



Child Safeguarding Policy and Guidelines

Policy Statement

It is the policy of SCARF to safeguard its members from physical, sexual and emotional harm while participating in its activities. SCARF takes all reasonable steps to ensure that, through relevant procedures and training, young people and adults taking part in activities do so in a safe environment.

SCARF will:

- Treat all children with respect.
- Carefully recruit and select all adults whether paid or voluntary.
- Respond to all concerns and allegations swiftly and appropriately
- Ensure that confidentiality will be maintained at all times.

Safe Recruitment

All volunteers and staff should be subject to an appropriate level of scrutiny. SCARF takes the view that the level of checking should be proportionate to the role and the level of risk involved. Where no parents or carers are present then a higher level of check is necessary for the staff in charge. SCARF will ensure that there are always two or more adults present with children.

Volunteers

Members of the Management Committee are required to complete an enhanced CRB check on appointment and every three years if they remain on the committee.

Volunteers who help at activities where the parent or carer is present are asked to complete the Child Protection References form (attached).

Volunteers who are helping at activities where no parent is present are asked to complete an enhanced CRB check.

Paid Staff

Paid staff (eg coaches, instructors, entertainers, etc) who are working for less than one week eg a two hour session, are asked to complete the Child Protection References form (attached).

Paid staff (eg regular workshop and club leaders) who are working for SCARF for the equivalent of more than one week of full-time work will be asked to complete a CRB check.

New Staff

For paid positions, when staff will be employed for one week or more or regularly over an extended period (eg a club leader), SCARF will

- provide the applicant with a job or role description so that they understand what the work involves
- draw up a 'person specification' listing the key qualifications, skills, experience and qualities SCARF is looking for
- check that the applicant is competent for the role

SCARF will then

- take up references, at least one of which should be from someone who has first-hand knowledge of their previous work with children, and make the nature of the work clear to the referees
- consider whether to ask the applicant to apply for an Enhanced Criminal Records Disclosure

Photography

SCARF will ensure that written consent is obtained from parents before taking photographs or videos when they become SCARF members.

When publishing images SCARF will ensure that they are appropriate and that they do not include any information that might enable someone to contact the child

Handling concerns, reports or allegations:

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

An allegation may range from mild verbal bullying to physical or sexual abuse. If SCARF members, volunteers or staff are concerned that a child may be being abused, it is NOT their responsibility to investigate further BUT it is their responsibility to act on their concerns and report them to the appropriate statutory authorities. For guidance on recognising abuse, see attached.

If you suspect a child is being abused physically, sexually or emotionally or if a child talks to you about abuse by someone else either connected with SCARF or elsewhere:

Always:

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

Never:

- rush into actions that may be inappropriate
- make promises you cannot keep (eg. you won't tell anyone)
- ask more questions than are necessary for you to be sure that you need to act
- take sole responsibility – consult someone else (ideally the designated Child Safeguarding Officer or the person in charge or someone you can trust) so that you can begin to protect the child and gain support for yourself.

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

Recording and handling information

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

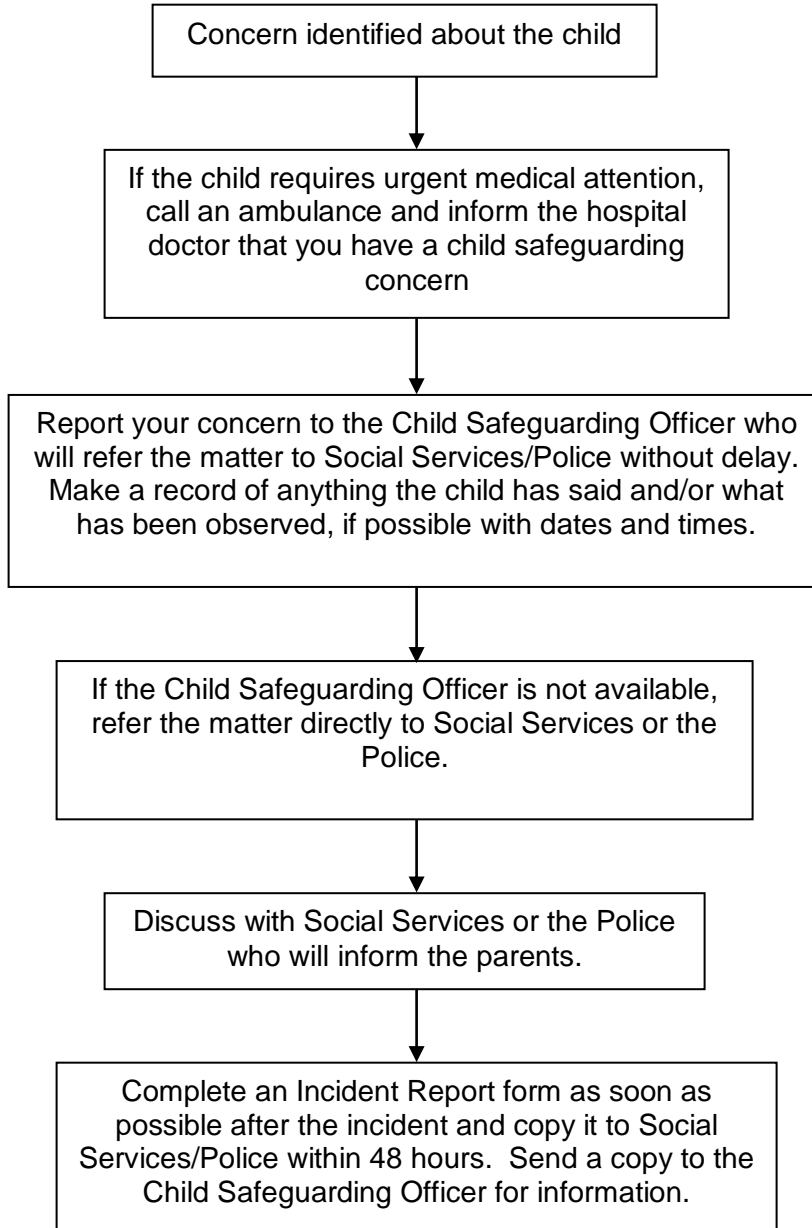
Listen to and keep a record of anything the child tells you or that you have observed and pass the information on to the statutory authorities.

All information must be treated as confidential, stored securely and only shared with those who need to know. If the allegation or suspicion concerns someone within SCARF, only the child's parents/carers, the Chair (unless they are the subject of the allegation), the relevant authorities and the Child Safeguarding Officers should be informed. If the alleged abuse took place outside SCARF, the Police or Social Services will decide who else needs to be informed, including the child's parents/carers. It should not be discussed by anyone within the organisation other than the person who received or initiated the allegation and, if different, the Chair.

The person who raises a concern with the CSO will be given feedback from them about the actions taken and if he or she does not receive any, will follow it up and ask again. If he or she is not satisfied with the response he or she will take ownership of the concern themselves and report it directly to the relevant authority such as the Police or Social Services.

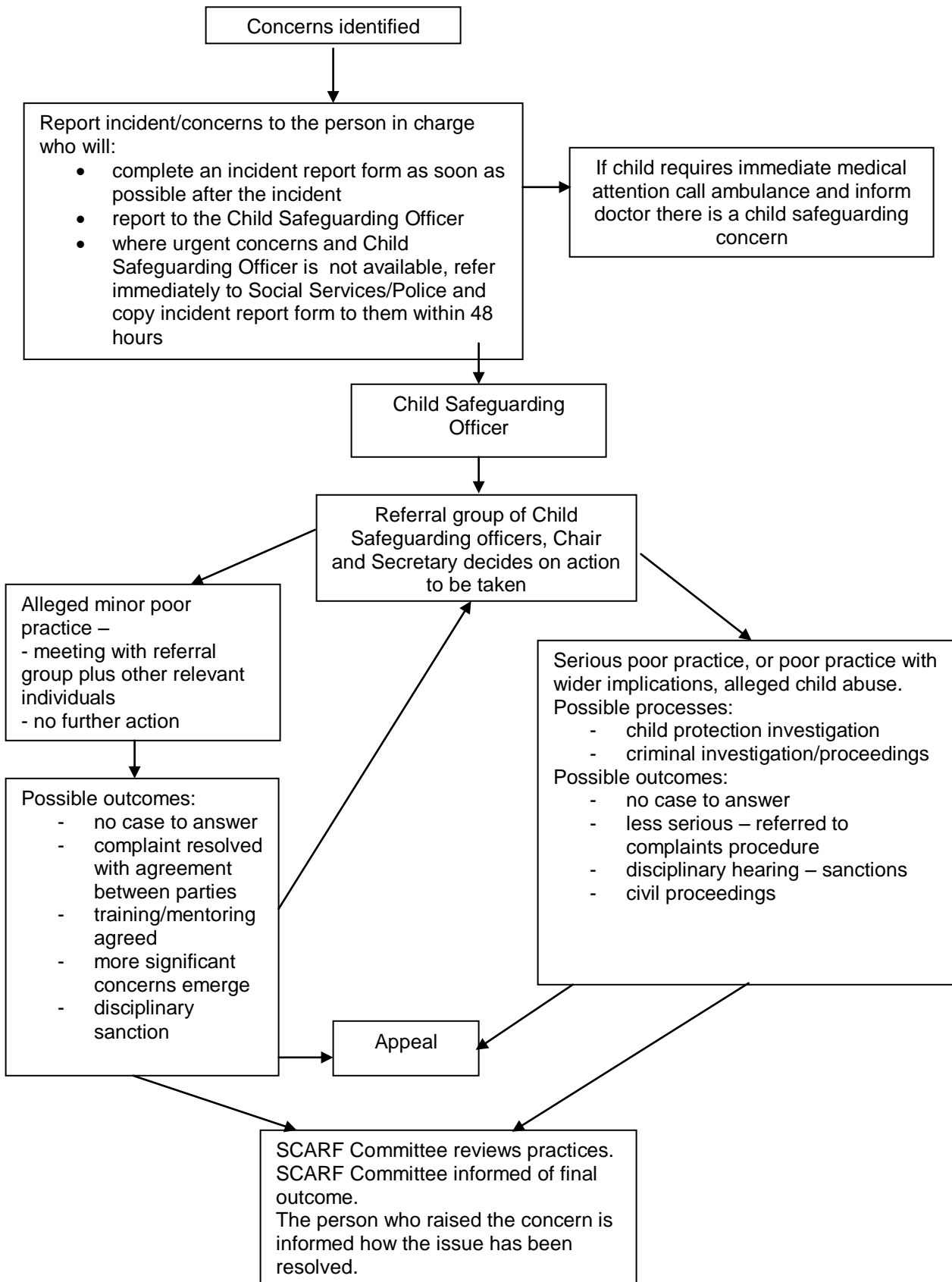
Procedures

The procedure to be followed by anybody concerned about a child's welfare



If you are uncertain what to do at any stage, contact the NSPCC free 24 hour helpline 0808 800 5000.

What to do if you are concerned about the behaviour of any member, volunteer or staff working for SCARF



Incident report form

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

This form should be copied, marked 'Private and Confidential', to the SCARF Child Safeguarding Officer and to the statutory authorities (if they have been informed of the incident) within 48 hours of the incident.

Good practice guidelines

A parent or carer must remain with their child at all times, unless it is explicitly stated that parents are not required (for example, at Youth Club).

When parents and/or carers are in attendance they are responsible for their child(ren)'s safety and behaviour.

Parents, carers, volunteers and staff should always:

- Respect everyone as an individual
- Provide a good example of acceptable behaviour
- Respect everyone's right to personal privacy.
- Be available as a listening ear and, if necessary, refer for more appropriate help.
- Be sensitive to other people's likes and dislikes.
- Try to ensure that actions cannot be misunderstood or cause offence and are acceptable within a relationship of trust.
- Show understanding when dealing with sensitive issues.
- Uphold SCARF's Child Safeguarding Policies and Procedures.

Parents, carers, volunteers and staff should never:

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

SCARF reserve the right to review membership should the safety of its members be compromised.

What is child abuse?

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

Physical abuse where adults or other children:

- physically hurt or injure children (eg. by hitting, shaking, squeezing, biting or burning)
- give children alcohol, inappropriate drugs or poison
- attempt to suffocate or drown children

Neglect includes situations in which adults:

- fail to meet a child's basic physical needs (eg. for food, water, warm clothing, essential medication)
- consistently leave children alone and unsupervised
- fail or refuse to give children love, affection or attention

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

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

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

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

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

Recognising Abuse

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

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

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

If you are concerned

If there are concerns about sexual abuse or violence in the home, talking to the parents or carers might put the child at greater risk. If you cannot talk to the parents/carers, consult your organisation’s designated Child Safeguarding Officer or the person in charge. It is this person’s responsibility to make the decision to contact Social Services or the Police. It is NOT their responsibility to decide if abuse is taking place, BUT it is their responsibility to act on your concerns.

Policy Reviewed and agreed July 2014

SCARF Child Safeguarding References

Surname..... Forename(s).....

Address.....

.....Postcode.....

How long have you resided at this address?.....

Are you a person known to any Social Services department as being an actual or potential risk to children? Yes/No (If yes please supply details)

Have you had any disciplinary sanction relating to child abuse? Yes/No (If yes please supply details)
Do you hold a current Enhanced Police Check Certificate? Yes/No (If yes, please supply documentary proof)

I have read and understand the rules applying to SCARF's Child Safeguarding Policy and agree to abide by these.

SignedDate

Reference One

I have known the above named person foryears. I certify that I know of no reason why they should not work with children.

Name.....Position.....

Address.....

.....Postcode.....

Tel. No.....Email.....

Signature.....Date.....

Reference Two

I have known the above named person foryears. I certify that I know of no reason why they should not work with children.

Name.....Position.....

Address.....

.....Postcode.....

Tel. No.....Email.....

Signature.....Date.....