



Medway Safeguarding Children Board

Guide to developing a child protection policy and practice guidance for private and voluntary organisations¹

¹ This guide is largely based on guidance from the NSPCC Safe communities, a toolkit to protect children and young people.

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1. Introduction to this guide

- 1.1 This guide was produced in collaboration with the MSCB and local private and voluntary organisations.
- 1.2 Children and young people have a right to be safely cared for and parents and carers need to have confidence that the private or voluntary organisations to which they entrust their children and young people will provide safe care.
- 1.3 All organisations therefore have a duty to care² safely for the children and young people for whom they provide activities or services. A set of thorough child protection policies and procedures will allow your service or organisation to demonstrate that you have taken all possible steps to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children or young people you work with.
- 1.4 This guide is intended for private and voluntary organisations who do not currently have a child protection policy or who wish to update their existing policies and practice guidance. It is a step-by-step guide that takes you through the policies and practice guidance that you need to have in place. Note that the steps should be seen as a guide and that you may wish to add additional policies and procedures that suit your organisation's activities and needs.³ For instance a point of good practice would be to have safeguarding updates as part of staff meetings to ensure ongoing awareness.
- 1.5 In developing this work you should refer to two documents;
 - "What to Do If You're Worried a Child Is Being Abused" (DH) 2006. (<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/resources-and-practice>)
 - Kent and Medway Safeguarding Children Procedures 2007 (Available at www.msbc.org.uk)
- 1.6 Ensure any policy or practice guidance developed for your particular organisation is consistent with these documents. Nothing in your practice guidance must conflict with that issued by the Medway Safeguarding Children Board (MSCB), which must take precedence.

² Duty to care is the obligation on an individual or organisation to adhere to a standard of reasonable care while performing any acts that could foreseeably harm others. This can be considered in terms of how much contact your organisation has with a child and include factors like whether their parents remain with them and are responsible for their care.

³ This guidance has been produced by Medway Safeguarding Children Board (MSCB) to assist organisations in writing and implementing appropriate Child Protection policies and procedures. The guidance contained in this document is general, and any organisation using this guide is responsible for writing and implementing a rigorous policy that suits their work. MSCB accepts no legal responsibility for policies that are written or followed as a result of consulting this guide.

The Kent and Medway Safeguarding Children procedures apply to all children and young people in Kent and Medway.

- 1.7 The words "child" and "children" are used to refer to children and young people. In UK law, someone is a child until they are 18 years old. It is worth remembering that vulnerable children can become vulnerable adults and this should be reflected in any policy relating to them.

Detailed guidance

2. Child protection policy

- 2.1 A child protection policy statement outlines the measures in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people receiving a service and the action that will be taken if any concerns arise. A policy statement on child protection is an integral part of managing safeguarding and protecting children and young people whilst they are the responsibility of that organisation and its staff.
- 2.2 There are several reasons why it is important that the organisation has a policy statement:
- Everyone needs to be clear about how children and young people are protected within your work.
 - A policy statement makes it clear that safeguarding the welfare of children and young people is a mandatory and integral activity for your organisation.
 - It provides a structure for the procedures that the organisation will follow in order to maximise safety.
- 2.3 The policy statement should recognise the organisation's responsibility to safeguard the children and young people with whom it comes into contact. The policy should state clearly the duty of all those employed by or involved in the organisation in a voluntary capacity to take steps to prevent the neglect and physical, sexual or emotional abuse of all children and young people with whom they come into contact.

3. Child protection procedure

- 3.1 Make it clear that your organisation's child protection policies and procedures apply to all children and young people regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or religion.
- 3.2 Your guidance should include anything that is particular to your organisation⁴. For example if you take children away on trips, work with child with disabilities, use the Internet in your activities or run parent and toddler groups this will need to be reflected in your child protection policy and possible special arrangements put in place. **All organisations for children and young people must have a child protection policy.**

⁴ See appendix A for special circumstances

4. Recognising abuse

- 4.1 All staff and volunteers should be provided with, and demonstrate their understanding, an appropriate induction that includes making them aware of your procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. You should also consider what system is in place to ensure staff and volunteers understand your safeguarding policy and procedures.
- 4.2 Your group should also run or arrange basic training for staff and volunteers where appropriate. Training should cover:
- What is significant harm?
 - What is abuse and neglect?
 - Recognising the signs of abuse.
 - Behaviour of abusers to be aware of.
 - What to do if you suspect abuse, and how these details can be found in your child protection policy.
 - Information sharing arrangements, reassuring your staff and volunteers when and how to share information.

After the training, you need to make sure that all staff and volunteers understand child welfare concerns and agree to report any concerns to the nominated person.

Information on training courses offered by MSCB is available from www.mscb.org.uk. Other training courses and resources can be found at www.cvsmedway.org.uk and www.nspcc.org.uk.

5. Responding to allegations of child abuse (staff and others)

- 5.1 You should have in place procedures for dealing with allegations made against any adults, and indeed any allegation against a child's peer. This will show your organisation is taking its safeguarding concerns seriously. Will your organisation have a different process for allegations against staff, a child or young person or a parent? Will this rely on the setting you are in at the time?
- 5.2 Procedures for dealing with allegations against staff should comply with MSCB procedures. Suspension should not be an automatic response to an allegation, but you will need to consider the seriousness and plausibility of the allegation, the risk of harm to children and the possibility of tampering with evidence, as well as the interests of the person concerned and your organisation.

6. Designated child protection person

- 6.1 It is essential that you identify someone within your organisation to be the designated child protection coordinator. This is the first person staff, and volunteers should approach with concerns or suspicions of abuse. They can also be identified to children and their families in case they want to approach them. They are also responsible for ensuring that child protection policies and procedures are being implemented correctly. *The name and contact details of the designated child protection coordinator should be stated in your child protection policy statement.* You may want to state here that the designated child protection coordinator will receive adequate training.
- 6.2 It is not the named person's responsibility to decide whether a child has been abused or not. This is the task of children's social care who have the legal responsibility, or of the NSPCC, which also has powers to help with child protection concerns. It is, however, everybody's responsibility to ensure that concerns are shared and appropriate action is taken.
- 6.3 The designated person must keep all records of concern locked up and share them with the appropriate bodies.
- 6.4 A deputy should be appointed to act in the absence of the lead designated child protection coordinator. This is also important should an allegation be made against the lead.

7. Code of conduct/behaviour for everyone

- 7.1 A code of conduct can be used to ensure everyone within your organisation behaves, as you would expect him or her too. The code of behaviour should reflect the child-centred principles of the group.
- 7.2 A Code of Behaviour is for all volunteers and staff involved in an organisation. It should include statements about appropriate boundaries to behaviour and should make it clear that discriminatory, offensive or violent behaviour is unacceptable and that complaints will be acted upon.

Your code of behaviour may state that the following specific behaviours should not be allowed:

- Sexual relationships with young people in staff care (even if they are aged 18 or over)
- Lending or borrowing of money or property
- Giving or receiving gifts
- Exclusive or secretive relationships
- Taking clients/children to your home
- Using the Internet to socialise on social networking sites, or using personal email/facebook accounts to contact children and young people.
- Physical restraint – What are acceptable forms of restraint and in what circumstances can these be used.

All disciplinary measures should be non violent and should not involve humiliating children.

Contacting children and young people about activities at inappropriate times.

- 7.3 Your code of behaviour should state that relationships between personnel (both paid workers and volunteers) should be based on mutual respect. All employees should be expected to contribute and take responsibility to ensure a positive working environment and to conduct themselves accordingly.
- 7.4 You may wish to define appropriate physical contact. What physical contact is used in an emergency as well as in physical restraint techniques should also be outlined. Where possible the contact should be explained before it is made e.g. "If you do not stop doing that I will have to restrain you" or "I am putting my hand under your head..." in terms of first aid.
- 7.5 The code should be made known to all children, workers and where possible displayed in a prominent position.

8. Staff/volunteer selection and training

8.1 There are several aspects to protecting children from unsuitable people. These include safe recruitment practices, procedures for dealing with allegations against staff and guidance about appropriate behaviour. Your policy and procedures are important safeguards to stop this happening. It is best practice that all volunteers and staff, including temporary workers and helpers, should be subject to a careful selection and vetting process that includes the following:

- Completion of an application form
- Checking the person's identity by their birth certificate or passport, preferably by something that has their photograph
- Taking up 2 references, which are seen before the interview and verified by a follow up phone call
- Checking qualifications
- An interview preferably by two people
- Identifying reasons for gaps in employment or inconsistencies
- Require applicants to complete a self-disclosure about previous convictions and follow this up with appropriate safeguard checks.
- Obtain full disclosure through checks from Criminal Records Bureau where required and an ISA registration number when it come sin to force
- Allowing no unsupervised access to children and young people until this has been completed (e.g., no appointment until references have been reviewed)
- Seeking advice about recruiting someone with a criminal record or other types of offences if you are concerned
- A supervised probationary period for new people to the project and a comprehensive induction period that includes training in your child protection procedures.

9. The criminal records bureau process and vetting and barring system

- 9.1 Criminal records checks should be carried out on all people applying to work with children, including volunteers.
- 9.2 The CRB will provide checks of the Police criminal records via the Police National Computer and of lists held by ISA (Independent safeguarding authority) that disqualify people from working with children and young people (currently the Protection of Children Act list and list 99 until the vetting and barring scheme becomes operational).
- 9.3 You will need to check if your workers or volunteers meet the criteria to be checked and if they do not consider using a self-disclosure form. Information on this along with general information on the CRB is available at www.crb.gov.uk. In most cases, an application for a check will need to be put through a local 'Umbrella Body' registered with the CRB. For information on local agencies that act as 'Umbrella Bodies' provider, contact www.disclosure.gov.uk. There is likely to be a small administrative fee to the agency carrying out the checks.
- 9.4 The terms of registration with the ISA are being reviewed and employers should check the status of guidance. Highlighted below are the original terms of registration that are being reviewed. Those barred by ISA are still no allowed to work with children and vulnerable persons.
- 9.5 From July 2010 all new employees, those moving jobs and volunteers who want to work with children or vulnerable adults **can** register with the ISA. From November 2010 these groups of people **must** register with the ISA.
- 9.6 It is the employee's responsibility to obtain ISA registration, until they have it is illegal to employ someone to work/volunteer with children or vulnerable adults.⁵
- 9.7 Employers can check candidates ISA registration online for free and subscribe to their staff's information to receive any updates made to their profile.
- 9.8 More information about the vetting and barring scheme, the Independent Safeguarding Authority, the registration process, who is affected and how can be found by visiting www.isa.gov.org.uk or by calling 0300 123 1111.

⁵ The ISA registration has been put on hold until the new government has reviewed it.

10. Complaints procedure

10.1 A complaints procedure allows people a safe way of voicing complaints or concerns. Complaints procedure should also incorporate the idea of "whistle blowing". "Whistle-blowing" is used to describe incidents where people report an alleged wrongdoing within an organisation, further guidance on this is given below. An open, publicised complaints policy can encourage children and adults to voice concerns about abusive or unethical behaviour. A written, implemented complaints procedure will also aid respectful responses to all complaints that are voiced.

10.2 Your complaints procedure should have three parts:

1. Introduction to the procedure
2. How to make a complaint
3. How your group will respond to the complaint

1. Introduction

Your complaints procedure should make it clear what it is intended to provide and whom it is intended for. You may wish to state that:

- Complaints are any clear expression of dissatisfaction with the group, its personnel, or its services that calls for a response
- The procedure deals with specific concerns including: a risk to the health or safety of any individual or improper conduct or unethical behaviour or inappropriate behaviour in relation to children.
- Anyone may make a complaint including children, parents/carers, volunteers, paid workers, or other people outside the group.
- Complaints are treated seriously whether it is made in person, by telephone, by letter, by fax, or by e-mail
- Complaints will be dealt with promptly, politely, and with respect - give timescales to resolve.
- The group learns from complaints and uses them to improve its services.

2. How to make a complaint

Your group should decide the most appropriate procedure for making complaints. Below are a number of options:

- People may make a complaint in a number of ways, including in person or in writing, by fax, by email, or by telephone.
- You may be able to resolve your complaint by taking it up immediately with the individual concerned, or with his or her immediate manager.
- If you cannot resolve your complaint in this manner, you should approach a member of the management committee.

A formal complaint should include:

- Their name and contact details (though in some cases, you may allow anonymous complaints)
- Copies of any relevant correspondence
- Name of people they have written to or spoken to up to this point about the complaint
- Details about what has gone wrong or has been handled improperly
- An explanation of how they would like the complaint resolved

3. How your group will respond to complaints

The complaints procedure must outline a clear process by which complaints are handled. You might state:

- Who will respond to the initial complaint and within how many days
- What happens if the complainant is not satisfied with the initial response
- What will happen if the complaint has still not been resolved – this may include calling in an independent body to assess the complaint

10.3 Each response should include who to contact next if the person believe that the complaint has not been dealt with properly.

10.4 A process for reviewing and incorporating what has been learnt from complaints should be in place.

10.5 If a complaint relates to child abuse rather than poor conduct it should be immediately reported to the designated child protection coordinator.

11. What is whistle blowing at work?

11.1 Staff have the right and individual responsibility to raise any matters of concern regarding poor practice at work. Staff are responsible for the welfare and safety for those they care for on the organisations behalf and this comes above and before feelings of loyalty towards colleagues. It is a means whereby staff have an immediate opportunity to express their concerns regarding poor practice at work at the highest level should they wish to do so.

11.2 Whistle blowing guidelines are written for staff to encourage them to take action if they have a reasonable suspicion of serious poor practice at work or have been informed about serious poor practice from service users and to reassure them that they will be both protected and supported if they 'Whistle Blow' in line with these guidelines. They are designed to reduce worries of reprisals.

11.3 You may want to include whistle blowing guidance advising staff to report any issues through their normal line management or through an

independent person where staff feel that the normal line management route is, for whatever reason, too difficult for them to handle.

12. Resources/contacts

- 12.1 It will be useful to have outside contacts for advice and guidance if child protection issues arise and you are not sure how to respond. There are a number of agencies that can provide guidance on child protection. Your group should assess which agencies are relevant and then collect their names and contact details.

13. MSCB training

- 13.1 The MSCB is committed to delivering a high quality programme of multi-agency training which aims to support people, both paid and unpaid, working at different levels of responsibility for safeguarding children.
- 13.2 Training will be provided at 3 levels to address the learning needs of different staff. This is based on the framework proposed in Working Together 2006 which has been adapted to link to the Common Core Skills that all childcare professionals should be working to.
- Level 1 is designed for staff who have regular contact with children, young people, adults, parents and carers. These may include non-teaching school staff, housing officers and playscheme staff.
 - Level 2 is for staff who work regularly with children, young people, parents and other adults who are carers and who may be required to contribute to assessments. These may include social workers, teachers and police officers.
 - Level 3 is for staff who have a particular responsibility for safeguarding children and/or are actively involved in undertaking s47⁶ Child Protection enquiries and assessments.

Information on MSCB training courses, dates and how to book can be found on the MSCB website www.mscb.org.uk.

14. Implementation checklist

- 14.1 The child protection procedures will only be effective if all staff and volunteers in your organisation own and understand them so a checklist can be rather useful to help you to go through that process. An example implementation checklist can be found in Appendix B and be changed according to organisation needs.

⁶ Section 47 enquires are carried out when there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm.

Model Child protection policy

1. Child protection policy

- 1.1 State organisation name and purpose or function and the nature of the contact the organisation has with children, young people and families.
- 1.2 (Organisation name) believes that it is always unacceptable for a child or young person to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people, by a commitment to practice that which protects them.⁷

We recognise that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse. This policy applies to all children and young people.
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents and carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

The purpose of the policy:

- To provide protection for the children and young people who receive (organisation name) services, including the children of adult members or users.
 - To provide staff and volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a child or young person may be experiencing, or be at risk of harm.
- 1.3 This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers and session workers, agency staff, students or anyone acting on behalf of (organisation name).
- 1.4 This policy follows guidance from, and adheres to, the Kent and Medway Safeguarding Children procedures (2007) and "What to do if you're worried a child is being abused" (2006)
- 1.5 We will review our child protection policy and procedures annually to ensure they are still relevant and effective. Or when there are any significant changes to the way services are delivered or any new legislation.
- 1.6 The words "child" and "children" are used to refer to children and young people.

⁷ Policy statement is taken and adapted from *Firstcheck*, NSPCC 2006

Child protection procedure

- There will be a named person for child protection who will be responsible for dealing with any concerns about the protection of children. The designated child protection co-ordinator is _____ . In their absence it is _____ .
- All staff/volunteers will be vetted appropriately and as required by law through CRB checks and the Independent Safeguarding Authority.
- All staff/volunteers will be expected to conform to the code of conduct.
- All staff/volunteers will, as their induction, be given this document and basic training in safe conduct, what to do if they have concerns for a child and recognising reasons for concern.
- All staff/volunteers will be monitored and have supervision to ensure the child protection policy is followed and their practises are in keeping with this policy and it's procedures, as well as all relevant policies of this organisation.
- All staff/volunteers will be aware of the procedure for dealing with allegations against staff, volunteers and those outside of the organisation.
- All staff will be aware of how to record concerns in a confidential manner and know what the organisations information sharing arrangements are.
- Children and young people, their parents and carers will be informed about the child protection policy, what they should do if they have concerns and who the designated child protection co-ordinator is. We will convey this information by (insert organisations method of conveying information e.g. leaflets, poster).
- This document will contain details of contacts for other agencies and resources.
- There will be a complaints and whistle blowing procedure.
- Special provisions have been made due to the organisation *taking children away on trips, using internet in group sessions, running parent and toddler etc insert your activity here.*

2. Abuse

- **Different categories of abuse**
- 2.1 Child abuse can be in the form of neglect, physical injury, sexual abuse or emotional abuse inflicted or knowingly not prevented, which causes significant harm or death.
 - 2.2 Abuse can take place within a family, in an institutional or community setting, by telephone or on the Internet. Someone known to the child or a complete stranger may carry out abuse. Some abuse can be face to face, via the telephone, texting, emails, social networking or any other form of writtern/verbal contact.

- 2.3 Physical abuse takes place when a child is physically hurt or injured by hitting, shaking, squeezing, burning, biting or attempting to drown or suffocate them. Physical abuse also includes giving a child alcohol, inappropriate drugs, poison or failing to prevent physical injury. It can also be caused by a parent/carer deliberately causing ill health of a child in order to seek attention.
- 2.4 Sexual abuse includes enticing or forcing a child to engage in fondling, masturbation, oral or anal intercourse or full sexual intercourse, making a child observe inappropriate behaviour and showing a child pornographic materials; whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.
- 2.5 Emotional abuse is persistent or severe emotional ill treatment or rejection that has, or is likely to have, a serious effect on the child's development. It occurs when a child's need for love, security, praise and recognition is not met. This can include withholding love, constantly shouting and threatening or demeaning the child, being persistently over protective or undermining a child's self esteem and prevent them developing a positive self-image. It may result from children being prevented from having social contact with others. Emotional abuse usually, although not always, co-exists with other forms of abuse.
- 2.6 Neglect occurs when any of a child's basic needs are not met, these needs include physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual needs. Examples of neglect include children being left alone in possibly dangerous situations or left alone at an inappropriate age or being denied access to education or proper health care or not having adequate food, clothing or shelter.
- 2.7 It is also important to consider bullying as a abuse as it may play a part in form of other recognised abuses. Bullying is deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time. Bullying can be physical verbal or emotional. Although bullying normally involved child and their peers adults can also inflict it. The damage inflicted by bullying can frequently be underestimated. Bullying can cause considerable distress to children, to the extent that it affects their health and development or, at the extreme, cause them significant harm (including self harm).

3. How to recognise the signs of abuse

- 3.1 Each type of abuse can have possible signs and effect behaviour. This list is not exhaustive and recognising the signs and behaviour does not necessarily mean a child is being abused. They may help you identify if

something is wrong, the possibility of abuse should be investigated if a child shows a number of signs or any of them to a distinct degree. Many signs are applicable to more than one type of abuse. Alternatively the child may show no outward signs of abuse.

Physical Abuse

- Unexplained recurrent injuries or burns. Finger, bite and pinch shaped bruising, scratches and bruising to face, cigarette and shaped burns, fractures in young/small children and bald patches can all be signs of abuse.
- Improbable excuses or refusal to explain injuries.
- Wearing clothes to cover injuries, even in hot weather.
- Refusal to undress for activities requiring change of clothes.
- Chronic running away.
- Fear of medical help or examination.
- Self-destructive tendencies.
- Aggression towards others.
- Fear of physical contact - shrinking back if touched or flinching at sudden movements.
- Admitting that they are punished, but the punishment is excessive (such as a child being beaten every night to 'make him study')
- Fear of going home or of suspected abuser being contacted.

Sexual abuse⁸

- Being overly affectionate or knowledgeable in a sexual way inappropriate to the child's age and more concerned with sexual matters.
- Medical problems such as chronic itching, pain in the genitals, venereal diseases.
- Other extreme reactions, such as depression, self-mutilation, and suicide attempts, running away, overdoses, anorexia.
- Personality changes such as becoming insecure or clinging.
- Regressing to younger behaviour patterns such as thumb sucking or bringing out discarded cuddly toys.
- Being isolated, fearful or withdrawn.
- Inability to concentrate.
- Lack of trust or fear of someone they know well, such as not wanting to be alone with another member of staff or volunteer.
- Starting to wet again, day or night/nightmares, with no physical cause.
- Become worried about clothing being removed.
- Suddenly drawing sexually explicit pictures.
- Trying to be 'ultra-good', overly compliant or perfect, overreacting to criticism.
- Unexplained sources of gifts/money.
- Talks about "a friend" being abused.

⁸ Adapted from <http://www.kidscape.org.uk/professionals/childabuse.shtml>

Emotional Abuse

- Physical, mental and emotional development lags i.e. speech delay, poor verbal ability and lack of communication skills. Lack of concentration and learning problems.
- Sudden speech disorders.
- Continual self-depreciation and low self esteem ('I'm stupid, ugly, worthless, etc')
- Overreaction to mistakes.
- Self-mutilation/harming.
- Attention seeking and lack of appropriate boundaries with strangers.
- Extreme/unreasonable fear of any new situation.
- Inappropriate response to pain ('I deserve this') and inappropriate emotional responses to stressful situations.
- Neurotic/obsessive behaviour (rocking, hair twisting, self-mutilation).
- Extremes of passivity or aggression.
- Alcohol, drugs and solvent misuse.
- Eating disorders (over or under eating).

Neglect

- Constant hunger, compulsive scavenging or stealing (for food and clothes) and emaciation.
- Poor personal hygiene, poor skin/hair.
- Constant tiredness.
- Poor state of clothing or inappropriate clothing for conditions.
- Untreated medical problems.
- No social relationships and withdrawal from relationships with other children.
- Destructive tendencies or repeated accidents.
- Frequent lateness or non-attendance to activities.

Bullying

- Change in behaviour and avoidance of certain activities but not others.
- Unexplained damaged property.
- Repeatedly "lost" money.
- Unexplained bruising (also sign of physical abuse).
- Social isolation.

The following may be applicable to some faith and community groups. You do not need to include these statements if they are not necessary.

Some members of our communities hold beliefs that may be common within particular cultures but which are against the law in England. *Insert name of* organisation does not condone practices that are illegal or harmful to children. Examples of particular practices are:

- **Forced Marriages**

No faith supports the idea of forcing someone to marry without his or her consent. This should not be confused with arranged marriages between consenting adults.

- **Under-age Marriages**

In England, a young person cannot legally marry or have a sexual relationship until they are 16 years old or more

- **Female Circumcision**

This is against the law yet we know that for some in our communities it is considered a religious act and a cultural requirement. It is also illegal for someone to arrange for a child to go abroad with the intention of having her circumcised.

- **Ritualistic Abuse**

Some faiths believe that spirits and demons can possess people (including children). What should never be condoned is the use of any physical violence to get rid of the possessing spirit. This is physical abuse and people can be prosecuted even if it was their intention to help the child.

4. How to respond to signs of abuse

- 4.1 If you recognise signs of abuse keep a written record of any physical or behavioural signs or symptoms. If patterns emerge or signs become frequent report them to your designated child protection coordinator. Try and be specific and write down what you have actually seen so that your notes can be used as evidence in any investigation. It may be a good idea to record what you have seen on a body map (included in the appendix C) for an accurate record that cannot be misinterpreted. Body maps may also be of for your first aid records.
- 4.2 If you suspect abuse you must report your suspicions to the designated child protection coordinator who will be able to deal with your concerns.
- 4.3 Your organisation may want to include a statement of what staff/volunteers should do if they do not feel able to respond to disclosures. It would also be useful for staff/volunteers to know what support is available for them should someone disclose to them i.e. management support in supervision giving them a chance to feedback on what they are feeling.

5. How to respond to allegations of abuse against a member of staff

- 5.1 If the concerns are about the appointed Child Protection Officer report your concerns to the Deputy Appointed Person. If they are unavailable report your concerns directly to the local authority Customer First⁹ line or the Police, who will advise on the action to be taken including advice

⁹ Customer First is the gateway to council services. They are trained to direct your call to the appropriate service team.

on contacting parents. Alternatively contact the NSPCC for advice (0808 800 5000).

- 5.2 It is crucial that all allegations are taken seriously and appropriate action taken. It is important that any concerns for the welfare of the young person, arising from abuse, poor practice or harassment by a member of staff or volunteers, should be reported immediately.
- 5.3 Suspension will not be an automatic response to allegations. The seriousness and plausibility of the allegation will be considered along with the risk of harm to children and the possibility of tampering with evidence, as well as the interests of the person concerned and the organisation.
- 5.4 All incidents should be investigated internally after any external investigation has finished, to review organisation practice and put in place any additional measures to prevent a similar thing happening again.

6. How to respond to allegations of abuse against someone not working in the group

- 6.1 Report the concerns to the appointed Child Protection coordinator immediately who will report the concerns directly to the local authority customer first line or Police who will advise on the action to be taken, including advice on contacting parents.
- 6.2 If you cannot contact the appointed Child Protection Officer or their deputy report your concerns immediately to the local authority or Police who will advise you appropriately. Should you wish to seek expert advice to help you decide on the best course of action you can contact the NSPCC Helpline on 0808 800 5000 or Child line on 0800 1111.

7. How to respond to a child telling you about abuse

- 7.1 If a child tells you about abuse:¹⁰
 - Stay calm and be reassuring, respond with tact and sensitivity. Don't make judgements.
 - Find a quieter place to talk and allow the child to speak in their own time, this should still be in the open but away from the crowd and you should tell somewhere else where you are going and who with.
 - Believe in what you are being told; take allegations or suspicion of abuse seriously.
 - Listen, possibly confirm details but do not press for information or ask leading questions as this may void any disclosure you receive in a court case or investigation.¹¹

¹⁰ <http://www.kidscape.org.uk/professionals/childabuse.shtml>

How to respond to an abuse disclosure is taken partly from the kidscape website.

- Make brief notes using the person's own words. Do not interpret what has been said or make assumptions.
- Say that you are glad that the child told you. Do not promise confidentiality and discuss who you need to tell. Do not investigate the allegation yourself and do not contact the parents/carers in the first instance until advised to do so by the local authority/officer in charge of the allegation.
- If it will help the child to cope say that the abuser has a problem.
- Say that you will do your best to protect and support the child.
- If necessary, seek medical help and contact the police or social services. Ensure the safety of the child and that they are away from the alleged abuser.
- Acknowledge that the child may have angry, sad or even guilty feelings about what happened, but stress that the abuse was not the child's fault. Acknowledge that you will probably need help dealing with your own feelings and your employer/organisation should provide additional support this could include a follow up session, time off or counselling.
- Follow procedures for reporting allegations and suspicions to the designated child protection coordinator.

8. How information will be recorded

- 8.1 Referrals to the designated child protection person should be clearly documented. Any notes made during a disclosure should also be passed onto the designated person. These records will be kept in a locked drawer/cabinet. The documents will be made available to the police or social care and the designated person for child protection will follow the guidance for information sharing. Those expressing their concerns must not consult others in the first instance.
- 8.2 Your report of concern should contain, as far as possible, the following:

Items to be included in a Record of Concern
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name of child • Child's address • Name of parent/carer(s) (if available) • Phone numbers for parent/carer(s) and child (If available) • What is said to have happened or what was seen? • When and where did it occur? • Who else, if anyone, was involved and how? • What was said by those involved? • Were there any obvious signs e.g., bruising, bleeding changed behaviour? • Was the child able to say what happened, if so, how did they describe it and record using their words? • Who has been told about it and when? • Do the parents know? • Signature of person filing the record and their name • Date of record • A completed body map (where appropriate) See appendix C

¹¹ Additional information on listening and questioning skills can be found

9. Confidentiality policy

- 9.1 The legal principle that the “welfare of the child is paramount” means that taking action to safeguard the child is most important. Privacy and confidentiality should be respected, but if doing this leaves a child at risk of harm, the child’s safety has to come first. If you are worried about a child’s safety it should be reported to those that need to know, respecting the child’s/families/staff’s right to privacy. It is fine to say that a concern has been raised and it is being dealt with following the group’s procedures.

10. Designated child protection person

- 10.1 The designated person (and their deputy) needs to complete child protection awareness training and have a good understanding of “What to do if you are worried a child is being abused”. They will have an enhanced CRB check.

- 10.2 The role of the designated child protection person is to:
- know about the signs and symptoms of abuse and know how abusers behave.
 - ensure the organisations child protection policy and procedures are followed and updated.
 - ensure information is shared appropriately¹².
 - receive and record information from anyone who has concerns and store information in a locked drawer/cupboard.
 - assess the information promptly and carefully, clarifying or obtaining more information when they need to.
 - consult initially with a statutory child protection agency; such as the local children’s social care teams or the NSPCC’s child protection helpline (0808 800 5000), to talk about any doubts or uncertainty.
 - make a formal referral to a statutory child protection agency or police.

- 10.3 The designated person must have relevant contact number and addresses of statutory agencies in their area.

- 10.4 If you have concerns that a child in Medway may be suffering from harm please contact:

**Customer First, Medway Council, Level 4, Gun Wharf, Chatham,
Kent. ME4 4TR.**

Tel: 01634 334466

Fax: 01634 333188

Or: when out of hours 0845 762 6777

Alternatively call:

¹² See page 55 “What to do if you are worried a child is being abused”

If you have concerns that a child in Kent may be suffering from harm please contact:

Kent police (Child abuse investigation unit)
01622 690690

(These calls are answered by the Kent Police Force Communications Centre in Maidstone. You will be diverted to the person best able to respond to your call)

Kent Children's social services
08458 247100

11. Code of conduct for everyone¹³

11.1 This code applies to all staff and volunteers.

You must:

- treat all children equally and with respect.
- provide an example of good conduct you wish others to follow.
- ensure that, whenever possible, there is more than one adult present during activities with children (or where the staff member or volunteer is under 18) or at least that you are within sight or hearing of others. If you are asked to talk in private ensure someone else knows where you are and leave a door ajar or stay in clear view, always make a note of the conversation, tell the child or young person they are free to leave or stop talking at anytime.
- respect a young person's right to personal privacy/encourage young people and adults to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like.
- remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well intentioned.
- be aware that physical contact with a child may be misinterpreted
- recognise that special caution is required when you are discussing sensitive issues with children.
- operate within the organisation's principles and guidance and any specific procedures.
- challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations/suspicions of abuse.

You must not:

- engage in sexual activity with a young person (even if they are over 18) you have met through your duties within the organisation, this would be an abuse of trust.
- invite a child to your home or arrange to see them outside set activity hours.

¹³ Taken and adapted from the *Final report of the independent review on Child Protection in the Catholic Church in England and Wales*, September 2001 and *Firstcheck*, NSPCC, 2006.

- Give out personal contact details or contact them unnecessarily outside of activity hours.
 - give child gifts personally, any appropriate gifts such as token birthday gifts should come from the organisation. You should not accept gifts from children unless they are small token gifts appropriate to a celebration. All gifts must be reported to your activity leader.
 - Lend or borrow any money or property.
 - allow yourself to be drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour/make suggestive or derogatory remarks or gestures in front of children.
 - jump to conclusions about others without checking facts.
 - either exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues.
 - show favouritism to any individual.
 - rely on your good name or that of the organisation or to protect you.
 - believe "it could never happen to me".
 - take a chance when common sense, policy or practice suggests another more prudent approach.
 - allow abusive peer activities e.g. initiation ceremonies, bullying or horse play.
- 11.2 You should give guidance and support to inexperienced helpers. Staff relationships are based on mutual respect and it is everyone's responsibility to ensure a positive working environment.

12. Staff/volunteer selection and training

- 12.1 Staff and volunteers will be selected based on their suitability to the role. All staff/volunteers are required to complete the recruitment process before activity commences.
- 12.2 Job descriptions and personal specifications will be made for each new role/position and agreed with staff/volunteers.
- 12.3 Staff/volunteer's ability to deal with disclosures should be assessed. Special consideration should be given when recruiting under 18s.
- 12.4 All staff/volunteers will be required to:
- complete an application form.
 - provide proof of identity and qualifications.
 - provide two references who may be contacted before interview.
 - attend an interview, with at least two interviewers.
 - explain gaps in employment.
 - complete a self-disclosure form.
 - obtain a full disclosure through checks from the Criminal Records Bureau (when they will be in contact with children or vulnerable adults both directly and indirectly).
 - supply their ISA registration or go through the vetting and barring system (when they will be in contact with children or vulnerable adults both directly and indirectly).
 - complete an agreed probationary period.

- Undertake induction and training.

12.5 Advice will be sought when recruiting someone with a criminal record.

12.6 Any applicant without an ISA registration number or refusing to go through the vetting and barring system or CRB check will not be employed as a paid member of staff or as a volunteer if their role includes regulated or controlled activities that require registration. Current definitions of controlled and regulated activity can be found on the ISA website.

13. The criminal records bureau process and vetting and barring system

13.1 All staff and volunteers will go through CRB checks as necessary and provide an ISA registration number should legislation require it¹⁴.

13.2 All staff/volunteers who have regular, unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adults will have the Enhanced check as will the designated person for child protection.

13.3 Staff/volunteers who have regular contact with children and young people through mixed groups (activities that both adults and children participate in together), and who have positions of responsibility and trust where contact with children is possible will in most cases have the Standard check.¹⁵

14. Complaints procedure

- Complaints are any clear expression of dissatisfaction with the group, its personnel, or its services that calls for a response
- The procedure deals with specific concerns including: a risk to the health or safety of any individual or improper conduct or unethical behaviour or inappropriate behaviour in relation to children.
- Anyone may make a complaint including children, parents/carers, volunteers, paid workers, or other people outside the group.
- Complaints are treated seriously whether it is made in person, by telephone, by letter, by fax, or by e-mail
- Complaints will be dealt with promptly, politely, and with respect - give timescales to resolve.

14.1 The group learns from complaints and uses them to improve its services.

14.2 Complaints will be taken in person, in writing or by telephone by a member of the management team/senior workers. Formal complaints

¹⁴ July 2010 saw the proposed mandatory ISA registration system halted and will be fully reviewed.

¹⁵ You can find more information on CRBs at www.crb.homeoffice.gov.uk

should be written down in as much detail as possible, including names of people the complaint has already been taken to.#

- 14.3 Complaints can be made anonymously although a name and contact details would help for further investigation.
- 14.4 Initial complaints will be dealt with by (insert name or job title) within (insert timeframe).
- 14.5 If you feel that your complaint has not been dealt with to a satisfactory level (insert next in hierarchy or independent body to assess the complaint).
- 14.6 Whistle blowing is supported when reporting concerns of actual or possible unethical, illegal or unprofessional conduct by anyone within the organisation. Complaints should be reported through normal line management unless they are unable to deal with the matter, in which case it should be taken to the management team.
- 14.7 **Should this organisation take part in specific activities that fall outside the policies and procedures here an additional statement of policy and procedure is required to ensure all aspects of child protection have been considered. See appendix A**

Resources/contacts

If you have concerns that a child in Medway may be suffering from harm please contact:

**Customer First, Medway Council, Level 4, Gun Wharf, Chatham,
Kent. ME4 4TR.**

Tel: 01634 334466

Fax: 01634 333188

Or: when out of hours 0845 762 6777

Alternatively call:

NSPCC 0808 800 5000

Medway Police 01622 690690

If you have concerns that a child in Kent may be suffering from harm please contact:

Kent police (Child abuse investigation unit)
01622 690690

Kent Children's social services
08458 247100

“What to Do If You’re Worried a Child Is Being Abused” (DH) 2006.
(<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/resources-and-practice>)

Kent and Medway Safeguarding Children Procedures 2007
(Available at www.msrb.org.uk)

Working together to safeguard children
www.everychildmatters.gov.uk

a) Trips away from home

Children need to be kept safe when taking trips away from home. It is therefore important that rigorous child protection policies and procedures are in place, in addition to health and safety procedures, adequate insurance, etc. In putting together a trip away from home, some procedures to follow include:

General

- Ensure children know how to behave, e.g. through a behaviour policy.
- Getting written consent from parents and, if necessary, holding a meeting for parents to give them a briefing on the outing.
- Asking parents about any special needs or requirements for their children.

Using activity centres and other external providers

- Use reputable organisations that have in place any licences or accreditation required (some adventure activities require specific licences).
- If possible, visiting the centre beforehand and complete a risk assessment. You can ask the centres for their own risk assessment and follow it up with your own.
- Get agreement on the activities to be undertaken if using an adventure activity provider.
- Ensure external providers have proper safety procedures in place (e.g. insurance, maintenance of equipment/ transport, health and safety policies, recruitment of staff to work with children, Child Protection policies etc.).
- Ensure the accommodation is suitable.

Staff/volunteers

- Have a person trained in first aid and suitable equipment.
- When staying in self catering accommodation a member of staff will need a food hygiene qualification (e.g. Level 2 NVQ in Food and Hygiene)
- Have adequate staff ratios. These will depend on the age of the young people and the activity being planned, but DfES guidance on a typical school trip to a museum or historical site are:
 - 1 adult to 6 pupils for under-eights (more adults if under-fives).
 - 1 adult to 10-15 pupils for eight to eleven-year olds.
 - 1 adult to 15-20 pupils for over-elevens.
- Ensure all those attending are aware of their roles and responsibilities.
- Ensure staff/volunteers are competent to lead children in activities.
- **Even greater care should be taken over trips abroad.**

Two publications in particular provide more detailed information on planning trips away are:

- *Safe Sport Away*, produced jointly by the Amateur Swimming Association and the NSPCC.

- *Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits*, published by the Department for Education and Skills, available free or to download from www.dfes.gov.uk.¹⁶

b) Working with children with disabilities

For a number of reasons, children with disabilities are more vulnerable to abuse than others. For example children with disabilities may be more dependent on others for intimate care and may be less able to tell people about any abuse they experience. For these reasons, it is essential that rigorous safe recruitment procedures are in place, especially with regard to recruitment checks on volunteers and paid workers, whistle blowing policies, and having clear guidelines setting out acceptable behaviour by those working with children with disabilities.

c) Groups of parents and children

In some cases, the volunteers may consist solely of parents or carers looking after their own children. It is recommended that the group still have a policy to cover the activity, as the group and its trustees are still accountable. However, the policy and procedures might be adapted, e.g. to focus more on a code of conduct for parents and children whilst using the service and how parents might deal with the reporting of an allegation of abuse by a child. In this circumstance the duty of care for the child remains with the parent whilst the organisation hold the duty of care for the environment and overall moral duty of care.

d) Working with older teenagers, e.g. 16+

Given that child protection legislation covers all children and young people up to the age of 18, groups working with older children are still required to have a child protection policy and procedures. The policy is likely to cover the same ground as a standard policy, but the section on acceptable behaviour might reflect the age of the young people.

e) Children only groups (projects only involving children and young people)

In reality, few are likely to be made up solely of young people. In most cases, adults will have some responsibilities (e.g. as management committee members), or will come into contact in some way with the children on the project. In addition, children can abuse each other (e.g. bullying). It is therefore likely that a policy for such a group would cover the same ground as a standard child protection policy.

f) Capital projects (e.g. where a group is to provide facilities for other groups)

Some simply aim to provide facilities for other groups or young people to use, e.g. a skate park or playground, or a hall for use by other groups. On the face of it, it may seem that a group like this does not come into contact with

¹⁶ Further information and advice can be found at www.hse.gov.uk and www.lotc.org.uk

young people and does not need a child protection policy. In reality, this is unlikely. If you involve volunteers, have any involvement with young people, hold meetings or consultation events or have use of a public site, a child protection policy would be extremely valuable (this may be in the terms of booking). Any contact with young people makes it necessary to have a child protection policy, and obviously this policy can be adapted to suit the nature of your project. In addition, complete child protection may also include health and safety concerns and appropriate insurance measures, and either provision or guidelines for the use of the equipment or venue once your work has ended.

g) Use of the Internet

The following procedures are recommended for community groups:

- Place the computer where everyone can use it and where everyone can see it, rather than out of sight in another room.
- Supervise use of the Internet.
- Suggest sites that could be visited by children and young people, e.g. those connected with children's TV programmes.
- Talk to children and young people about what sorts of sites they can and cannot visit.
- Ensure children are aware that chat sites are open to misuse and they should be as cautious of strangers they meet on the Internet, as they would be when meeting strangers in real life.
- Ensure that children and young people do not give out personal details over the Internet, e.g. surname, address, phone number or e-mail address.
- Ensure children never arrange a face-to-face meeting with anyone they come into contact with on the Internet.
- Encourage children to report anything they come across which they feel is abusive or offensive.
- Limit the amount of time children spend online.
- Explore the use of filters, which block access to certain sites (although remember that these are unlikely to be foolproof and cannot replace proper supervision).
- In addition, groups should not publish recognisable photographs of children on their own websites.

h) Social networking

Over the past years the use of social networking sites such as Bebo, Twitter, MySpace and Facebook has become increasingly popular. Such sites are used to share information, photographs and news with friends across the world.

Whilst the use of such sites (known as social networking) has very many benefits there are potential problems concerning privacy and appropriate usage. These may include breaches of confidentiality, unsuitable language or images, and in some cases breaches of the law.

Examples of such problematic usage of publicly accessible social networking could be:

- Staff/volunteers referring to children by name on their profiles.
- Staff/volunteers referring to private organisation matters
- Staff/volunteers using derogatory or offensive language about fellow colleagues or children.
- Staff/volunteers posting images of themselves in inappropriate dress or situations, especially when it can be accessed by children and young people.
- Staff/volunteers participating in illegal activities such as the sharing of indecent images of children.
- Photos published can identify the staff/volunteers home.

Your policy should cover such things as;

- The use of online contact with young people as part of professional duties i.e. using personal email to contact a group about an upcoming activity. Will you require appropriate online contact to be recorded?
- That Staff and volunteers have appropriate security on their profiles to stop anyone viewing them that they are not friends with.
- Friend requests from children and young people, or their families, should be declined by explaining it is against the organisations policy to do so.
- Staff/volunteers should not create web pages, groups or contact lists concerning professional activities carried out on behalf of the organisation without expressed permission.

There must be absolutely no private online contact between professionals and any young people with whom they have a work-related relationship.

i) Use of photos

This policy would apply to all forms of publications; print, film, video, DVD, on websites and in the professional media.

Consent forms signed by parents and guardians can be used as blanket permission for the taking and publication of images when you are working with the same group of children and young people continuously or over a long period of time. Or for one off events, or when the conditions of on which permission was granted have changed, new permission forms may need to be signed.

Consent/information forms could include;

- How long the permission will be considered valid.
- How images may be used.
- For how long will you be able to use the photos etc.
- That you will not publish names or any personal details.
- Only images of children suitably dressed will be used.
- Specific detail of how a photo may be used i.e. in a newsletter.
- Give the option for a parent/carer to give permission to photos being taken but not filming.
- Issues with parents/visitors taking pictures.
- That every effort will be made to prevent the capturing of any image of a child who should not be identified.

If a general event is taking place, such as a fete, you could warn visitors by sign or on any invitation. General consent is then implied by attendance.

Alternatively you could have a no photo policy.

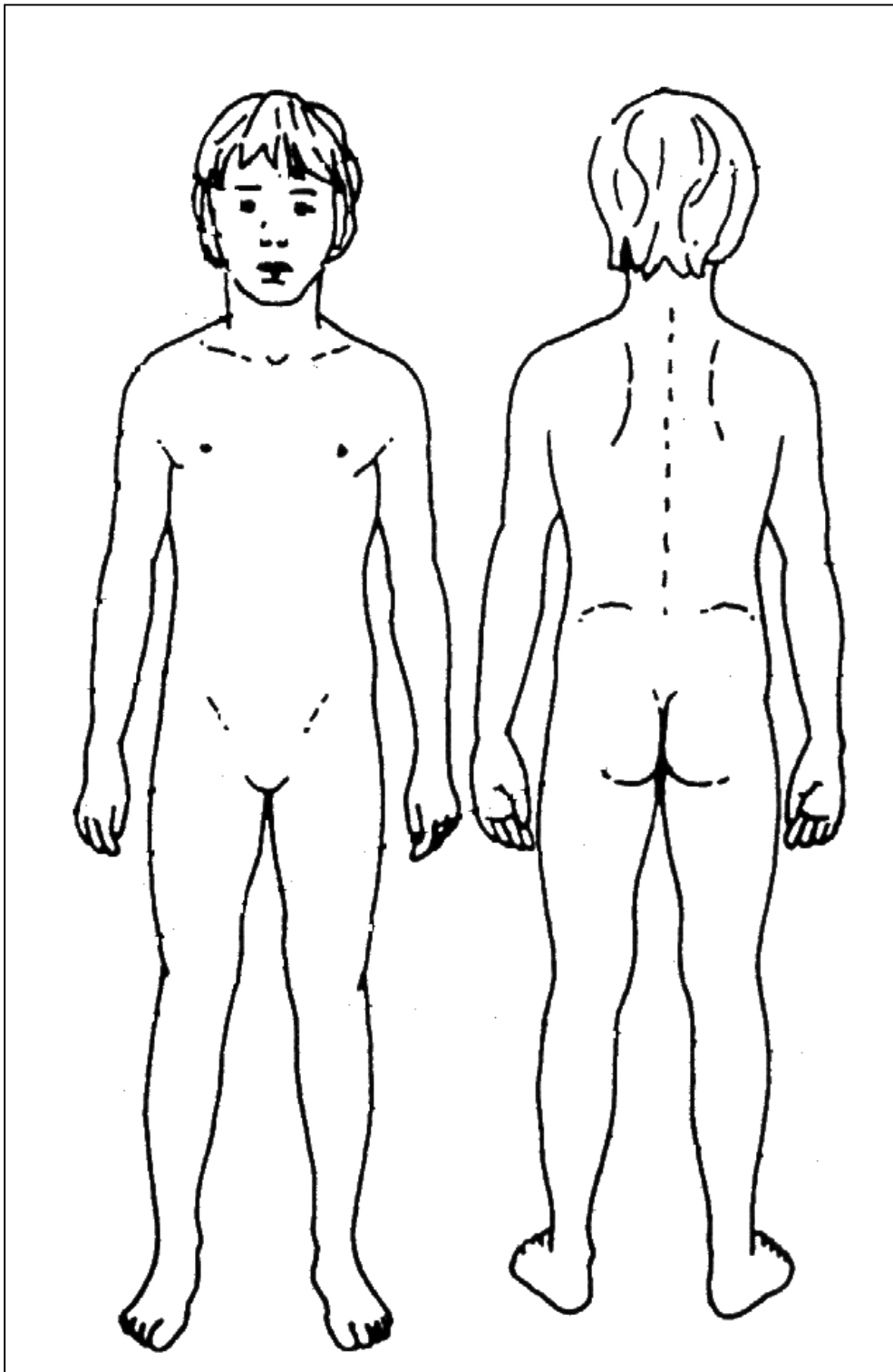
Appendix B

IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST

- Identify a designated child protection officer (CPO) and deputy.
- Add Child protection coordinator (CPC) name and contact details to procedure
- Ensure CPC attends training on child protection and updates that training regularly
- Ensure all staff and volunteers have a copy of child protection procedures which, they have signed to say they understand them
- Ensure that all staff and volunteers know what to do if they have concerns about a child
- Ensure all existing staff and volunteers who have contact with children have CRB Disclosures
- Ensure that new staff/volunteers who have contact with children have CRB Disclosures before they start work
- Ensure that the premises conforms to health and safety guidelines
- Ensure that any letting arrangements are bound by contracts that include an agreement to adhere to the host organization's child protection procedures

Appendix C Body Map

Child body map



Baby/infant Body Map

