they have met online, they should always tell an adult, take along someone they trust, and meet somewhere public.
- C. YMCA will not give children, young people, members and vulnerable adults a personal email account. Young people may only send email to others via their own private webmail address. When doing so, young people must not be allowed to send rude or abusive messages to others.
- D. Where emails are seriously nasty, or break the law in some way such as by making false allegations against a person, the local police should be contacted. Print or save a copy of the email as potential evidence.
- E. Young people should be reminded to be careful about what they say in email messages. False, inaccurate and abusive comments in email about people or companies, that damage their reputation or interests, can lead to embarrassment or even legal action in the courts. Email is not anonymous, and can usually be tracked back to individuals. It is best not to say something in email that a person would not be happy to make public.
- F. YMCA personnel should never communicate personally with young people and vulnerable adults by means of personal email. This means never giving your email address to a young person nor asking them for their email address.

v Safe Chat

- A. Chatrooms are particularly popular with children and teenagers. However, because they can't see the person they're talking to, there is a risk that paedophiles might use them to strike up a friendship. Rules and guidelines for using email (as above) are equally applicable to using Chat Rooms.
- B. When using Chatrooms, users must always use a suitable nickname (or net name). Use of nasty, suggestive or rude aliases will result in suspension from using computer systems.
- C. Everyone that is met in a chatroom is a stranger. You should never give out personal details to a stranger in the street – the same applies in a chatroom.
- D. Chatrooms have private and public areas. In the public areas everyone can see what is being typed or said. Alternatively, the private areas are used to hold one-to-one conversations, known as 'whispering' (think of it like stepping out of a busy party for a private chat). These one-to-one conversations are potentially dangerous. Use of private areas in chatrooms is prohibited.

vi Safe Browsing

- E. The majority of material on the internet is fun, legal and useful, but an internet search can still return images unsuitable for children, young people, members or vulnerable adults. Such material could be violent, racist, pornographic, inaccurate or harmful in some other way. Under no circumstance should YMCA electronic resources be used to access such material.
- F. YMCA personnel should regularly check the "History" icon to see a list of websites that have been visited by users on that machine.
- G. YMCA will make use of software that attempts to block or filter out undesirable websites that users might access, but this cannot give any guarantee of safety.
- H. YMCA will use "Content Advisor" to stop certain subject material being accessed.
- I. YMCA will use internet filtering software which is kept fresh with regular online updating.
- J. If material is found on YMCA computer which might be illegal, such as photos or images, this must be reported by completing an 'Abuse of ICT Facilities' form.

Useful websites:

Be Safe Online

<http://www.besafeonline.org>

Chat Danger

<http://www.chatdanger.com/>

I Am Big Brother

<http://www.iambigbrother.com>

Section B

12. Mobile Phones

Young people have a right not only to be empowered through mobile phone technology, but also to be protected from abuses which the technology exposes them to. YMCA personnel should be aware that YMCA policy on 'Guidelines for Photography' AND 'Email and the Internet' are equally applicable in relation to the use of mobile phones.

1. YMCA personnel must encourage young people and vulnerable adults to never give out their mobile numbers to strangers.
2. YMCA personnel should never communicate personally with young people and vulnerable adults by means of mobile phone. This means never giving your mobile phone number to a young person nor ask them for their mobile phone number.
3. YMCA personnel, young people and vulnerable adults with camera phones must adhere to the YMCA policy on 'Guidelines for Photography'.
4. Young people and vulnerable adults must be subject to the YMCA Discipline Policy for Members when misusing their mobile phone.
5. Young people should be encouraged to disclose if something happens when they are using their mobile phone that makes them feel scared or uncomfortable.

Section B

13. Music, DVD and Television

Aberdeen YMCA has a responsibility to ensure that children, young people and vulnerable adults are protected from content that might seriously impair their physical, mental, spiritual and moral development.

To ensure that they are protected the following should be observed at all times when playing music, watching DVDs or watching television (supervised or unsupervised) during YMCA activities:

1. Material that might seriously impair the physical, mental, spiritual or moral development of children, young people, members and vulnerable adults is prohibited.
2. Material other than BBFC U-rated must only be shown when supervised and subject to age restrictions of members being observed and adhered to.
3. Television broadcasts after the watershed (2100) must be supervised at all times, consistent with the provisions intimated below:
4. Music, DVDs and Television programmes which feature the use of illegal drugs, the abuse of drugs, smoking, solvent abuse and the misuse of alcohol must generally be avoided and in any case must not be condoned, encouraged or glamorised.
5. Music, DVDs and Television programmes which feature the use of offensive language, violence or dangerous behaviour, whether verbal or physical, that is easily imitable by children should not be featured.
6. Music, DVDs and Television programmes which feature the use of sexual intercourse, nudity, exorcism, the occult and the paranormal must never be featured.
7. Music highlighted by the Parental Advisory System (a code devised by the music industry to warn of sexually explicit or violent language) must never be featured.
8. No film refused classification by the British Board of Film Classification ('BBFC') may be broadcast unless it has subsequently been classified or the BBFC has confirmed that it would not be rejected according to the standards currently operating.
9. No music, film, dvd or television (or other media) which have content unsuited to Christian morality must be featured.

Section B

14. Transportation of children, young people and members

The issue of transporting children has become very sensitive for YMCA personnel, leaders and parents. Arguably, YMCA benefits from the goodwill of volunteers and parents ensuring that children are returned home or transported to events in a private car. If it is necessary to provide transport or take children or vulnerable adults away from / or return to home, then the following good practice must be followed:

- 1 YMCA personnel must not take children on journeys alone in their car as an example of best practice.
- 2 Always tell another member that you are transporting a child, give details of the route and the anticipated length of the journey.
- 3 Where practicable request written parental/guardian consent if personnel are to be required to transport children or vulnerable adults. This request should inform parents of the person who will be transporting their child.
- 4 Always plan and prepare a detailed programme of activities and ensure copies are available for other members and parents/guardians.
- 5 Ensure all vehicles are correctly insured.
- 6 Ensure that all reasonable safety measures are taken. Children in the back seat, seatbelts are worn. Note: the driver is legally responsible to ensure that a child under 14 wears a seatbelt (i.e. the adult would have to pay any fine) but morally responsible to ensure all passengers wear seatbelts.
- 7 Ensure, where possible, a male and female accompany mixed groups of children or vulnerable adults. These adults should be familiar with and agree to abide by Aberdeen YMCA's Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and Procedures.
- 8 When dropping or collecting children in relation to YMCA programme activities, ideally two children should be dropped off last at an agreed point (e.g. one of their family homes).
- 9 Driver and colleague should always have a point of contact and mobile phone should they break down.

Section B

15. Recommended Adult to Child Ratios

It is important to have a high enough ratio of adult YMCA personnel to children, youth and vulnerable adults for any programme activity. The factors to take into consideration include:

- sex, age and ability of group;
- members with special educational or medical needs;
- nature of activities;
- experience of adults in on-site and off-site supervision;
- duration and nature of journey;
- type of any accommodation;
- competence of staff, both general and on specific activities;
- requirements of the organisation/location to be visited;
- competence and behaviour of members;
- first aid cover.

In general, YMCA levels of supervision for working with children, young people and vulnerable adults, taking the above factors into consideration, that must be adhered to are:

- 1 adult for every 20 children (8-11 year olds) in the YMCA centre.
- 1 adult for every 8 children (8-11 year olds) outwith the YMCA centre.
- 1 adult for every 30 youth (12-16 year olds) in the YMCA centre
- 1 adult for every 10 youth (12 – 16 year olds) outwith the YMCA centre.

There should be a minimum of one member of personnel in charge and, in addition, enough colleagues to cope effectively with an emergency. Where groups include young people of both sexes, then personnel supervising activity should include both sexes.

YMCA personnel should assess the risks and consider an appropriate safe supervision level for their particular group.

When visits are to remote areas or involve hazardous activities, the risks may be greater and supervision levels should be set accordingly.

The same consideration should be given to visits abroad or residential visits.

Section B

16. Guidance on the use of Restraint

The YMCA operates a strict 'Hands Off' policy to prevent members of YMCA personnel being accused of causing physical 'harm' to a child.

YMCA personnel must not lay hands on members for any reason, even in the face of strong provocation. This policy exists for the protection of YMCA personnel.

The use of physical restraint by adults working with young people is an emotive subject. The dangers in physically touching a young person, in relation to the POCSA 2003 Act can have serious implications for a member of YMCA personnel who acts even with the best of intentions. This is evidence by Wright (1999:462): *Physical restraint implies the violation of other socially and professionally valued aspects of the helping relationship, such as the promotion of the clients dignity, autonomy and self determination, even if it is performed to preserve life and prevent suffering after other means of stopping the dangerous behaviour have failed.*

However, in operating a 'Hands Off' policy, members of YMCA personnel may choose to intervene, at their own risk, to prevent harm in the following cases:

- to prevent an adult or child running toward a busy road
- to prevent an adult or child self-injuring
- to prevent an adult or child injuring another person
- damaging property which may result in an injury to person or others
- acting in a way that is counter to maintaining safety and security for others
- to prevent an adult or child committing an offence

The YMCA will support any member of personnel who attempts to prevent children and vulnerable adults from injury in these circumstances and it was deemed as the only REASONABLE measure which required to be taken to ensure a 'duty of care' to the person or others.

Record Keeping

Detailed and up-to-date records must be made and kept of any incidents where restraint is used. Records of incidents should include the following information:

- the name(s) of the individuals) involved
- when and where the incident took place
- details of the incident, including all steps taken to diffuse the situation and resolve it without force and the nature of the force used
- why the use of force was deemed necessary
- the individual's response
- the outcome of the incident
- a description of any injuries suffered by individuals or others and/or any property damaged during the incident.
- Time parent or emergency contact was informed of the incident and use of restraint

Section C

17. Recognition of Abuse and a Summary of Signs and Indicators.

'Child abuse' is a term used to describe ways in which children are harmed. Abuse may result from action or inaction by a member of YMCA personnel, a family member or another young person. A formal definition of Child Abuse is:

'Children may be in need of protection where their basic needs are not being met, in a manner appropriate to their age and stage of development, and they will be at risk through avoidable acts of commission or⁴ omission on the part of their parent(s), sibling(s) or other relative(s), or a carer (i.e. the person(s) while not a parent who has actual custody of the child).' ('Protecting Children: A Shared Responsibility').

For recording of incidents, in relation to the Children's Act, etc, the following are the standard categories of abuse:

1. Physical Abuse

Actual or attempted physical injury to a child, including the administration of toxic substances, where there is a knowledge, or reasonable suspicion, that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented

2. Emotional Abuse

Failure to provide for the child's basic emotional needs such as to have a severe effect on the behaviour and development of the child.

3. Sexual Abuse

Any child may be deemed to have been sexually abused when any person(s) by design or neglect, exploits the child, directly or indirectly, in any activity intended to lead to the sexual arousal or other forms of gratification of that person. This definition holds whether or not there has been genital contact AND whether or not the child is said to have initiated, or consented to, the behaviour.

4. Neglect

This occurs when a child's essential needs are not met and is likely to cause impairment to physical health and development; negligence; and circumstances which endanger the child. Such needs include food, clothing, cleanliness, shelter and warmth. A lack of appropriate care, including deprivation of access to health care, may result in persistent or severe exposure, through negligence, to circumstances which endanger the child.

5. Non-organic failure to thrive

Children who significantly fail to reach normal growth and developmental milestones (growth, weight, motor, social and intellect) where physical and genetic reasons have been medically eliminated

Examples of and recognising signs of the above are intimated below:

⁴ This means children at risk through either something a person has done to them OR something a person is failing to do for them.

1. Physical Abuse:

Examples:

- beating, whipping, paddling, punching, slapping, or hitting
- pushing, shoving, shaking, kicking or throwing
- pinching, biting, choking, or hair-pulling
- burning with cigarettes, scalding water, or other hot objects.
- severe physical punishment that is inappropriate to child's age.

Signs:

- Unexplained burns, cuts, bruises, or welts in the shape of an object
- Pinpoint haemorrhage of the face and neck can indicate a serious shaking injury
- Black eyes
- Around the mouth
- Grasp or finger marks
- Direct impression
- Linear
- Uncommon places - back of the legs or buttocks, mouth, cheeks, behind ears, stomach, chest, under the arm, genital/rectal area

Symptoms:

- Bite marks
- Burn marks
- Scalds
- Fractures

- Improbable excuses for injuries
- Wearing clothes to cover injuries
- Wearing clothes to cover injuries, even in hot weather
- Fear of touch
- Self-destructive behaviour such as physical self-harm
- Aggression towards others
- Failure to take part in activities that normally good at and enjoy

2. Emotional Abuse

Examples:

Verbal, Mental and Psychological abuses include:

- ignoring, withdrawal of attention, or rejection
- lack of physical affection such as hugs
- lack of praise, positive reinforcement, or saying "I love you"
- yelling or screaming
- threatening or frightening
- negative comparisons to others
- belittling; telling the child he or she is "no good," "worthless," "bad," or "a mistake"
- using derogatory terms to describe the child, name-calling
- shaming or humiliating
- habitual scape-goating or blaming
- using extreme or bizarre forms of punishment, such as confinement to a closet or dark room, tying to a chair for long periods of time, or terrorising a child
- parental child abduction

Signs:

- Apathy
- Depression
- Hostility
- Lack of concentration
- Eating disorders

Symptoms:

- Low self esteem
- Continual self depreciation
- Sudden speech disorder
- Significant decline in concentration
- Social immaturity
- Self mutilation
- Compulsive stealing
- Extremes of passivity or aggression
- Indiscriminate friendliness

3. Sexual Abuse

Examples:

- fondling, touching, or kissing a child's genitals
- making the child fondle the adult's genitals
- penetration, intercourse, incest, rape, oral sex or sodomy
- exposing the child to adult sexuality in other forms (showing sex organs to a child, forced observation of sexual acts, showing pornographic material, telling "dirty" stories, group sex including a child)
- other privacy violations (forcing the child to undress, spying on a child in the bathroom or bedroom)
- sexual exploitation
- enticing children to pornographic sites or material on the Internet
- luring children through the Internet to meet for sexual liaisons
- exposing children to pornographic movies or magazines
- child prostitution
- using a child in the production of pornography, such as a film or magazine

Signs & Symptoms:

Combination, frequency and duration of signs:

Behavioural -

- Lack of trust
- Fear of particular individual
- Sleep disturbance
- Reluctance to participate in physical activities or to change clothes, fear of bathrooms, showers, closed doors
- Low self esteem
- Substance misuse
- Display of sexual knowledge
- Over sexualised behaviour, sexual promiscuity, compulsive masturbation
- Psychosomatic factors - eg recurrent abdominal pain
- Developmental regression

Physical -

- Fear of dark
- Bruises, scratches to thighs or genital area
- Itch, soreness, discharge, unexplained bleeding from rectum, vagina or penis
- Pain on passing urine or recurrent urinary infections
- Stained underwear
- Depression, anxiety
- Eating disorder
- STD
- Soiling or wetting when previously trained
- Self mutilation

4. Neglect

Examples:

Physical neglect:

- inadequate provision of food, housing, or clothing appropriate for season or weather
- lack of supervision
- expulsion from the home or refusal to allow a runaway to return home
- abandonment
- denial or delay of medical care
- inadequate hygiene

Emotional (psychological) neglect:

- lack of emotional support and love, such as:
- not attending to the child's needs, including need for affection
- failure to provide necessary psychological care
- domestic violence in the child's presence, such as spousal or partner abuse
- drug and alcohol abuse in the presence of the child, or allowing the child to participate in drug and alcohol use

Signs & Symptoms:

- Constant hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Constant tiredness
- Poor state of clothing
- Frequent lateness, unexplained non-attendance
- Untreated medical problems
- Low self esteem
- Extreme hunger
- Apparent lack of supervision

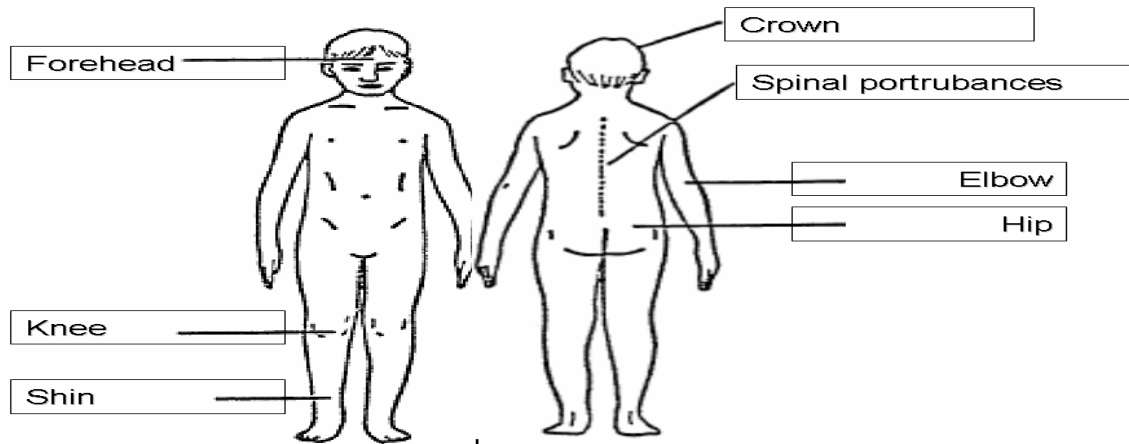
5. Non-organic failure to thrive

Examples & Signs:

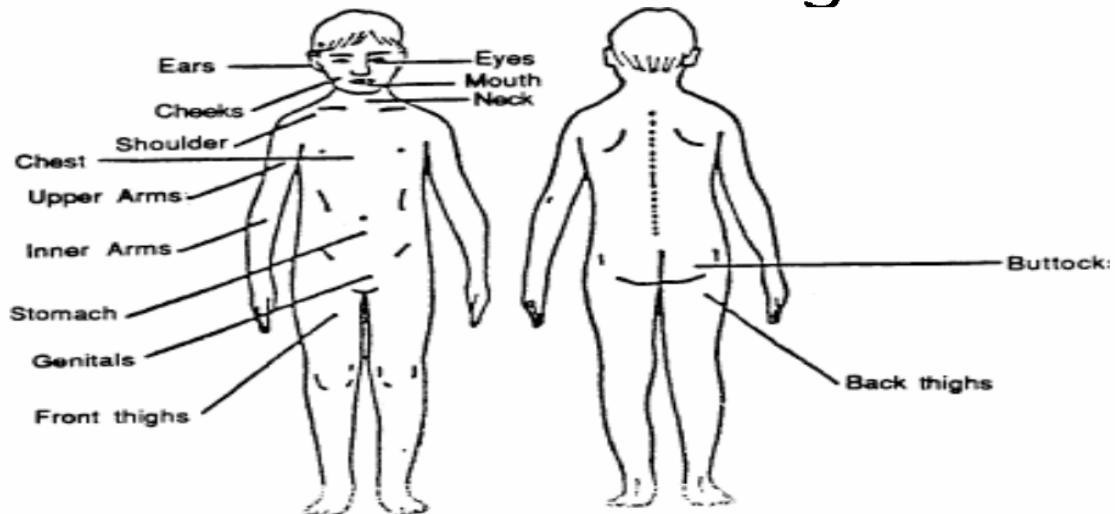
- Physically poor
- Underweight
- Poor motor skills (writing, talking, etc)
- Unable to relate to peers well
- Very low educational attainment

The following diagrams act as a guide to inform YMCA personnel to recognise possible accidental and non-accidental signs of all types of abuse:

Recognising common accidental signs:



Recognising common non-accidental signs:



Section C

18. Responding to Disclosures

It is not the responsibility of anyone from Aberdeen YMCA to decide whether or not a child or vulnerable adult has been abused. It is however everyone's responsibility to report concerns.

Information you receive about or from a child or vulnerable adult may fall into one of the following categories:

1. Suspicion or allegation of inappropriate behaviour or misconduct against someone who is NOT a member of Aberdeen YMCA personnel.
2. Suspicion or allegation of inappropriate behaviour or misconduct against someone who is a member of Aberdeen YMCA personnel.
3. Suspicion or allegation of abuse against someone who is NOT a member of YMCA personnel.
4. Suspicion or allegation of abuse against someone who is a member of YMCA personnel.

If unclear about the nature of the information, and therefore which category the disclosure falls into, advice must be sought from the Child Protection and Vulnerable Adult Officer or the Police or Social Work Department.

The Child Protection and Vulnerable Adult Officer is responsible for dealing with all external matters regarding Child Protection and Aberdeen YMCA. Your responsibility is to listen, respond, report to CP&VA Officer and record.

7.1 How to Listen to a Disclosure

It is important to listen carefully to the information a child or vulnerable adult discloses.

Good practice when listening to a disclosure:

- React calmly so as not to frighten the child/vulnerable adult.
- Listen to the child/vulnerable adult.
- Do not show disbelief.
- Tell the child/vulnerable adult that he/she is not to blame and that he/she was right to tell.
- Take what the child/vulnerable adult says seriously, recognising the difficulties inherent in interpreting what a child/vulnerable adult says, especially if they have a speech disability and/or differences in language.
- Do not pre-suppose that the experience was bad or painful - it may have been neutral or even pleasurable. Always avoid projecting your own reactions onto the child or vulnerable adult.
- If you need to clarify, keep questions to the absolute minimum to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said.
- If you need to clarify or the statement is ambiguous, use open-ended, non-leading questions.
- Do not introduce personal information from either your own experiences or those of other children or vulnerable adults.
- Reassure the child or vulnerable adult.

Actions to Avoid when receiving a disclosure:

- Avoid panic.
- Avoid showing shock or distaste.
- Avoid probing for more information than is offered.
- Avoid speculating or making assumptions.
- Avoid making negative comments about the person against whom the allegation has been made.
- Avoid approaching the individual against whom the allegation has been made.
- Avoid making promises or agreeing to keep secrets.
- Avoid giving a guarantee of confidentiality.

7.2 Responding to a Suspicion or Allegation of Inappropriate Behaviour or Misconduct against Someone who is Not a member of Aberdeen YMCA personnel:

In the course of your role within Aberdeen YMCA a child or vulnerable adult may disclose information to you about a person who is not a member of YMCA personnel that leads to a suspicion or allegation of inappropriate behaviour or misconduct.

If the disclosure is about an incident that occurred during an Aberdeen YMCA event or activity:

- Listen to the child as detailed above.
- Acknowledge the information received.
- Pass the information to both the duty manager of the event or activity and the Child and Vulnerable Adult Officer and if appropriate the parents/guardians/carers of the child or vulnerable adult (refer to section on Sharing Concerns with Parents, Guardians or Carers).
- Make a full written record of the disclosure on the day you receive the disclosure.
- Sign and date the record then pass it to the Child Protection and Vulnerable Adult Officer.

7.3 Responding to a Suspicion or Allegation of Inappropriate Behaviour or Misconduct against a Member of Aberdeen YMCA personnel:

If you receive a disclosure that leads to a suspicion or allegation of inappropriate behaviour or misconduct against a member of YMCA personnel:

- Listen to the child as detailed above.
- Acknowledge the information received.
- Pass to the Child Protection and Vulnerable Adult Officer.
- Make a full written record of the disclosure on the day you receive the disclosure.
- Sign and date the record then pass to the Child Protection and Vulnerable Adult Officer.

Establishing the Basic Facts: The Child and Vulnerable Adult Officer must clarify the basic facts to establish whether there is reasonable cause to suspect or believe that misconduct has occurred. If the basic facts support a suspicion or allegation of misconduct by a member, the matter will be dealt with in accordance with the YMCA's Disciplinary Procedure.

7.4 Responding to a Suspicion or Allegation of Abuse against Someone who is Not a Member of Aberdeen YMCA.

All allegations of abuse must be taken seriously. Although false allegations of abuse do occur, they are less than usual. If a child or vulnerable adult says or indicates that he/she is being abused or information is obtained which gives concern that a child or vulnerable adult is being abused, you must react as soon as possible that day in line with the following procedures.

Where there is uncertainty about whether the concern relates to abuse or misconduct, the Child Protection and Vulnerable Adult Officer must firstly be consulted for advice on the appropriate course of action. If the Child and Vulnerable Adult Officer is unavailable, external agencies such as the Police and Social Work Department must be consulted for advice. This is important because they have an overview of child protection issues and they may well have other information that together causes concern.

On receipt of info about a non-member that leads to suspicion or allegation of abuse:

- Listen to the child or vulnerable adult.
- At the earliest opportunity tell the Child Protection and Vulnerable Adult Officer. If the CP&CA Officer (or their deputy) cannot be contacted then pass your concerns to the Social Work Department or the Police in the area where the abuse is alleged to have occurred immediately (these are available 24 hours a day).
- Act on any advice given.
- Make a full written record of what has been seen, heard and/or told as soon as possible in the child/vulnerable adult's own words. The information must, where known, include the following:
 - Name of child/vulnerable adult.
 - Age, date of birth of child/vulnerable adult.
 - Home address and telephone number of the child/vulnerable adult.
 - The nature of the allegation in the child/vulnerable adult's own words.
 - 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/vulnerable adult's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any injuries occurred.
 - The nature of the allegation (include all of the information obtained during the initial account e.g. time, date, location of alleged incident).
 - A description of any visible (when normally dressed) injuries or bruising, behavioural signs, indirect signs (do not examine the child/vulnerable adult).
 - Details of any witnesses to the incident.
 - Whether the child/vulnerable adult's parents/guardians/carers have been contacted.
 - Details of anyone else who has been consulted and the information obtained from them.
 - If it is not the child/vulnerable adult making the report, whether the child/vulnerable adult has been spoken to, if so what was said.
- Record, sign and date on the day what you have seen, heard or been told.
- If making an electronic copy do not save to the hard drive or floppy disk. Print off the record, sign and date, then delete the electronic copy, that day.
- Pass the record to the Social Work Department or the Police.
- Remember: Listen; Respond; Report and Record

7.5 Responding to a Suspicion or Allegation of Abuse against a Member of Aberdeen YMCA personnel.

The feelings caused by the discovery of potential abuse by a member will raise different issues, e.g. disbelief that a member would act in this way. It is not the responsibility of a member to take responsibility or to decide whether or not a child or vulnerable adult has been abused. However, as with allegations against non-members, it is the responsibility of the individual to act on any concerns.

Any information that raises concern about the behaviour of YMCA personnel towards a child or vulnerable adult must be passed on as soon as possible that day, in accordance with these procedures. No YMCA personnel in receipt of such information shall keep that information to himself/ herself or attempt to deal with the matter on their own.

These Procedures aim to ensure that all suspicions and/or allegations of abuse against YMCA personnel are taken seriously and are dealt with in a timely and appropriate manner. They must be read in conjunction with the YMCA's Personnel Disciplinary Procedures.

7.5.1 On receiving information about a member that leads to a suspicion or allegation of abuse: ^e

- Listen to the child or vulnerable adult
- At the earliest opportunity pass the information to the Child Protection and Vulnerable Adult Officer. If the CP&CA Officer (or their deputy) cannot be contacted then pass your concerns to the Social Work Department or the Police in the area where the abuse is alleged to have occurred immediately (these are available 24 hours a day).
- Act on any advice given.
- Make a full written record of what has been seen, heard and/or told as soon as possible in the child/vulnerable adult's own words.
- Sign and date the record including what you have seen, heard or been told, that day.
- If making an electronic copy do not save to the hard drive or floppy disk. Print the record, sign and date, then delete the electronic copy, that day.
- Pass the record to the Child and Vulnerable Adult Officer or the Social Work Department or Police.

Important Note: Where the concern is about the Child and Vulnerable Adult Officer it must be reported to the Executive Chairman or equivalent].

^e Procedures 7.5.1 and 7.5.2 are summarised in Flowchart 1.

7.5.2 Actions for the Child and Vulnerable Adult Officer when Concerns are Reported. ^f

Before taking any action the Child and Vulnerable Adult Officer must always seek advice from the Police or Social Work Department.

Thereafter:

- Establish Basic Facts - the Child and Vulnerable Adult Officer must initially clarify the basic facts to establish whether there is reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a member may have abused a child and/or vulnerable adult.
Important Note: This may necessitate the child(ren) or vulnerable adult(s) involved being asked some basic, open-ended, non-leading questions solely with a view to clarifying the basic facts. It may also be necessary to ask similar basic questions of other children, or other appropriate individuals e.g. other YMCA personnel.
- After seeking advice from the Police and/or Social Work Department, the parents/guardians may be approached to provide consent to speak to a child/vulnerable adult.
- Advice must be sought from the Police and/or Social Work Department as to whether the member about whom the allegation has been made may be approached as part of the initial enquiry.
- This process will not form part of the disciplinary investigation.

Making a Referral in Cases of Suspected and/or Alleged Abuse - If the basic facts support a suspicion or allegation of abuse:

- The Child and Vulnerable Adult Officer will refer the suspicion and/or allegation to the Social Work Department and the Police, as soon as possible that day.
- Appropriate steps may be required to ensure the safety of the child(ren) or vulnerable adult(s) who may be at risk.
- A record should be made of the name and designation of the Social Work Department member of staff or the Police Officer to whom the concerns were passed, together with the time and date of the call, in case any follow up is required.
- Following advice from the Social Work Department and/or Police, the parent/guardian of the child or vulnerable adult should be contacted as soon as possible.

Important Note: Reporting of the matter to the Police or Social Work Department must not be delayed by attempts to obtain more information. A Referral for Reporting Suspicions and/or Allegations of Abuse Against a Member of Aberdeen YMCA Form must be completed as soon as possible that day. Where possible, a copy of this form must be sent to the Police and Social Work Department within 24 hours.

^f Procedures 7.5.1 and 7.5.2 are summarised in Flowchart 1.

7.5.3 Possible Outcomes following advice from Police

Where the initial enquiry reveals that there is reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a member has abused a child and/or vulnerable adult there will be an investigation. There are three types of investigation that can result:

1. A disciplinary investigation
2. A child protection / vulnerable adult investigation
3. A criminal investigation

Following advice from the Police, disciplinary action may be taken in cases where a criminal investigation is ongoing provided sufficient information is available to enable a decision to be made and doing so does not jeopardise the criminal investigation.

7.5.4 Managing False or Malicious Allegations

- Where after investigation, the allegation is found to be false or malicious the member will receive an account of the circumstances and/or investigation and a letter confirming the conclusion of the matter. The member involved may wish to seek legal advice.
- All records pertaining to the circumstances and investigation will be destroyed.
- Where this involves a member of Aberdeen YMCA they will be advised of the appropriate counselling services available.

7.5.5 Managing Allegations of Historical Abuse

- Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event e.g. an adult who was abused as a child by a member who is still currently working with children. Where such an allegation is made the procedures for managing allegations of abuse, detailed above must be followed.

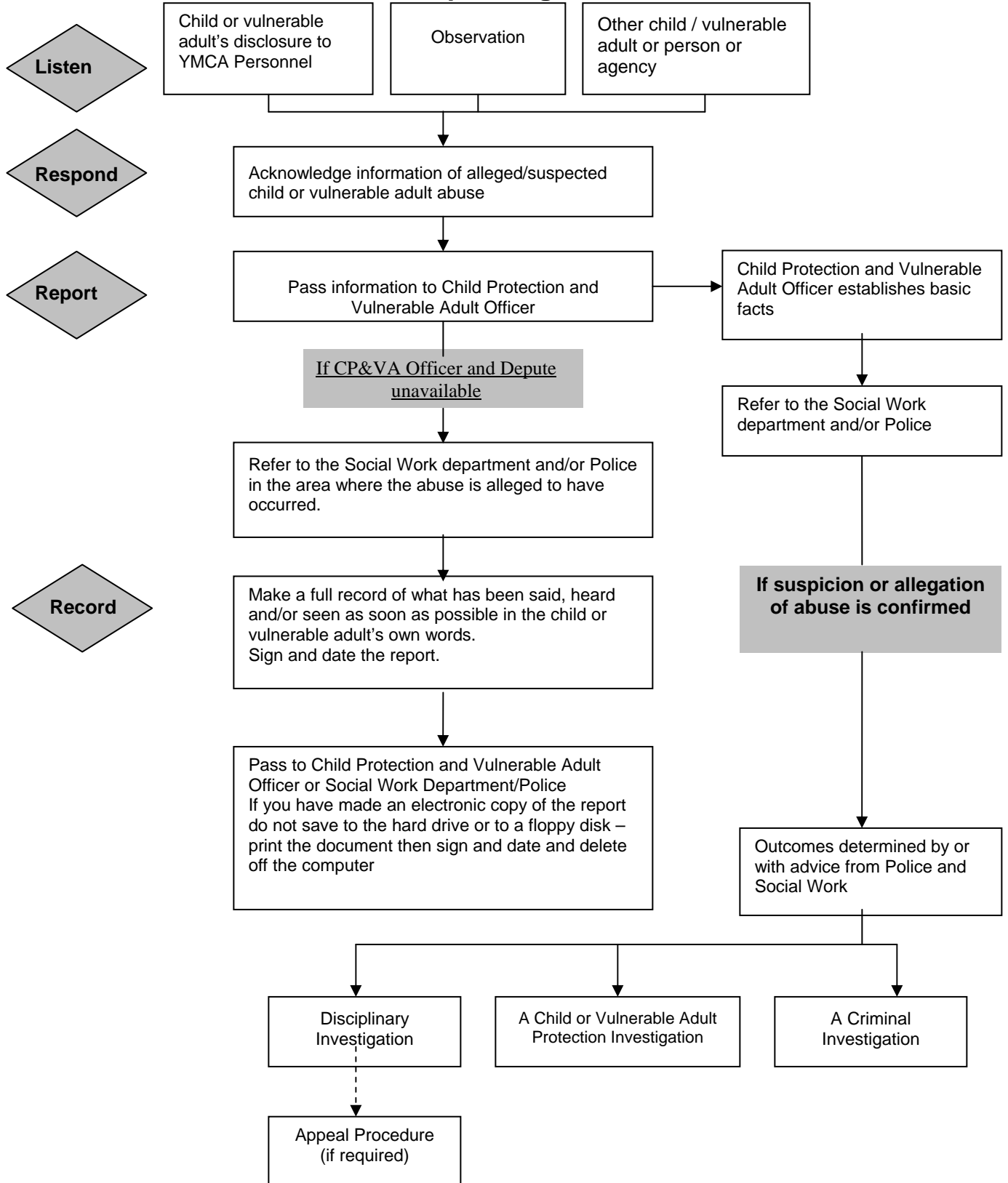
7.5.6 Sharing concerns with Parents, Guardians or Carers

Where it is Not Abuse: There is always a commitment to work in partnership with parents/guardians/carers where there are concerns about a child/vulnerable adult. Therefore in most situations, not involving the possibility of the abuse of a child or vulnerable adult, it would be important to talk to parents/guardians/carers to help clarify any initial concerns. For example, if a child or vulnerable adult 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 however advice should be sought from the Child Protection and Vulnerable Adult Officer if there is any uncertainty about the appropriate course of action.

Allegations of Abuse: There are circumstances in which a child or vulnerable adult might be placed at even greater risk if concerns are shared e.g. where a parent/guardian/carer may be responsible for the abuse or not able to respond to the situation appropriately. In all cases of suspected or alleged abuse, advice and guidance must first be sought from the local Social Work Department or the Police as to who contacts the parents.

Section C

19. Flowchart Procedure for Responding to Disclosures:

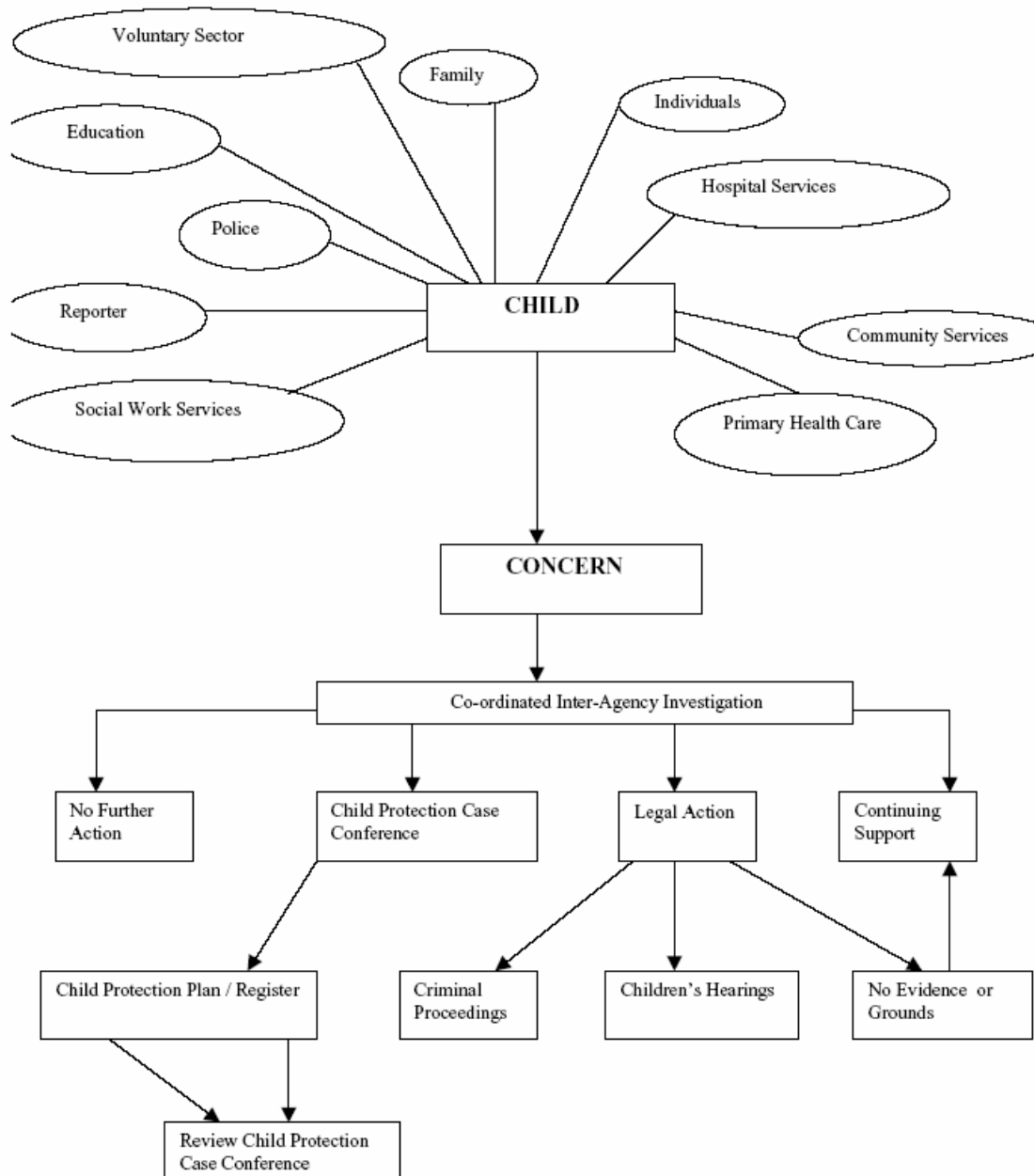


Section C

20. Referral Process via YMCA CP&VA Officer

Following a referral being made to Social Work and/or Police, the process becomes the responsibility of the statutory agencies and not the YMCA. The diagram below illustrates the procedures which the statutory agencies may take following a concern being brought to their attention.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE CHILD PROTECTION PROCESS



Section C

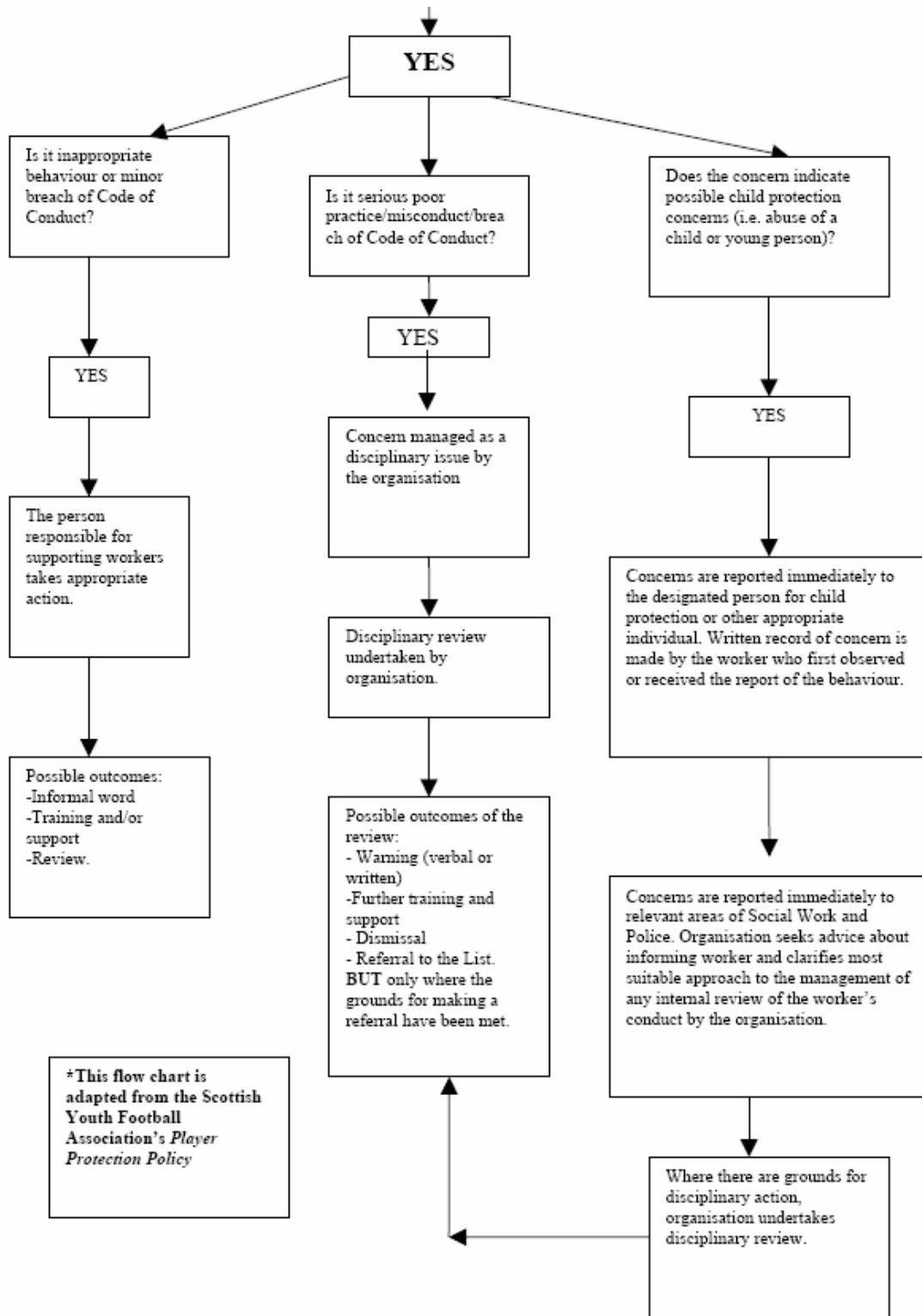
21. Guidance on Managing Child Protection Allegations Made Against a Member of YMCA Personnel.

It is recommended that allegations made against YMCA personnel are managed according to the following procedure:

1. The allegation must be reported immediately to the Child Protection and Vulnerable Adult Officer or other individual within the organisation who has responsibility for managing YMCA personnel.
2. On receiving the concerns, the Child Protection and Vulnerable Adult Officer should contact immediately Social Work and/or the Police and act on any advice given. In particular, Social Work and/or Police should be asked whether or not it is appropriate for the organisation to approach the worker implicated in the allegation as part of the organisation's internal enquiry.
3. The individual who first received/witnessed the concern should make a full written record of what was seen, heard and/or told as soon as possible after observing the incident/receiving the report. It is important that the report is an accurate description. The Child Protection & Vulnerable Adult Officer can support the worker during this process but must not complete the report for the worker.
4. The Child Protection & Vulnerable Adult Officer should add any steps that s/he has also undertaken (e.g. contact with Social Work/and or Police) and summarise any advice given by the child protection agencies.
5. The individual worker and the Child Protection & Vulnerable Adult Officer should sign and date the report.
6. A copy of the record should be passed to Social Work and/or Police. The original record should be stored in a secure place such as a locked cabinet.
7. Where the Police have advised that it is appropriate to inform the worker that an allegation has been made against them, the worker should be told this and the Association should consider suspending the worker whilst an internal review is carried out. It is essential to preserve evidence for any criminal proceedings while at the same time safeguarding the rights of the member.
8. It is important that any internal review carried out by the Association does not compromise the work of the child protection agencies or involve questioning the child or young person about the nature of the abuse that is being alleged. This is always the concern of the child protection agencies.
9. Where the Association's own internal review suggests that the worker's actions have breached the Code of Conduct it should follow the disciplinary procedure. Sanctions may involve dismissal or removing the worker from access to children and young people where his/her actions are considered to be a serious breach of the Code of Conduct.
10. Where the Association's internal review indicates that the worker harmed or placed a child at risk of harm and should be removed from access to children, a referral to the List should be made.

The worker's behaviour flow chart gives a summary of the steps suggested for managing different levels of concerns:

Are You Concerned About The Actions of a member of YMCA Personnel:



Section C

22. Whistleblowing Policy

Aberdeen YMCA recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where YMCA personnel fail to do so. Therefore all YMCA personnel, for the purposes of this Policy for Safeguarding Children, Young People and Members at Aberdeen YMCA, MUST be aware of their duty (not expectation) to raise concerns about inappropriate behaviour, misconduct or negligent action of colleagues in relation to children, young people and vulnerable adults.

The YMCA's 'Whistleblowing Policy' is intimated below. It should be noted that this is the YMCA's generic whistleblowing policy and does not refer to child protection, abusive and unethical conduct alone.

Any member of YMCA personnel therefore is required to fulfil their duty and voice concerns in the knowledge that when they do, provided the act in good faith and follow the laid down procedures, the Board of Directors will ensure that they are not victimised in any way.

1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 In order to promote good employment practice, this procedure seeks to encourage a climate of openness in the YMCA where YMCA personnel can raise their concerns without fear of reprisals.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This procedure provides YMCA personnel with the opportunity to bring to the attention of the Board of Directors issues of serious wrong doing or malpractice within the YMCA. Where the disclosure of such matters is in the public interest, the procedure details the steps a worker should take to raise the concern, in confidence, and provides a guarantee that the individual will not suffer any detriment as a result.
- 2.2 The public has a right to expect high standards of service. When these are not met and are due to individual acts, omissions or corporate failings then this needs to be addressed. This procedure allows YMCA personnel to report such matters to the Board of Directors. Within the procedure there are a number of categories under which an issue can be raised (see Section 4 of Whistleblowing Policy)
- 2.3 The principles and guidance outlined in this procedure have been developed to complement the YMCA's Code of Conduct for Personnel.
- 2.4 The YMCA has a Complaints Procedure for the public that allows for issues of concern, relating to the provision of services to the public, to be raised. It also has a Grievance Procedure which deals with individual and collective problems that YMCA personnel have as a result of their employment.

The following 'Whistle-blowing Procedure' does not replace either of the above but complements them by identifying a process whereby YMCA personnel can raise matters of concern, have these investigated, and be given the assurance of no reprisals by the employer, where the worker has reasonable suspicion of the alleged act(s).

3. SCOPE

3.1 The procedure is for the use of 'YMCA personnel' who are identifiable individuals that provide services for the YMCA. These include:

- (i) All Employees (including part-time and temporary staff)
- (ii) Voluntary YMCA personnel
- (iii) Work experience or those on vocational training schemes
- (iv) Self-employed contractors working for the YMCA

3.2 Having identified to whom the procedure applies above, detailed below are the types of acts or issues which qualify for protection:

- (i) A Criminal Offence (except where the act of disclosure itself constitutes a criminal offence e.g. breach of the Official Secrets Act)
- (ii) Failure to Comply with a Legal Obligation
- (iii) A Miscarriage of Justice
- (iv) Health & Safety Risks (*including timekeeping, child safety, bullying & harassment in the workplace, risks to the public as well as fellow YMCA personnel*)
- (v) Financial Irregularities
- (vi) Damage to the Environment
- (vii) The deliberate concealment of information relating to any of the above matters

3.3 Under the terms of this procedure, YMCA personnel can report a matter to the Board of Directors regarding any of the seven categories identified in paragraph 3.2. The categories are by no means mutually exclusive, for example, there may be a health & safety failure that is also a criminal offence. The failure to attribute the issue to the correct category will not disqualify the individual bringing the complaint, nor will it affect the individual's right to protection. If the issue is outwith the categories identified above then the protections offered by this procedure do not apply.

3.4 The protection provided by this procedure will apply to the worker where (s)he:

- (i) Acts in good faith
- (ii) Has reasonable belief, that at the time of the disclosure, the information is substantially true
- (iii) Does not act for personal gain
- (iv) Complies with the provisions of the procedure

4. REPORTING A CONCERN

- 4.1 The first step under the procedure is the initial reporting of the problem by the worker to their line manager or the appropriate officer managing the contractual arrangements in the case of the self-employed and contractors. YMCA personnel, when raising their concern under this procedure, must make sure the matters that are the basis for their complaint are communicated clearly to the line manager. This is best done with advice and support of another colleague. If this, for what ever reason, is not appropriate or would be difficult then the worker should seek to contact an Office Bearer of the YMCA. Once again if for some reason this is not appropriate, contact should be made with YMCA Scotland's National General Secretary.
- 4.2 In the case of 'YMCA personnel' who are not personnel to whom this procedure applies, particularly agency and self-employed individuals, who may be unclear as to whom they should be reporting a concern in the first instance, they should contact the Executive Chairman. Once contact is made with the Executive Chairman the individual will be afforded the protection provided within this procedure. It will be for the Executive Chairman to ensure that any complaint is formally acknowledged, within the timescales detailed in Section 5.
- 4.3 Irrespective of which person or post-holder receives the initial report this constitutes that the matter has been formally lodged and the provisions of the procedure, with all appropriate protection, will apply from this point in time.
- 4.4 Concerns can be raised either verbally or in writing. It must however, be recognised that it is best if concerns are raised in writing to avoid any ambiguity as to when the matter was formally lodged. Where matters are reported verbally the manager receiving the complaint must put the complaint in writing, in their own words and request the member of personnel to sign or endorse it. Even if the member of personnel refuses to sign or endorse the way the complaint has been written it must be recorded and progressed in accordance with the provisions of this procedure. The process will only stop if the member of personnel produces a written complaint of their own, which will supersede that written by the manager, or makes a clear verbal statement that they wish to withdraw their complaint.
- 4.5 All concerns will be treated seriously and confidentially. Protection can only be afforded to YMCA personnel who are identified and as such matters raised anonymously will not be progressed within the provisions of this procedure but forwarded to the Board of Directors.
- 4.6 Once a concern is formally lodged the procedure outlined in Section 5 will begin and protection will apply from this time.

5. RECORDING A FORMAL COMPLAINT

- 5.1 When a member of YMCA personnel raises a concern, either verbally or in writing, this must be acknowledged as this constitutes the start of the process and the time from when protection under the procedure applies. For this purpose

- a standard letter which appears at Appendix 'A' should be sent to the worker in acknowledgement of the concern being formally registered.
- 5.2 From the concern being formally registered and acknowledged the Manager receiving the complaint must complete the pro-forma at Appendix 'B' and forward this along with any other correspondence (*including the letter of acknowledgement*) to the Executive Chairman who will:
- (i) Make an initial determination as to whether the concern qualifies for protection within the six categories identified at Para 3.2
 - (ii) Appoint an appropriate Investigating Officer to look into the concern raised with a view to reporting back within a reasonable timescale.
 - (iii) Confirm with the member of personnel the initial determination relating to the complaint and the name of the Investigating Officer.

6. HOW THE YMCA WILL RESPOND

- 6.1 The action the Board of Directors will take largely depends upon the nature of the concern. In order to protect YMCA personnel who raise complaints, the Executive Chairman (or appointed representative) will make initial enquiries to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and to determine what form it will take. Concerns or allegations which fall within the scope of other specific procedures eg: child protection, bullying and harassment will normally be referred for consideration under the appropriate procedure. It may be agreed with the complainant that some concerns can be resolved without the need for an investigation. This determination will take no longer than 5 working days.
- 6.2 In all circumstances the YMCA will either:
- Investigate the matter internally (see Section 7)
 - Refer the matter to the Police
 - Form the subject of an independent inquiry

7. INVESTIGATION STAGE

- 7.1 The Executive Chairman shall appoint a suitable Investigating Officer to investigate the registered concern. Where it is established that the matter has not been previously investigated to which the concern relates, it will be referred for a response which will be shared with the worker bringing the complaint.

Where the complaint has been investigated previously, without resolution, the Office Bearers of the YMCA will meet to consider further. This determination will take no longer than 5 working days.

- 7.2 Where the complaint relates to an issue of financial irregularity, the matter will be reported to the Office Bearers to investigate. In this circumstance communication between the Executive Chairman and other Office Bearers needs to be maintained to allow a response to be made to the member of personnel raising the complaint, in accordance with Section 8 of this procedure.

- 7.3 The appointed Investigating Officer will be required to meet with the member of personnel who has registered their concern and their representative to discuss the investigation plan. The plan will include the scope and timescale of the investigation. Where it is not possible to agree on both of these aspects of the investigation the matter will be referred back to the Executive Chairman who will determine the scope and timescale for the investigation.

The scope of the investigation will largely determine the timescale. However, as a rule of thumb, investigations are not normally expected to last longer than 20 working days. Any investigations that go beyond this period, except where it has been previously agreed that the investigation period would be longer, will necessitate that a meeting between the Investigating Officer and worker plus representative takes place within 5 days of the expiry of the investigation period and a revised timescale agreed. Any problems must be reported to the Executive Chairman.

- 7.4 It will be necessary for the Investigating Officer to source and scrutinise all available facts in order to report to the Executive Chairman. This may include interviewing others who may, or may not be personnel of Aberdeen YMCA.
- 7.5 The Investigating Officer is responsible for compiling a written report for the Executive Chairman on the concern that was registered by the member of personnel. The report should comment on the validity of the concern and recommend any action the YMCA's Board of Directors should take to make good any identified failings. However, the final decision as to the scope of the investigation and the outcome of the complaint is that of the Executive Chairman alone.

DETERMINATION OF THE COMPLAINT

- 8.1 Once the Executive Chairman is in receipt of the Investigating Officer's report, a meeting will be called with the complainant. At the meeting the Executive Chairman will explain his/her decision on the complaint and explain reasons. This decision will be confirmed in writing within seven working days from the date of the meeting.
- 8.2 The Executive Chairman should, for the sake of accountability and transparency, release the full report to the complainant. However, where there are issues that are highly confidential, which contain personal information about individuals, or for any other justifiable reason only the parts of the report which exclude the sensitive information will be released.
- 8.3 At the meeting the member of personnel may be represented by a colleague or trade union representative.

- 8.4 Following determination of the complaint, the Executive Chairman will inform the Board of Directors of any action points necessary, arising from the complaint. These must be implemented within a reasonable timescale. Any non-compliance with the requirements of the Board of Directors will then be reported to them by the Executive Chairman.
- 8.5 Should the worker be dissatisfied with the determination of the Executive Chairman in the conclusions and action to be taken (s)he should contact Public Concern at Work, an independent external organisation that can advise on progressing such issues.

RIGHT OF APPEAL

- 9.1 Where a member of YMCA personnel is not satisfied that this procedure has been applied properly or appropriately, an appeal is permissible via the YMCA's Grievance Procedure. Any procedural issue raised regarding a 'Whistle-blowing' complaint shall be considered by the Board of Directors.

SAFEGUARDS FOR WHISTLEBLOWERS

- 10.1 The YMCA will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation (including informal pressures) and will take appropriate action to protect those who raise a concern in good faith.
- 10.2 Every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality as far as this is reasonably practical.
- 10.3 Help will be provided to you in order to minimise any difficulties which you may experience. This may include advice on giving evidence if needed. Meetings may, if necessary be arranged off-site with you and with you being represented, if you so wish.

Section C

23. YMCA Responsibility to Refer to Scottish Ministers.

The Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003 places certain legal obligations on Aberdeen YMCA because we recruit personnel to “child care” positions with a responsibility and access to young people under the age of 18 years.

To meet our legal obligations under the Act we are legally required to do three things:

1. Refer an individual to the List where the grounds for referral are met.⁹
2. Not knowingly appoint an individual who is fully listed to a child care position (as defined under Schedule 2 of the Act).
3. Remove an individual who is fully listed from a child care position.

A referral to the List is made in a written report (reference). Only individuals who ‘work’ in child care positions (as defined by Schedule 2 of the Act) **and** meet the grounds for referral, should be referred to Scottish Ministers for consideration for inclusion on the List.

Scottish Ministers will follow a number of very detailed steps when they receive a reference about an individual. These steps include giving the individual (who is the subject of the reference) opportunities to respond to the content of the reference. Scottish Ministers may also seek clarification on the content of the reference from the source of the referral.

Aberdeen YMCA, or its CP&VA Officer who makes the referral is not required to send a copy of the reference to the individual who is the subject of the reference. This responsibility rests with the Scottish Ministers.

Before listing the person **provisionally**, Scottish Ministers will dismiss the reference if they are satisfied that:

- it is vexatious or frivolous;
- it is made otherwise than in accordance with sections 2(1) or 4(1) of the Act (i.e. that it does not meet the grounds for referral to the List);
- there is no information with the reference to indicate that it may be appropriate for the individual to be included in the List.

A pro-forma for the Child Protection & Vulnerable Adult Officer to make a referral is provided in the appendices to this policy.

⁹ The *Information Note on the Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003 - Disqualified from Working with Children List* (Scottish Executive 2003) states that: “An organisation will have a duty to make a referral to Scottish Ministers if an individual working in a child care position harms a child or puts a child at risk of harm **AND** is dismissed or moved away from access to children as a consequence. In addition, a person in a child care position who harms a child or puts a child at risk of harm **AND** would have been dismissed if they had not resigned, retired, been made redundant or left at the end of a temporary contract, must also be referred to Scottish Ministers.” (P.2 of the *Information Note*) The *Explanatory Notes* to the Act state that: “It is important to understand that no referral can be made unless the organisation has (or would, but for a resignation, retiral, redundancy or contract expiry, have) taken steps to remove the individual from his or her present position.” (Para. 9 of the *Explanatory Notes*).

Section D

Aberdeen YMCA's response to the Scottish Executive's publication:

24. Parent Checklist for Youth Activities.

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/education/peya-00.asp>

Text in black = published by Scottish Executive
YMCA

Text in red italics = response by Aberdeen

YOUNG PEOPLE'S INVOLVEMENT IN YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Over half a million young people take part in Scotland's 11,000 youth organisations and clubs. These organisations play a vital role in helping children and young people develop, learn and have fun. 80,000 volunteers and 2000 paid workers provide this essential service, representing a huge investment in our young people.

While youth organisations are constantly trying to strengthen their selection processes for recruiting leaders and improving their training provision, parents should assure themselves about standards before allowing their young people to join a club or group for organised activities ... AND MAYBE - YOU COULD VOLUNTEER TO HELP!

The following information sets out some basic questions parents might ask about the status and credentials of the club and its leaders. Youth organisation leaders, many of whom are parents themselves, encourage and welcome this kind of parental interest.



1. Is the youth group/club affiliated to a larger organisation like the Scouts, Guides, Boys' Brigade, Girls' Brigade, Youth Scotland, sports council or out of school network? If so, does it have good contact and a good relationship with the umbrella organisation?

- *Aberdeen YMCA is affiliated to YMCA Scotland, the umbrella organisation of YMCAs in Scotland. YMCA Scotland can be contacted at:*

*11 Rutland Street
Edinburgh
EH1 2AE.
Tel: 0131 228 1464.
Email:*

info@ymcascotland.org

- *Aberdeen YMCA maintains a very good contact and relationship with YMCA Scotland.*
- *Members of our Leadership Team regularly attend the quarterly meetings of the National Council.*
- *Our Executive Chairman is a member of the National Executive Committee*
- *Aberdeen YMCA was one of the first YMCAs to be awarded the National YMCA Quality Standards Award in 2000. Our next review is not due until after 2005.*
- *The YMCA is the largest youth organisation in the world!*

These umbrella organisations provide the group/club with access to professional support, training and advice ... not all youth groups/clubs belong to an umbrella organisation or network ... and not all umbrella organisations have control over the practices of affiliates; in either case you should ask for details about who runs the club, are they local parents/teachers; do they have any contact with other youth groups or the local council, and if so what type of contact?

- *Aberdeen YMCA is also a member of Aberdeen Council of Voluntary Organisations, Scottish Council of Voluntary Organisations and Volunteer Development Scotland – none of which have control over our practices but enables the YMCA leaders to access quality training, advice and support.*
- *All leaders involved in running clubs have had an enhanced criminal records check conducted by Disclosure Scotland.*
- *The YMCA is overseen by a Board of Directors who are all members of local churches in the north-east.*
- *The Board of Directors employ various people to operate our programme activities and are ably supported by a professional team of volunteers.*
- *Key employees are line-managed by the Executive Chairman and meet weekly as a Leadership Team to discuss the practical day-to-day programme.*
- *Our current personnel list can be viewed electronically on the internet at:
www.aberdeenyumca.org.uk/personnel.htm*
- *Many of our employees and volunteers are degree trained professionals, many in the field of education, and are employed by Aberdeen City Council. All leaders,*

paid or unpaid, undergo regular training in first aid, child protection, sports leadership and outdoor education.

2. Can the group/club give a named contact within the local council's community education or community services department who is aware of the group's operational practices?

Not all groups will - it should be sufficient to be satisfied in relation to either questions 1 or 2.

- *Lord Provost John Reynolds, Aberdeen City Council is a director of Aberdeen YMCA*
- *Rev Jim Patterson, Minister, Denburn Parish Church*

3. Is the group/club subject to regulation and inspection by an outside body?

The majority of groups and clubs will probably not fall within this category ... however, some groups such as after school clubs may require registration with the Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care.

- *Aberdeen YMCA is subject to a quality assessment review by YMCA Scotland on a 5 year cycle.*
- *Aberdeen YMCA is not subject to regulation by an outside body, other than regulatory checks to conform with health and safety and environmental legislation.*

4. Is there a leaflet which gives basic information about the youth group/club, its aims, leaders, nature of the activities, cost, meeting day(s) and times of meeting (start and finish) including holidays?

- *A general leaflet detailing the aims of Aberdeen YMCA, programme activities, contact details, membership and entry costs is available on request.*

5. Is it established practice that parental consent is sought for outside visits, adventure activities, etc.?

- *Absolutely! Participation in all activities outside our centre is subject to parental/carer consent indicated in the return of a signed indemnity form from the parent/carer.*
- *Participation in indoor activities is open to members only. Membership applications for young people under 16 will only be accepted with a signature in the appropriate parental consent box on the application form.*

6. Does the youth group/club have set procedures on the recruitment (e.g. vetting arrangements such as Criminal Record checks), training and management of workers/ volunteers including training on protecting children and personnel?

These may have been established by the national organisation but local workers/volunteers should be aware of the criteria, have met the recruitment standards, have access to relevant training and have documented evidence.

- *The YMCA does have a Child Safety Policy which is reviewed Annually in May or June of each year.*
- *All youth leaders are required to be SCRO checked prior to working in*

Aberdeen YMCA on an employed or voluntary basis.

- *The YMCA conducts an Annual Child Safety Protection training seminar for YMCA personnel and others in the local community as appropriate.*
- *YMCA personnel regularly undergo training in various aspects of delivering YMCA programme activities. This training is usually accredited training and certification of achievement is displayed in the foyer of the YMCA.*
- *As a member of various other organisations, the YMCA is able to access and promote appropriate training to its personnel.*

7. Are there adequate numbers of leaders/adult helpers (volunteers/paid staff) and is there a clear policy that there should be a minimum of two adult leaders/ helpers for an activity/meeting to operate safely?

Safe practice requires that there should always be at least two adults present to ensure that no adults find themselves working alone with children. It is desirable that there are adults present of the same sex as the young people involved in the club.

- *All activities involving children and young people in the YMCA have a minimum of two adult leaders. In normal circumstances this will consist of a male leader and a female leader.*

8. Are there clear procedures and guidance for staff and volunteers in respect of behaviour towards children?

This could be in the form of a written Code of Conduct for staff and volunteers so that parents know what standards of behaviour to expect - this might cover things such as the appropriateness of physical contact with children, comforting children and accompanying children to toilets.

- *Aberdeen YMCAs Child Safety Policy includes a section entitled 'Code of Conduct for Programme Personnel'. This Code includes a section on 'You Must:' and 'You Must Not:'*
- *Aberdeen YMCA's Child Safety advocates a policy of "hands off" at all times. This removes all ambiguity of when it may, or may not be appropriate, to put "hands on" a child or young person. In exceptional circumstances, e.g administration of first aid; breaking up a fight using restraint techniques; and preventing a child or young person from harming themselves, it may not be possible to avoid "hands off". In such circumstances the YMCA would support leaders who find themselves in such difficult circumstances.*

9. Does the club/organisation have a formal constitution setting out its aims, management and financial policy and procedures?

Most youth groups and clubs have a management committee which meets on a regular basis with local parents among its members and an annual rotation of membership with nominations invited from parents of the young people involved in the group. This ensures a degree of parental supervision and input into the group's activities.

- *YMCA is properly constituted and is recognised in Scotland as a charity by the local council, Inland Revenue and the Office for Scottish Charity Regulation.*
- *YMCA activities are overseen and governed by a Board of Directors which meets every 6 weeks.*
- *Directors are elected annually at the Annual General Meeting for that purpose.*
- *Eligibility for nomination to the Board of Directors is open to Full Members only. Any parent wishing to become a Full Member would have to satisfy the requirements of full membership before being accepted as a Full Member and, thereafter, nomination for directorship.*

10. Are parents encouraged and welcomed to visit the club, to meet those in charge and to view activities?

If not, you as a parent, should consider whether this gives cause for concern.

- *Parents regularly enter the YMCA to collect their children and this is useful for building up quality relationships with the programme team staff.*
- *Any parent that wishes to be given a tour of the building, meet the programme staff, and discuss aspects of YMCA work is most welcome.*
- *A parents' evening is organised annually to highlight and display aspects of YMCA work and celebrate success and achievement by our members and youth leaders.*

11. Does the youth group/club have a health and safety policy, a First Aid kit, a First Aider and adequate procedures for recording and notifying accidents? Is it insured?

- *The YMCA has a designated Health & Safety Officer who is a trained Firefighter and employee of Grampian Fire Brigade.*
- *The YMCA does have a Health & Safety Policy which is reviewed on an Annual Basis.*
- *Health and Safety feature prominently in the job descriptions of all employed staff.*
- *The YMCA has 4 qualified First Aiders who have successfully passed the British Red Cross First Aid course.*
- *A First Aid kit is fully stocked and kept in the main office of the YMCA.*
- *Both YMCA minibuses have fully stocked first aid kits.*
- *All youth trips can proceed only when a First Aider is among the leadership of the trip.*
- *All accidents and dangerous occurrences are recorded in the relevant Health & Safety recording book for such incidents.*
- *The YMCA conducts termly fire drills for evacuation of premises.*
- *The YMCA continues to maintain adequate public liability insurance.*

12. Does the club have a policy to ensure the protection of children and young people and is the policy made available to parents? Is the policy maintained and reviewed? Leaders should have a clear understanding of the organisation's criteria for recruiting and selecting staff and guidance on planning work to minimise opportunities for abuse.

- *The Child Protection Policy is available to parents / carers on request*

- *The Child Protection Policy is available to download on our website*
- *The Child Protection Policy contains a section on 'Recruitment and Employment Procedures'*
- *The Child Protection Policy contains a section on 'Recognising Abuse'*
- *The Child Protection Policy contains a section on 'Referral Procedures' should abuse be suspected.*
- *The Child Protection Policy is maintained regularly and reviewed at least once annually in May / June of each year.*

13. Does the organisation have established procedures to handle complaints?

This may be through a nominated member of a management committee or an independent party who is not directly involved in the running of the activity but there should be a named person within the organisation who can be contacted.

- *Complaints regarding any aspect of YMCA programme activities, health and safety, staff, ethics, etc should be addressed to:
Executive Chairman, Aberdeen YMCA, 52 Skene Terrace, Aberdeen, AB10 1RP*
- *Complaints will only be considered if they are submitted with a contact address.*
- *Complaints will be investigated thoroughly by the Executive Chairman and another director of Aberdeen YMCA.*
- *Statements are recorded in written form and subjected to the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998.*
- *A written response to all complaints can be expected within 10 working days from receipt of the complaint.*

14. Is this complaints procedure made clear to club members? Parents should encourage their children to tell them if there are any

occurrences about which they are unhappy or uncomfortable.

- *This complaint procedure is highlighted on the notice-boards within the YMCA.*



15. What to do if you are not satisfied with standards or have a complaint:

These questions are based on things which every worthwhile youth club or group should have. If you are not satisfied that the club or group has addressed these issues, or does not have the necessary controls and procedures in place, you could contact the management committee or the named individual who is responsible for dealing with complaints. If no complaints procedure exists, or if you fail to receive satisfaction, you should pass your concerns to the national organisation to which the club is linked or advise the local council community education or community services department. You could also talk over your concerns with Parentline Scotland - the hotline for parents on issues concerning them. Tel: 0808 800 2222.