



Safeguarding Children Policy

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Safeguarding Children Policy

West Dunbartonshire Leisure Trust (WDLT) aims to ensure that any child is kept safe from harm while they are with staff or volunteers in our organisation. In order to achieve this we will ensure our staff and volunteers are, where appropriate, carefully selected, screened, trained and supervised.

Selection

- All applicants to our organisation will complete an application form
- Short listed applicants will be asked to attend an interview
- Short listed applicants will be asked to provide references and these will always be taken up prior to confirmation of an appointment.
- Successful applicants will, where appropriate, be asked to complete a self declaration form prior to a PVG record being requested from the appropriate authority.

Screening

The successful applicant will, where appropriate, be asked to complete a Disclosure Record (relevant to the position applied for) prior to the applicant taking up the post.

Training

The successful applicant will receive induction training, which will give an overview of WDLT and ensure they know its purpose, values, services and structure. Relevant training and support will be provided on an ongoing basis and will cover information about their role, and opportunities for practicing skills needed for work. Training on specific areas such as health and safety procedures, identifying and reporting abuse, and confidentiality will be given as a priority to new staff and volunteers and will be regularly reviewed.

Supervision

All staff and volunteers will have a designated supervisor who will provide regular feedback and support.

It is an offence for an individual who is barred to undertake the type of regulated work from which they are barred.

It is an offence for an organisation to offer regulated work to someone who is barred or fail to remove a person from regulated work if they have been notified that they are barred.

It is an offence for an organisation not to refer an individual to Disclosure Scotland where the grounds have been met.

WDLT will ensure that all staff and volunteers involved in recruitment, training and supervision, are aware of this policy and have received appropriate training and support to ensure its full implementation.

Reporting Abuse

All concerns must always be referred to the WDLT Child Protection Officer and may also require a referral to social work and/or police for appropriate investigation. Where the grounds for referral are met a referral would also be made to Disclosure Scotland.

WDLT will ensure that all staff and volunteers involved in recruitment, training and supervision, are aware of this policy and have received appropriate training and support to ensure its full implementation.

WDLT Code of Conduct – Safeguarding Children

You Should

- ✓ Play your part in helping to develop an ethos where all people matter and are treated equally, and with respect and dignity
- ✓ Always put the care, welfare and safety needs of a child first
- ✓ Respect a child's right to be involved in making choices and decisions which directly affect them
- ✓ Listen attentively to any ideas and views a child wants to share with you
- ✓ Respect a child's culture (for example their faith and religious beliefs)
- ✓ Respect a child's right to privacy and personal space
- ✓ Respond sensitively to children who seem anxious about participating in certain activities
- ✓ Speak to your line manager immediately if you suspect that a child is experiencing bullying or harassment
- ✓ Be aware of the vulnerability of some groups of children to being isolated and hurt (for example, children with disabilities and learning difficulties)
- ✓ Wherever possible ensure that when you are working with children you are at least within sight or hearing of other workers
- ✓ Listen carefully to any child who 'tells you' that they are being harmed and report what you have discovered immediately to your line manager
- ✓ Report immediately any suspicion that a child could be at risk of harm or abuse
- ✓ Never dismiss what a child tells you as 'lies' or exaggeration
- ✓ Always avoid physical interventions
- ✓ Never underestimate the contribution that you can make to the development of safe communities for children

You Should Not

- × Exaggerate or trivialise another worker's concerns about a child/protected adult or ignore an allegation or suspicion of abuse in the hope that it will either 'go away' or that 'someone else will deal with it'
- × Discuss personal issues about a child or their family with other people except with your line manager when you are concerned about the child's wellbeing
- × Be drawn into any derogatory remarks or gestures in front of children
- × Allow a child to be bullied or harmed by anyone in the organisation
- × Allow children to swear or use sexualized language unchallenged

You Must Never

- × Engage in sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- × Never allow others to or yourself engage in touching a child in a sexually provocative manner
- × Never make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun
- × Engage in rough or physical contact unless it is permitted within the rules of a game or sports activity or conforms to the guidance on appropriate physical restraint
- × Never form inappropriate emotional or physical relationships with children
- × Harass or intimidate a child because of age, 'race', gender, sexual orientation, religious belief, socio economic class or disability
- × Never invite or allow a child to stay with you at your home

WDLT Safe in Care Guidelines

These guidelines have been introduced to provide practical guidance for those working and/or volunteering directly with children on practices to keep the child safe and to promote a safe operating environment for the employee/volunteer. These guidelines complement and should be read in conjunction with the Code of Conduct. Breach of these guidelines may be dealt with under WDLT's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

WDLT owes a *duty of care* towards all children involved in its activities. Children under the age of 16 years should not be placed in positions of responsibility in relation to other children. These guidelines apply to all children and young people under the age of 18 years. Common sense should be applied when considering the circumstances of older children and all children should have the opportunity to express their views on matters which affect them, should they wish to do so.

As sport and leisure activities take place in many different locations, environments and formats, it is impossible to provide specific guidance on many of the issues covered. The following guidelines are therefore based on generally recognised good practice and common sense. Ultimately, most practical situations will require a judgement to be made about what is practicable and reasonable in the circumstances.

Adult to Child Ratios (Coaching Sessions)

WDLT follows the recommendations made by National Governing Bodies of the sport or activity in which the session is taking place. The ratio below acts as a guideline for sports coaching sessions:

Age: 3 and over **1:8**

If all children are over 8 **1:10**

All activities should be planned to ideally involve two adults, preferably one male and one female. The above guidelines may vary at the discretion of the deliverer, taking account of the factors below:

- The number of children involved in the activity.
- The age, maturity and experience of the children.
- Whether any of the group leaders or children has a learning or physical disability or special requirements.
- Whether any of the children have challenging behaviour.
- The particular hazards associated with the activity and the environment.
- The level of qualification and experience of the leaders.
- The programme of activities

There may be other considerations which are specific to the sport or environment in which the sport takes place.

Physical Contact (Coaching Sessions)

All forms of physical contact should respect and be sensitive to the needs and wishes of the child and should take place in a culture of dignity and respect for all children. Children should be encouraged to express their views on physical contact.

In the first instance, coaching techniques should be delivered by demonstration (either by the coach or an athlete who can display the technique being taught). Educational instruction should be clearly explained, with a description of how coaches may handle or have contact with a child before doing so. This should be accompanied by checking if the child is comfortable. Manual support should be provided openly and must always be proportionate to the circumstances.

If it is necessary to provide additional support to a specific child, the child and parents should be encouraged to express a preference regarding the support and should be encouraged to speak out about methods of support with which they are uncomfortable. Staff/volunteers should work with parents and children to develop practiced routines so that parents and children know what to expect. Where sessions involve children who have additional support needs (e.g. help with personal care tasks - toileting or changing) it will be necessary for carers or parents to remain at the sessions.

Coaches will not take on the responsibility for tasks for which they are not appropriately trained e.g. manual assistance for a child with a physical disability.

First Aid and the Treatment of Injuries

- Where practicable all parents of children under 16 should have completed a permission form (covering transportation of their children, photographic/video images and medical health consent before their child participates in the activity.
- There should be an accessible and well-resourced first aid kit at the venue.
- Be aware of any relevant medical conditions and or medicines being taken by participants or existing injuries and their implications.
- Only those with a current, recognised First Aid qualification should provide assistance to those with illness or injury. In more serious cases assistance should be obtained from a medically qualified professional as soon as possible.
- An Accident Report Form should be completed if a child sustains an injury along with the details of any treatment given.
- Where possible, staff will be trained in First Aid, otherwise access to medical advice and/or assistance is available. This may be in the form of a mobile phone if working outdoors away from traditional communication methods.
- A child's parents/guardians must be informed of any injury and action taken as soon as practicable.
- Where appropriate, accidents will be investigated to help prevent similar incidents in future.
- Where the activity is one that carries a risk of serious injury or where there is significant risk due to large numbers of participants. Suitably qualified medical staff should be available on site.

Managing Challenging Behaviour

Staff/volunteers who deliver activities to children may, from time to time, require to deal with challenging behaviour.

These guidelines aim to promote good practice and to encourage children to manage their own behaviour and will suggest acceptable strategies to assist and highlight unacceptable sanctions which must never be used by staff or volunteers.

These guidelines are based on the following principles:

- The welfare of the child is of paramount consideration.
- A risk assessment should be completed for all activities which take into consideration the needs of all the children involved in the activity.
- Children must never be subjected to any form of treatment that is harmful, abusive, humiliating or degrading and should always be able to maintain their respect and dignity.
- No member of staff should attempt to respond to challenging behaviour by using techniques for which they have not been trained.

Planning Activities

Good practice requires planning sessions around the group but also considering the needs of individuals. Risk assessments should consider whether group members have presented or are likely to present difficulties in relation to tasks, the participants, or the environment. Where potential risks are noted, relevant assessments should be agreed in advance and identify coping strategies to manage such risks and appropriate staffing levels to safely manage and support the session.

All those delivering activities to children should receive training on these guidelines and be supported to address issues of challenging behaviour through regular supervision.

Agreeing Acceptable and Unacceptable Behaviours for Challenging Groups and Children

Staff, volunteers, children and parents can help develop an agreed statement of what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and sanctions that may be applied in response to unacceptable behaviour. When asked about acceptable and unacceptable behaviours, children tend to arrive at a very sensible and working set of 'rules'. Regular discussion should take part in this group regarding rights and responsibilities.

Managing Challenging Behaviour

In dealing with children who display risk-taking or challenging behaviours, staff and volunteers should consider the following options:

- Time out - from the activity.
- Reparation - the act or process of making amends.
- Restitution - the act of giving something back.
- Behavioural reinforcement - rewards or consequences for positive or negative behaviour.
- De-escalation of the situation – talking things through with the child.
- Increased supervision by staff/volunteers.
- Use of individual 'contracts' or agreements for their future or continued participation.
- Sanctions or consequences e.g. missing an outing.

Adults and children should never use the following as a means of managing behaviour:

- Physical punishment or the threat of such.
- The withdrawal of communication with the child.
- Being deprived of food, water or access to changing facilities or toilets.
- Verbal intimidation, ridicule or humiliation.

Staff and volunteers should review the needs of children for whom sanctions are frequently necessary. Ultimately, if a child continues to present a high level of risk behaviour or danger to themselves or others, they may have to be excluded from the activity.

Physical Intervention

The use of physical intervention is not permitted by WDLT employees. Where a child exhibits violent behavior, WDLT employees should telephone the police and ensure the safety of other children in the vicinity.

Trips Away and Transportation of Children

Designate a Child Protection Officer for the Trip

Those in charge of the group will be responsible for the safety and well being of children in their care. It is recommended that one of the group leaders co-ordinate the arrangements to safeguard the safety and welfare of children during the trip.

Risk Assessment

Potential hazards should be identified at the planning stage through a risk assessment. Safeguards, where appropriate, should be put in place to manage the risks. Risk assessment should be an on-going dynamic process throughout the trip as groups can often find themselves in unexpected situations despite the best laid plans. Risk assessments should be obtained from the activity provider before a trip takes place.

Travel Arrangements

Organisers must ensure there is adequate and relevant insurance cover (including travel and medical insurance). If the trip involves travel abroad, organisers shall ensure they are aware of local procedures for dealing with concerns about the welfare of children and are familiar with the details of the emergency services in the location of the visit.

Adult to Child Ratios

All trips away should be planned to involve *at least* two adults, preferably one male and one female wherever possible.

Group leaders should be familiar with and agree to abide by WDLT's Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Code of Conduct.

Accommodation

Organisers should find out as much as possible about the accommodation and the surroundings at the planning stage. Where possible, an initial visit to the venue/ accommodation should take place to help those organising the trip identify all practical issues and allow time to address them in advance, in consultation with children and parents where appropriate.

The following is a (non-exhaustive) list of some of the practical things that should be considered in advance about the arrangements for accommodation:

- Location: central and remote locations both present different challenges.
- Sleeping arrangements. These will enable suitable sharing in terms of age and gender and appropriately located staff/volunteer bedrooms for both supervision and ease of access in case of emergency. Parents and children should be consulted in advance about arrangements for sharing where possible and appropriate.
- Appropriate safeguards where others have access to the sleeping quarters.
- Special access or adaptive aids required by group leaders or children.
- Environmental factors.
- Personal safety issues.
- Fire drill and evacuation to take place first evening.

Residential at a Facility/Centre

Organisers should ensure the facility is appropriately licensed and has adequate and relevant insurance cover in place. The facility should have a policy on the protection of children and Health and Safety. Adequate security arrangements should be in place and facility staff should have been Disclosure Scotland checked where appropriate. Facility staff involved in the training or instruction of children must be appropriately qualified and trained.

Organisers should ensure there is adequate supervision of the group for the duration of the stay, particularly when the facility is being shared with other groups.

Involving Parents

Where possible, a meeting should be held with parents before departure to share an itinerary and information about the trip, answer their questions and make joint decisions about arrangements where appropriate. A Code of Conduct shall be agreed with children and parents in advance of the trip along with sanctions for unacceptable behaviour. Parents should be made aware that activities are not totally risk free. Parents must complete a consent form and provide emergency details.

In the event of an emergency at home during the trip, parents should be encouraged to make contact with the organiser in the first instance so that arrangements can be put in place to support the child on hearing any distressing news.

During the Trip

Organisers must ensure arrangements are in place for the supervision and risk assessment of activities during free time. Children shall not be allowed to wander alone in unfamiliar places. Group leaders should have clear roles and responsibilities for the duration of the trip. They must not be over familiar with or fraternise with children during the trip and remember that they are in a position of trust at all times.

Group leaders should maintain an overview of wellbeing of all children during the trip. This can help to identify issues at an early stage and resolve them as quickly as possible.

A debrief with the group organiser and group leaders should be held at the end of the trip to discuss any issues arising and identify any further action required or areas for improvement.

Transportation

Where it is necessary to transport children, the following good practice is required:

- Where parents make arrangements for the transportation of their own children to and from the activity, it will be their responsibility to satisfy themselves about the appropriateness and safety of the arrangements.
- Where arrangements are made for the transportation of children the members of staff/volunteers involved will undertake a risk assessment of the transportation required.

Responsibilities of Staff and volunteers:

- Ensure that all vehicles are on the council approved list.
- Ensure the driver has a valid and appropriate licence for the vehicle being used, e.g. D1, PCV.
- All reasonable safety measures are available i.e. fitted with working seatbelts (lap and diagonal).
- An appropriate ratio of adults per child.
- Ensure drivers have adequate breaks.
- Ensure medical forms and medication is on the bus (not in the luggage compartment).
- Medication should be checked to ensure it is in date.

In a situation where an adult has to take a child home the following good practice is required:

- Agree a collection policy with parents which will include a clear and shared understanding of arrangements for collection at the end of a session.
- Always tell another member of staff that you are transporting a child, give details of the route and the anticipated length of the journey.
- Take all reasonable safety measures e.g. children in the back seat, seatbelts worn.
- Have another adult accompany you on the journey.
- Call ahead to inform the child's parents that you are giving them a lift to inform them when you expect to arrive.
- If driving your own personal vehicle, make sure you have appropriate insurance (business insurance).

Photography

WDLT does not wish to prevent people from recording footage for performance development reasons or the recording of achievements. Staff must be vigilant however to ensure that children are protected from the misuse of opportunities to take or manipulate film and video footage in a way that could harm or put a child at risk.

- Photography will not be permitted where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy eg. in changing areas and toilet/shower areas.
- There is no reasonable expectation of obtaining individual consent to photographs being taken at events involving mass participation, whether indoor or outdoor, such as school sports days or sporting competitions. Wherever possible however, WDLT will gain prior consent to photography (eg. when signing up to an event)
- Written consent will be required from parents or guardians of children under 16 years of age.
- Where WDLT wishes to take and/or retain photographs or images of an individual, it will determine whether it is necessary to obtain signed consent from the individual in question or whether the photograph or image is exempt by reason of being journalistic, literary or artistic material.

Some sports take place in areas where organisers have little or no control over the environment such as a river or areas to which the public has general rights of access e.g. countryside, playing field etc. In these circumstances, staff should take all reasonable steps to promote the safe use of photography and to respond to any concerns raised.

1. PHOTOGRAPHS, FILM and VIDEO (and their use on the internet)

Scope

- Staff will adhere to these guidelines, however they have no power to prevent individuals photographing or filming in public places.
- Staff will have the right at all times to prohibit the use of photographic equipment at any event or activity where a reasonable expectation of privacy has been breached.
- Photographic equipment includes cameras, mobile phones, tablets or other hand held devices.

The following guidelines should also be followed when monitoring the use of mobile phones as cameras or video recorders.

Notification

- Parents and children will be informed they may, from time to time, be photographed or filmed whilst participating in activities. This could be for one of the following reasons:
 - ✓ Video footage for performance development.
 - ✓ Media coverage of an event or achievement.
 - ✓ Promotional purposes e.g. website or publication.
- Materials promoting events will state, where possible, that photography and filming will take place.
- Those who have sought and obtained permission to photograph or film will be formally identifiable e.g. in uniform or displaying an identification badge. Should an external organisation wish to photograph or film at a WDLT event, written approval from WDLT must be sought and granted.

Permission

- Parents will be offered the opportunity to withhold their permission to photography and filming. In the absence of any expressed objection, parental agreement will be assumed. Parental consent must however be received when publishing personal information or making any changes to information being used about children in press or on the internet.
- Where appropriate, children will be able to express their views. Where a child is able to provide an informed view, this will be taken into consideration by the event organising Officer(s).
- WDLT will do everything reasonable in the circumstances to abide by the wishes of parents and children. Special care must be taken with regard to identified vulnerable children. All decisions made by staff should reflect the best interests of the child.

Use of Images and Information

- All negative images, copies of videos and digital photograph files will be stored in a secure place. These will not be kept for any longer than is necessary having regard to the purposes for which they were taken.

- Images will not be shared with external agencies unless permission is obtained from the child and parent.
- Information published on websites must never include personal information that could identify a child. All contact must be directed to **WDLT**. Credit for achievements by a child should be restricted to first name e.g. “Tracey was Player of the Year 2013” unless otherwise approved through parental consent.
- Children must never be portrayed in a demeaning, tasteless or provocative manner. Children should never be portrayed in a state of partial undress, other than when depicting an action shot within the context of the sport. Attire such as tracksuits or t-shirts may occasionally be more appropriate.

Concerns and actions

- Anyone behaving in a way that could reasonably be construed as inappropriate in relation to filming or photography should be reported to the person in charge on the day. They should be approached for an explanation. If a satisfactory explanation is not provided, the circumstances should be reported to the person in charge on the day or **WDLT’s Child Protection Officer**.
- Where appropriate, concerns about publications or internet images will be dealt with through established WDLT procedures and may also be reported to the police.

2. TEXTING AND INFORMATION ON MOBILE PHONES

Children frequently use text messaging or social media as a quick and easy way to communicate with others. Staff and volunteers must be aware that intimidating and abusive messages can be discreetly sent by text. Information sent in this way, even where well-meaning, could be misinterpreted.

Staff/volunteers must consider whether it is necessary and appropriate to hold the mobile phone numbers of children. The general principle is that all communications with children should be open, transparent and appropriate to the nature of the relationship.

In the first instance contact should always be made at the phone number the parent has provided. Good practice would include agreeing with children and parents what kind of information will be communicated directly to children by texting. This information should only be “need to know” information such as the last minute cancellation of a training session.

The following good practice is also required:

- The mobile phone numbers of children will be carefully stored (in accordance with data protection principles) and access will only be provided to those who have permission.
- Staff/volunteers must never engage in personal or sensitive communications with children via text message.

Awareness of Abuse

Introduction

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting, or by failing to act to prevent, significant harm to the child. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.

It is helpful to consider and understand the different ways in which children can be abused. The following definitions show some of the ways in which abuse may be experienced by a child but are not exhaustive, as the individual circumstances of abuse will vary from child to child.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter or clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate care or treatment. It may also include neglect of a child's basic emotional needs.

Bullying

Bullying is abuse and/or intimidation by a person, persons or an organisation against another or others. Bullying may be a specific act or it may be institutional. Bullying can be perpetrated by both genders and is generally an abuse of a perceived power relationship. Specifically, bullying may include verbal abuse and intimidation, acts of physical or sexual abuse and coercion. Whatever its form, bullying is unacceptable within any organisation and it is expected that it always will be challenged and addressed appropriately.

Recognising Abuse

Some Facts about Abuse

- Most children, who are abused, are abused by someone they know.
- Much abuse goes unreported and therefore unrecognised.
- Disabled children are more vulnerable to abuse.
- Children are far more likely to be physically abused by their parents than sexually abused.
- Children rarely make false accusations that they have been abused and in fact frequently deny the abuse or take back an accusation after they have made it.
- Children who have been abused are often very good at hiding their unhappiness and distress.
- Abuse has serious long-term consequences and if untreated, can be devastating and last into adulthood.
- Child sexual abuse is equally common among all social classes, cultures and ethnic groups.
- In most reported incidents of sexual abuse the abuser is someone known to the child.
- A child is never to blame for abuse.
- It is not only men who sexually abuse children – it is estimated that 10% of all abuse is sexual abuse carried out by women.

Indicators of Abuse

When children and young people are abused there are sometimes (but not always) some common indicators which can be divided into 'behaviours' and 'physical signs'.

Some of these include:

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if they are on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries.
- An injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent.
- The child describing what appears to be an abusive act involving her/him.
- Someone else – a child or adult, expresses concern about the welfare of another child.
- Distrust of adults particularly those with whom the child previously had, or would normally be expected to have a close relationship.
- Unexplained changes in behaviour over time eg. becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper.
- Inappropriate sexual awareness or explicit behaviour in games.
- Reluctance to participate in physical activity.
- The child is unable to make friends or prevented from socialising with other children.
- Increasingly unkempt appearance.

Effects of Abuse

Abused children can suffer changes in normal behaviour and can suffer long-term damage that may follow them into later life.

The main effects of abuse on children are as follows:

- Pain and distress.
- Behavioural difficulties, like becoming angry and aggressive.
- School related problems.
- Developmental delay – physically, emotionally and mentally.
- Low self esteem.
- Depression, self harm – sometimes leading to suicide.
- Difficulty in forming relationships as adults.
- Sometimes, if untreated, abusive relationships with own (or other) children.
- Permanent or temporary injury.
- Children may die.

Factors that might increase the likelihood of risk:

- Young children who might have difficulty telling others.
- Disabled children who might have difficulty communicating or accessing people to tell.
- Children who are already experiencing some form of discrimination (eg. racial harassment) as they are more isolated from other adults/children. They may also perceive the abuse as a part of the ongoing discrimination.
- Poor relationship between children and parents/carers.
- High levels of stress.
- History of violence in the family.

The damage inflicted by bullying can be frequently underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to children to the extent that it affects their health and development or, at the extreme, causes them significant harm. In these circumstances, bullying should be considered as child abuse and treated as such.

Responding to Disclosure, Suspicions and Allegations

Introduction

Abuse can take place inside /or outside the sport and leisure environment. All suspicions and disclosures must be reported swiftly and appropriately. It is recognised that strong emotions can be aroused, particularly in cases of possible abuse or where there is a misplaced loyalty to a colleague. These feelings must not interfere with your judgement about any action to be taken.

Action to Take

The person receiving a disclosure from a child concerning abuse **should**:

- React calmly so as not to frighten the child.
- Tell the child s/he is not to blame and was right to tell.
- Take what the child says seriously.
- Keep questions to a minimum.
- Reassure the child, but do not make promises of confidentiality.
- Make a full written record of what has been said, heard or seen using the child's own words.
- Refer the matter as soon as possible on the same day. Reporting concerns should not be delayed until a written record has been made.

Action to Avoid

The person receiving information concerning disclosure **should not**:

- Panic.
- Allow their shock or distaste to show.
- Probe for more information than is offered.
- Speculate or make assumptions.
- Make negative comments about the alleged abuser.
- Approach the alleged abuser.
- Make promises or agree to keep secrets.

Responding to Suspicions Involving an Individual from outwith WDLT

Concerns that a child/young person may be experiencing abuse/neglect by an individual outwith WDLT may come to light because:

- A child/young person has alleged that they are being abused;
or
- WDLT has received a third party report that a child/young person is being abused;
or
- There are signs and indicators which could point to abuse.

The employee should make a full written record of the disclosure using the designated child protection reporting form. Sign and date it and pass it to your line manager. Where the concern is about the line manager, it must be reported to the Child Protection Officer. Reporting concerns should not be delayed until a written record has been made. The line manager will immediately pass concerns to the Child Protection Officer.

If Child protection officer/line manager unavailable, employees/volunteers should contact police/social work direct.

The Child Protection Officer will report the concerns to the child protection agencies (ie. Police and/or Social Work).

Concerns should not be shared with parents/carers. This would not be appropriate if they were suspected of/had knowledge of the abuse. In this instance, advice should be sought from the police/social work services before speaking to parents/carers.

Responding to Suspicions Involving an Employee of WDLT

Concerns that a child/young person may be experiencing abuse/neglect by an employee of WDLT may come to light because:

- A child/young person alleges that they have been harmed by an employee;
or
- A parent/carer or other individual from outwith WDLT alleges that their/a child has been harmed by an employee;
or
- Other employees/volunteers from within WDLT may have witnessed or have concerns about an employee's behaviour towards children/young people.

The employee should make a full written record of the disclosure using the designated child protection reporting form. Sign and date it and pass it to your line manager. Where the concern is about the line manager, it must be reported to the Child Protection Officer. Reporting concerns should not be delayed until a written record has been made. The line manager will immediately pass concerns to the Child Protection Officer.

Once the concerns have been reported, the line manager/Child Protection Officer will:

Establish the basic facts.

- Conduct an initial assessment of the facts in order to determine the appropriate course of action.
- Consult external agencies such as the police and social work services for advice at any time. This is important because they may hold other important information which, when considered alongside the current concerns, builds a significant picture of concern.

The purpose of the initial assessment is to clarify the nature and context of the concerns. It should determine whether there is reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a child has been abused/harmed or is at risk of abuse or harm.

- Where the established facts support a concern about possible abuse, the initial assessment will not form part of the disciplinary investigation.
- Subject to the nature and seriousness of the situation, if it is not clear at this stage whether a criminal offence may have been committed, the member of staff/volunteer *may* be approached as part of the information gathering process.
- An initial assessment of the basic facts may require the need to ask a child 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.
- Interviewing children about possible abuse and criminal offences is the sole remit of specially trained police officers and social workers. Questioning of children by those conducting an initial assessment should always be avoided as far as possible. If it is necessary to speak to the child in order to clarify the basic facts, best practice suggests that consent from the parent be obtained.

Any employee who harms a child (or places a child at risk of harm) will be disciplined as per WDLT's disciplinary policy and may ultimately be removed from their position of working with children. Where an employee/volunteer is removed, WDLT will be legally bound to make a referral to Scottish Ministers for the individual to be considered for listing on the *Children's List* in accordance with the *Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007*.

Support for the Reporter of Suspected Abuse

WDLT will fully support and protect anyone who in good faith (without malicious intent) reports their concern about a colleague's practice or the possibility that a child/young person may be being abused.

List of Contact Numbers

WDLT Child Protection Officer

Tel: 07773 177 692

Social Work Services for Alexandria and Dumbarton

Tel: 01389 608080

Social Work Services for Clydebank

Tel: 0141 562 8800

Emergency Social Work Out of Hours Service

Tel: 0800 811505

Police Scotland

Tel: 101

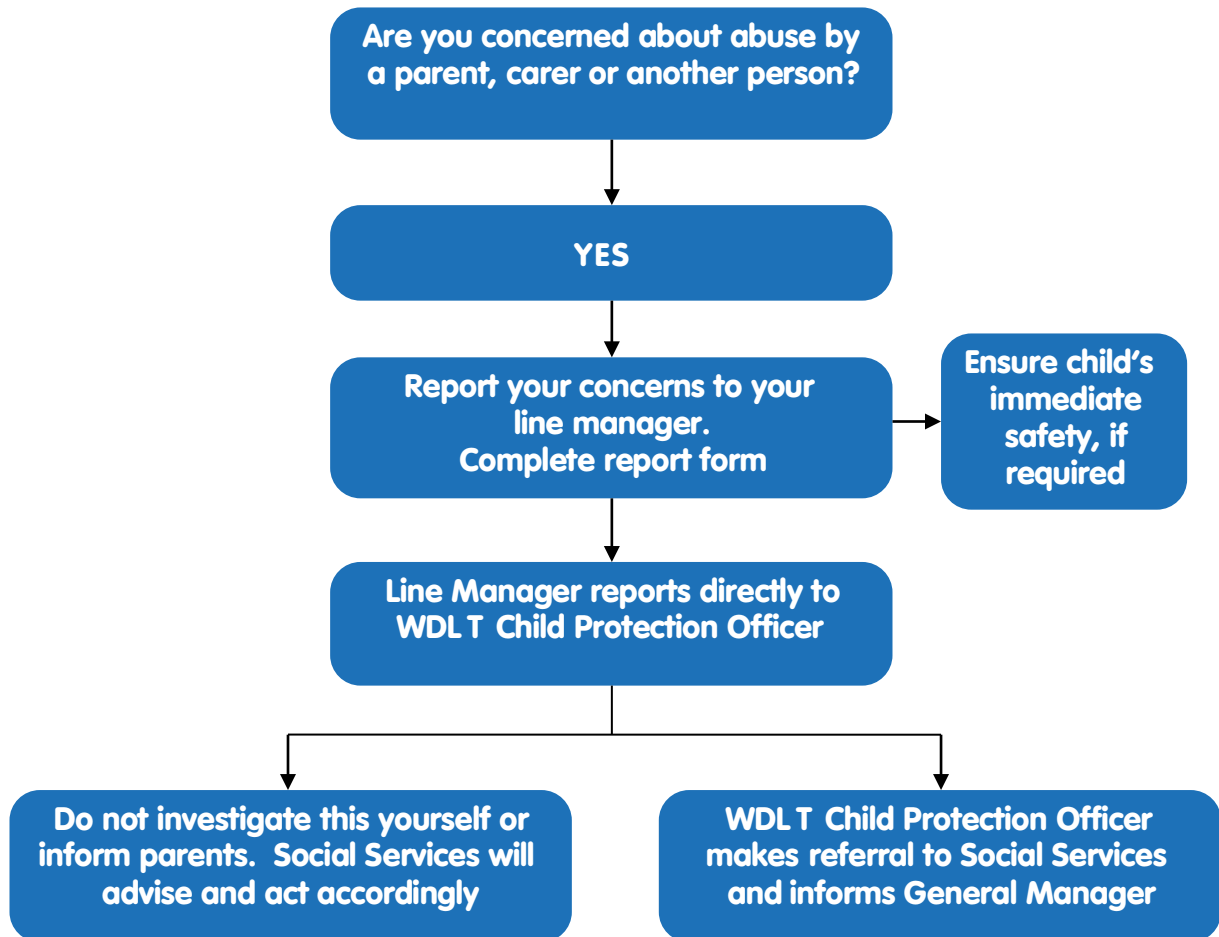
Childline

Tel: 0800 1111

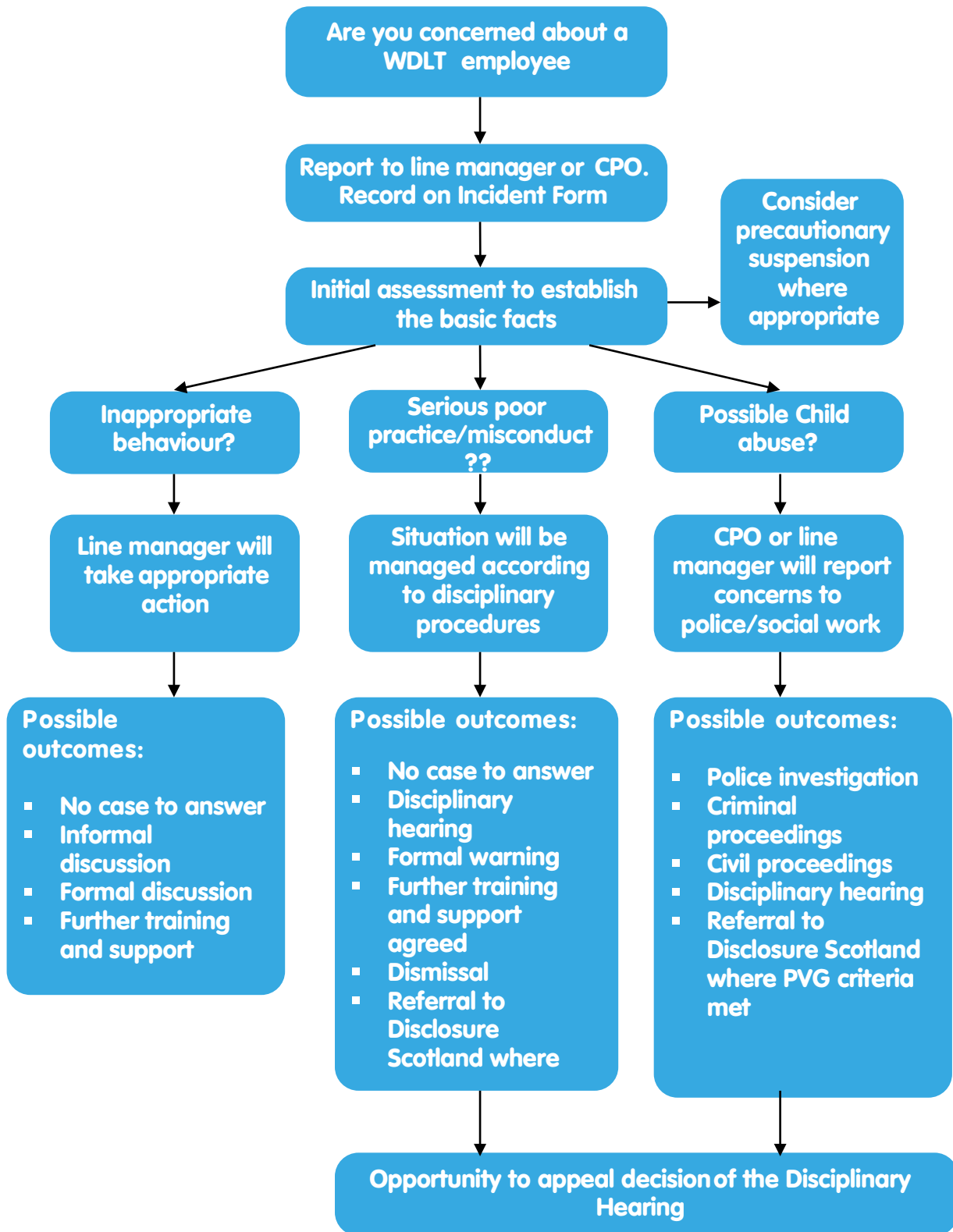
National Child Protection Line

Tel: 08000 223 222

Flowchart: Responding to Suspicions – Non Employee



Flowchart: Responding to Suspicions – Employees



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