



Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures

August 2023

Key Contacts

Policy Owner: Lara Hayward

Policy approved by: Skateboard GB Board

Date Policy approved: August 2023

Next review Date: August 2024

Skateboard GB Safeguarding Team

Lara Hayward, Head of Safeguarding & Welfare

Email: lara@skateboardgb.org

Neil Ellis, Deputy Safeguarding Officer

Email: neil@skateboardgb.org

General Safeguarding Information

Email: safeguarding@skateboardgb.org

Skateboard GB Safeguarding Webpages

<http://www.skateboardgb.org/safeguarding>

SBGB Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures

If you require any of this information in a different language or accessible format, please contact SBGB's Head of Safeguarding by e-mail: safeguarding@skateboardgb.org

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PART 1 - POLICIES

1. Introduction

These guidelines have been produced by SBGB to enable children and young people to enjoy skateboarding in a safe environment. This document can be downloaded from SBGB's website, www.skateboardgb.org/safeguarding

Duty of Care

All of those in the skateboarding community have a responsibility for the safety and welfare of skateboarders, coaches, volunteers, officials, visitors and others. This responsibility applies to all Skateboard GB registered members and affiliates, regardless of their size or structure. There is a legal responsibility to ensure that participants are protected from harm whilst taking part in skateboarding. This is legally termed as the 'duty of care' and is particularly significant when dealing with children.

Definition of 'Children' and 'Young People'

The Children Act 1989 defined any person under the age of 18 as a 'child'. In this document and in day-to-day communications the terms 'children' and 'young people' are both used, recognising that older teenagers may prefer not to be referred to as 'children' although they are still children in the eyes of the law. For the purpose of this document and all Safeguarding policies, Skateboard GB refers to children as any person under the age of 16 years and a Young Person as being over 16 but under 18 years, irrespective of their role.

Position of trust

'Position of Trust' is a legal term that refers to certain roles and settings where an adult has regular and direct contact with children. In England, Wales, and Northern Ireland changes to the Position of Trust legislation in June 2022 extended the definition to include adults that regularly coach, teach, train, instruct, or supervise 16 and 17-year-olds who are taking part in physical activity and sport. The Position of Trust legislation relates to the Sexual Offences Act 2003, particularly relating to making it a criminal offence for adults in a position of trust to engage in sexual relationships with 16- and 17-year-olds. This is intended to safeguard children over the age of sexual consent that may be at risk of sexual abuse and exploitation in situations where an adult is in a position of trust.

Safeguarding children

Protecting children from abuse and neglect, preventing the impairment of children's health or development, preventing children from being drawn into extremism and/or terrorist activity, ensuring that they grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care, and taking action to enable all children to have the best life chances. Recognising that some children may be more vulnerable to abuse or neglect, such as children with disabilities.

Safeguarding adults at risk

Many of the safeguarding principles in these guidelines also apply to 'vulnerable adults' or 'adults at risk', but the categories of abuse and the statutory procedures to be followed in the case of a concern are different. We recommend that you refer to our separate guidance on Safeguarding Adults which can also be found at www.skateboardgb.org/safeguarding

See appendix A for full glossary of relevant terms and categories of abuse and poor practice..

2. Policy Statement

SBGB Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy Statement

This policy refers to anyone under the age of 18, defined as a child by the Children Act 1989¹. The policy applies to all SBGB employees, contractors and volunteers.

SBGB is committed to safeguarding children taking part in its activities from physical, sexual or emotional harm, neglect or bullying. We recognise that the safety, welfare and needs of the child are paramount and that any child, irrespective of age, disability, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual or gender identity or social status, has a right to protection from discrimination and abuse.

SBGB takes all reasonable steps to ensure that, through safe recruitment, appropriate operating procedures and training, it offers a safe and fun environment to children taking part in SBGB events and activities.

The child's experience of skateboarding is our priority. We will create a safe and welcoming environment, where children can have fun and develop their skills and confidence. We will treat all children with respect, celebrate their achievements and listen to their views and experiences.

Relevant SBGB recognised training centres are required and all affiliated members, skate schools and skate parks are encouraged to adopt and implement similar policies and procedures. SBGB will provide them with information and support. See Part 3 of this Policy for further information.

SBGB:

- Recognises that safeguarding children is the responsibility of everyone, not just those working directly with them.
- Carefully recruits and selects all SBGB employees, contractors and volunteers in roles involving close contact with children and provides them with appropriate information or training.
- Responds swiftly and appropriately to all complaints and concerns about poor practice or suspected abuse, referring to external agencies as necessary.
- Regularly reviews safeguarding procedures and practices in the light of experience or to take account of legislative, social or technological changes.
- Communicates changes and shares good practice with affiliated members, skate schools, skate parks and the wider skateboard community.

This policy will be reviewed by SBGB's Head of Safeguarding & Welfare annually and by SBGB Board at least every three years.

3. Commitment and Minimum Standards

Everyone in SBGB, including those involved in SBGB governed activities must meet the minimum requirements for the safeguarding of children:

¹ Applies in England and Wales. The relevant legislation in Scotland is the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, and in Northern Ireland the Children (Northern Ireland) order 1995

- Always prioritise the well-being of all children
- Be a positive role model and act with integrity.
- Help to create a safe, inclusive environment for all children, free from poor practice, discrimination and/or bullying
- Always obtain consent from parents/carers and children before taking or publishing any photos, videos or personal information about a child. Please make sure you familiarise yourself with and comply with our [Photography and Videography Guidance](#)
- Keep your personal and working/volunteering life separate, including on social media. Avoid face-to-face and online private one-to-one communication with a child. Please ensure to familiarise yourself with our [Social Media Guidelines](#)
- Where possible, do not be alone with a child, unless in an emergency.
- Do not abuse, neglect, discriminate against or otherwise harm a child or act in a way that may be interpreted as such
- **Members should carry out a risk assessment to decide how many adults are required to safely coach children. In accordance with CPSU guidelines, whatever the recommended ratio of adults to participants is, a minimum of two adults should be available, where one of which holds a current DBS check.**
- Doing nothing is not an option: report all concerns and disclosures as soon as possible, as outlined in this policy. If someone is in immediate danger, call the emergency services (999)
- When in doubt, seek advice: contact SBGB's Safeguarding Team at safeguarding@skateboardgb.org or the Safeguarding Officer at the Skate School or Skate Park where you are at.

4. Scope

SBGB operates across Great Britain (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland), the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man; Skateboard Scotland operates in Scotland; Skateboard:NI operates in Northern Ireland (and there is an informal group working in Wales to set up a national governing body).

Each organisation has direct safeguarding responsibility for:

- Staff, consultants, coaches and officials they employ;
- Volunteers, including board members they recruit;
- Venues they own;
- Events and programmes they run; and
- Ensuring all accreditation requirements are met by accredited coaches, officials and venues.

Each organisation recommends and supports the development of good safeguarding practices to:

- Accredited coaches, officials and venues;
- Skateboarders, parents and carers;
- Volunteers recruited by other organisations;
- Venues hired by or on behalf of SBGB; and
- Events supported by SBGB

This Policy, Standards, Code of Conduct and Reporting a Safeguarding Concern Procedure are in line with national legislation, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 and applicable across the UK, to every person and place that SBGB has direct safeguarding responsibility.

5. Responsibility for implementation

SAFEGUARDING IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY: NOT RESPONDING TO A SAFEGUARDING CONCERN IS NOT AN OPTION.

- SBGB's Board and Chief Executive have overall accountability for this Policy, Procedures, Standards, Codes of Conduct and Reporting a Safeguarding Concern Procedure
- The Executive has overall responsibility for its implementation
- SBGB's Head of Safeguarding is responsible for updating this Policy, Standards, Code of Conduct and Reporting a Safeguarding Concern Procedure in line with legislative and organisational developments; and supporting Skateboard Scotland and Skateboard Wales Safeguarding Leads to develop a proactive approach to safeguarding and respond to safeguarding concerns/disclosures
- SBGB's Head of Safeguarding and the Skateboard Scotland and Skateboard NI Safeguarding Leads are responsible for supporting their teams to identify where safeguarding support is required; to implement safeguarding procedures in their team; and to support the SBGB Safeguarding Team to carry out an organisation-wide safeguarding audit every year
- SBGB work with Sport Resolutions Case Management Programme (SRCMP) to ensure safeguarding cases are dealt with in a timely, efficient and appropriate manner. The SRCMP is comprised of independent experts who are responsible for advising and making decisions on safeguarding cases, in line with this Policy, Standards, Code of Conduct and Reporting a Safeguarding Concern Procedure.
- All staff, consultants, coaches, officials and volunteers are responsible for raising safeguarding concerns/disclosures with the SBGB Safeguarding Team as outlined in the Reporting a Safeguarding Concern Procedure
- Skateboarders, parents and carers are responsible for upholding the Codes of Conduct and Reporting a Safeguarding Concern Procedure.
- SBGB's Head of Safeguarding is responsible for ensuring appropriate safeguarding training is put in place for new joiners and to ensure that existing members of staff are kept up to date with any safeguarding developments

PART 2: PROCEDURES

6. Responding to Safeguarding Concerns, Referrals and Disclosures

Where there is a safeguarding concern/disclosure:

- The individual who is told about, hears, or is made aware of the concern/disclosure is responsible for following the Reporting a Safeguarding Concern Procedure
- The Safeguarding Leads in member organisations and affiliate organisations are responsible for reporting all safeguarding concerns to SBGB Safeguarding Team
- The SBGB Safeguarding Team is responsible for assessing all safeguarding concern/ disclosures that are reported to them and working with the Safeguarding Leads to follow up as appropriate on a case-by-case basis, prioritising the well-being of the child at all times.

Dependent on the concern/disclosure, a referral may be made to:

- The police in an emergency (999);
- Local Authority Children's Social Care Services for concerns/disclosures about a child;
- Designated Officer (England; Wales); and national Disclosure and Barring Service for concerns/disclosures about a member of staff, consultant, coach, official or volunteer; and/or
- Sport Resolutions Case Management Programme for advice and decisions; and/or
- The police Prevent Officer for concerns about children or adults at risk of being drawn into extremism or terrorist activity and Channel with permission from the individual and parent/carer for those under eighteen years old.

Any individual can contact emergency services or make a referral directly to statutory agencies and should do so especially if they are concerned about the immediate risk to the safety or welfare of a child.

7. Key principles: reporting

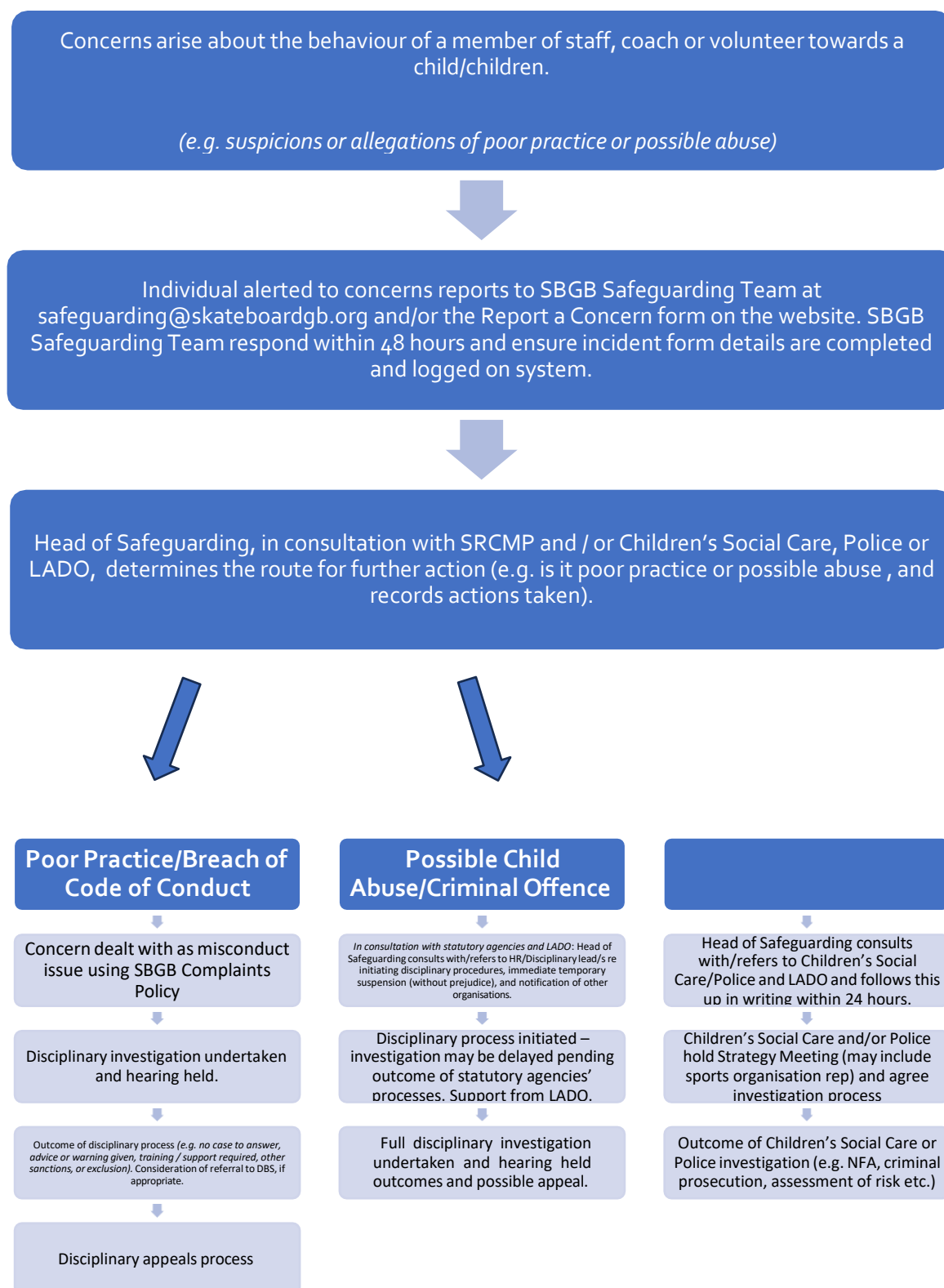
- If a child is in immediate danger or risk of harm call 999
- React to the concern in a timely manner: do not ignore a possible concern, you don't have to determine if a concern is abuse or failure to safeguard children. Your responsibility is to report and seek advice in any case where you have a concern about the welfare of a child.
- Record all the relevant information - how, where and what happened/what have you been told.
- Report your concern to the relevant skate school, or SBGB's CEO, safeguarding lead or SBGB safeguarding lead officer.
- Consider whether you should refer directly to local authorities or agencies. Information on when to do this is included below in the flow charts.

8. Flowcharts: Reporting a Safeguarding Concern Procedures

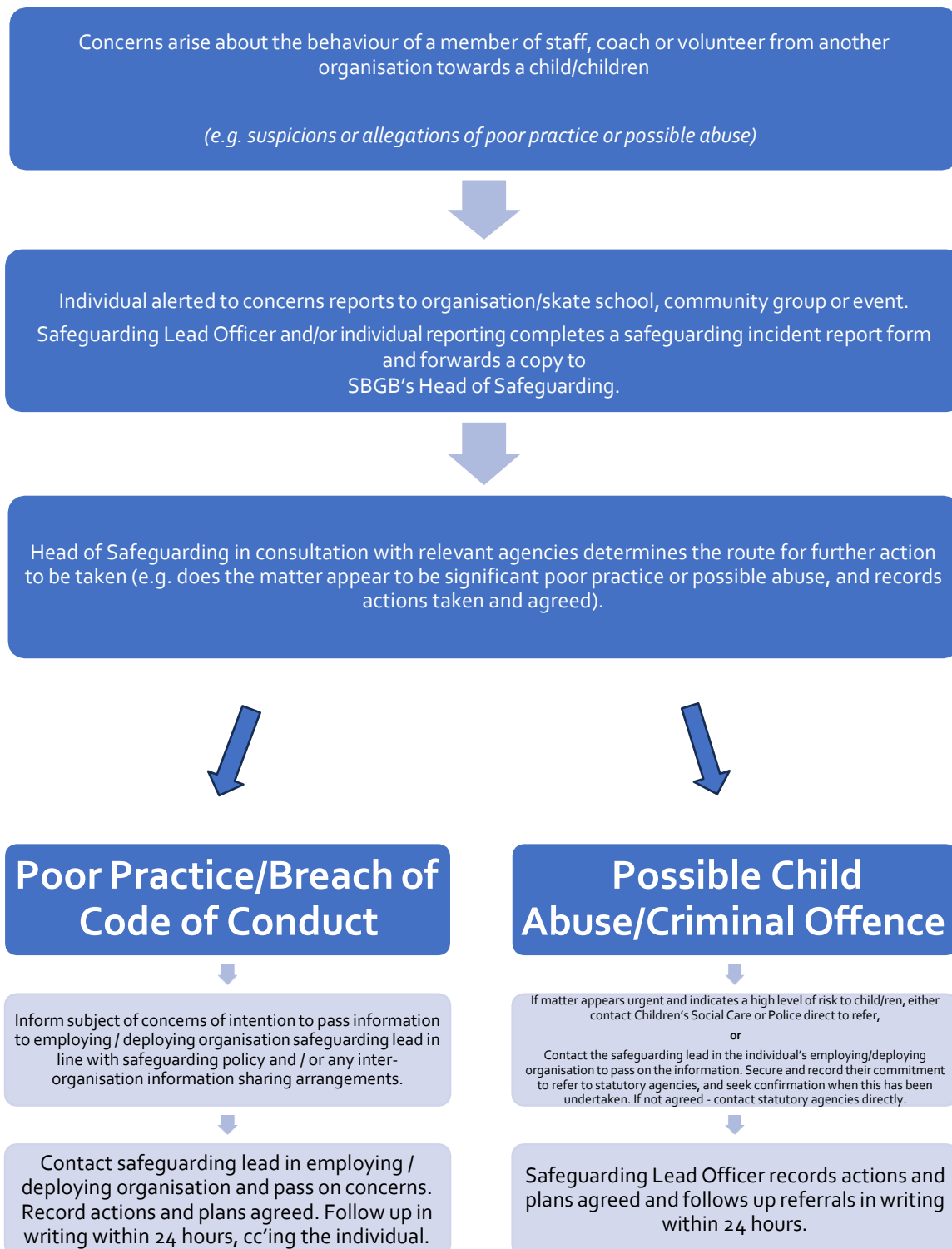
The following flowcharts set out the procedures to be followed in the event of any safeguarding concerns, referrals and disclosures.

SEE FLOWCHARTS BELOW.

FLOWCHART 1: Where concerns arise with the behaviour of an SBGB staff member or volunteer (e.g. allegation about a coaches behaviour towards a child)



FLOWCHART 2: Where concerns arise with the behaviour of another organisation's staff member or volunteer (e.g. allegation about an individual working for a partner organisation)



9. What to do if a child reports a Safeguarding Concern to you

If a child discloses a safeguarding/poor practice concern to you, you must follow the seven steps below:

- Listen carefully to what they're saying;
- Let them know they've done the right thing by telling you;
- Tell them it's not their fault;
- Tell them you'll take them seriously;
- Don't confront the alleged abuser;
- Explain what you'll do next, including that you must act on / report what they have said;
- Report what the child has told you as soon as possible.

No matter what your role is in skateboarding, whether you are a coach, a parent, carer or guardian, a club member or official or participant at a skate school or skateboarding event, you must report all disclosures of abuse, or possible abuse or poor practice, as soon as possible. You must report these concerns immediately to SBGB or the person responsible for safeguarding on the ground, who can handle the concerns appropriately. **It is vital that all adult and junior skateboarders, coaches, volunteers, officials and parents and carers, know how to report any Safeguarding concern they may have.** All concerns regarding the welfare of children must be acted on in line with SBGB's reporting procedures, above.

10. Recording and Handling a Safeguarding Concern

Once a referral has been received by someone, they must inform SBGB of the concern within 48 hours of the disclosure. **To assist relevant staff or the person recording the concern with this request, SBGB has a 'Report a Concern' button, which allows anyone to fill out a report form that gets sent directly to the Safeguarding Team.** If any individual is unable to access the online report form, a written form must be completed, which must then be sent to the Lead Safeguarding Officer at SBGB. **A printable report form is available here.**

This written record must include;

- A factual account of what you have been told, or what you have observed, including the relevant date and time
- Details of those involved, including;
 - The individual whose safety or welfare is of concern;
 - The alleged perpetrator of abuse/poor practice;
 - Any witnesses or third party who raised these concerns
- Any actions that have been taken (e.g. reporting to the police) and the rationale for taking these actions
- The date and time of the referral and to whom the referral was made
- Your details, including your name, mobile phone number and email address

When recording and handling safeguarding concerns, all disclosures, or referrals must be taken seriously, and every effort must be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all individuals

concerned. Remember, you have an obligation to report all concerns, so do not promise the individual that you will keep their concerns confidential. The information regarding the concern must only be shared on a 'need-to-know' basis. Those who need to know are individuals who have specific responsibilities and roles in supporting the welfare of the child, for example, the **Lead Safeguarding Officer, Deputy Safeguarding Officer, relevant agencies, LADO's and parents/carers/guardians.**

Recording and Handling Poor Practice

Poor practice or lower-level concerns include:

- inappropriate language
- making fun of someone
- humiliating or degrading someone
- restricting basic needs such as rehydrating or use of toilet facilities.

It could be actions that fall short of expected professional standards, such as:

- not providing the appropriate supervision for a group
- coaching under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- It could also be a lack of action, such as:
 - not helping someone who may be ill or injured
 - not following the organisation's policy or procedure for reporting concerns.

An organisation that is seen to challenge all concerns, including that thought of as lower-level concerns, discourages any further rule-breaking or escalating behaviour from taking place. Lower-level concerns may not always be managed through a safeguarding procedure; however, they can be red flags for signs of more serious behaviour or concerns and therefore it is crucial that they are managed swiftly and appropriately to prevent them from becoming safeguarding concerns.

Where lower-level concerns or poor practice are left unchallenged, they can result in inappropriate or unhealthy behaviours becoming normalised accepted behaviours. This can lead to an unsafe, often toxic, environment and culture.

SBGB commits to creating an environment that appropriately challenges poor practice and that is open, encouraging people to share concerns, no matter how small. Remember, a lower-level concern is still a concern and therefore must be taken seriously and reported as soon as possible. It's important to pass on the information you have to the relevant person in your organisation.

Lower-level concerns may require investigation or subsequent management at a local level through the skate school, coach, local authority, partner organisation depending on your safeguarding structure. Please see the Flow Charts above and [SBGB's Comments & Complaints Policy](#) for the procedure for reporting low level concerns.

If staff or volunteers witness, or are told about, an individual(s) at their event, skate school or coaching session who has committed an instance of poor practice, or who regularly commits instances of poor practice, they are responsible for reporting this to SBGB's Safeguarding team, via the 'Report a Concern' button on the SBGB Website or by completing the Incident Report Form and sending it to safeguarding@skateboardgb.org

We want to ensure that skateboarding organisations are still able to handle instances or allegations of poor practice in an independent manner. Therefore, while SBGB will support the skate school's handling of instances or allegations of poor practice at their skate school or community programme, we do not expect organisations to wait for a response from SBGB's Safeguarding Team before taking appropriate action. As the National Governing Body, we want to ensure that every instance of poor practice at skateboarding organisations is reported to us, allowing us to take a proactive approach to improve our current safeguarding practice and to offer support and help where required.

The Head of Safeguarding and Welfare will log all instances of poor practice that are reported and either: - confirm that SBGB is satisfied with the actions that the organisation has already taken, or is planning to take; - confirm that SBGB wants to investigate the instance(s) or allegation(s) further as these may be a Safeguarding Concern.

For more details on the reporting process for Poor Practice that members, skate schools and skateboarding organisations should follow, please see PART 3 of this Policy & Procedures document below.

Non-Recent Concerns

SBGB takes all safeguarding concerns very seriously, including concerns that are non-recent. As non-recent concerns typically involve people over the age of 18, we have included all the necessary information in our [Safeguarding Adult at Risk Policy, which you can find here](#). If you are aware of anyone who has suffered non-recent abuse, or you have a concern about them or an individual you know, you can report these concerns using the [SBGB Report a Concern button](#). If you have found out that a family member, or someone you know, suffered non-recent abuse as a child, some organisations may be able to help and support you with issues arising from such concerns. There is also an excellent resource provided by the Football Association, where we would encourage you to read their guidance note, 'Finding out that a family member was abused'.

Whistleblowing

Where you are concerned that good practice has not been adhered to, you should contact the [NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line on 0800 028 0285](#), or email help@nspcc.org.uk

PART 3 INFORMATION FOR SKATE PARKS, SKATE SCHOOLS & INDEPENDENT COACHES

11. Minimum safeguarding standards expected of member organisations

By joining SBGB as a member you are joining Skateboard GB Ltd (and your Home Country Association) and you or your legal guardian consent to the member being bound by all relevant rules, codes and policies governing the activities and conduct of the membership including, without limitation, the Byelaws, Technical Regulations, Codes of Conduct, Child Protection and Anti-Doping Policies of SBGB and the Home Country Associations.

Each member of SBGB agrees to be bound by and observe all other codes of conduct, regulations, rules and policies published by SBGB from time to time including, but not limited to these Safeguarding Policies and Procedures.

12. Non-Member Organisations, Staff and Coaches

Staff and volunteers at skate schools, skate parks, and organisations that aren't members of SBGB, should follow the good practice in line with their own Safeguarding Policies and Procedures. Where these don't exist, we recommend following Safeguarding Guidance set out on the CPSU's website and/or adopting the good practice guidelines set out in this Policy and our Social Media and Photography Guidelines.

Where possible all staff, volunteers, parents and young skateboarders should agree to abide by the relevant Code of Conduct that fits your particular organisation's role and remit (see SBGB's Codes of Conducts for examples and the CPSU's Guidance on drafting Codes of Conduct here). Those working or volunteering with young people should be aware of the guidance on recognising abuse (see Appendix A to this policy).

13. SBGB's involvement in non-member Safeguarding Complaints

SBGB's Head of Safeguarding & Welfare will only get involved in an enquiry and/or investigation which exceeds the scope of any member organisation's welfare officer, especially relating to a breach of this policy, any Codes of Conduct that are in place and/or the Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy. SBGB is signed up to Sport Resolutions Safeguarding Case Management Programme and depending on the nature of the safeguarding complaint/issue may refer safeguarding complaints and issues to the SRCMP.

14. Staff and volunteer recruitment

All staff and volunteers at skate schools, skate parks, and member organisations whose role brings them into regular contact with young people should be asked to provide references. Those regularly instructing, coaching or supervising young people should also be asked to apply for an Enhanced Criminal Records Disclosure, with Barred List check if appropriate. See the CPSU's Guidance on Safer Recruitment here.

PART 4 – USEFUL CONTACTS AND KEY ORGANISATIONS

Useful Contacts

NSPCC 24 hour free helpline

For advice on any aspect of children’s welfare 0808 800 5000

E-mail: help@nspcc.org.uk

Website: www.nspcc.org.uk

Children 1st (Scotland) free helpline

08000 28 22 33

E-mail: parentlinescotland@children1st.org.uk Text: 07860 022844

Website: www.children1st.org.uk

Childline 24 hour free helpline

0800 1111

Website: www.childline.org.uk

MIND – mental health charity

Tel: 0300 123 3393

Text: 86463

E-mail: info@mind.org.uk Website: www.mind.org.uk

Social Care Services

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

Skateboard Wales

Skateboard Northern Ireland

Skateboard Scotland

Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU)

Website: www.thecpsu.org.uk

England

Tel: 0116 366 5580 E-mail: cpsu@nspcc.org.uk

Wales

Tel: 0116 366 5590
E-mail: cpsuwales@nspcc.org.uk

Northern Ireland

Tel: 028 9035 1135
E-mail: cpsu@nspcc.org.uk

Children 1st Safeguarding in Sport (Scotland)

Website: www.safeguardingsport.org.uk
Tel: 0141 419 1156
E-mail: safeguardingsport@children1st.org.uk

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) – SBGB is Registered Body

Website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service>

Volunteer Scotland Disclosure Services – SBGB is Enrolled Body

Website: <https://www.volunteerscotland.net/for-organisations/disclosure-services/> **Disclosure Scotland (to make a referral)**
Website: <https://www.mygov.scot/pvg-referrals/>

Website: www.nidirect.gov.uk/accessni

UK Coaching – provide Safeguarding and Protecting Children training

Website: www.ukcoaching.org

Appendix A – What is child abuse, poor practise and peer-to-peer abuse?

(Based on the statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2018)

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (including via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

Physical abuse may involve adults or other children inflicting physical harm:

- hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating
- giving children alcohol or inappropriate drugs
- a parent or carer fabricating the symptoms of, or deliberately inducing, illness in a child
- in sport situations, physical abuse might also occur when the nature and intensity of

training exceeds the capacity of the child's immature and growing body.

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve:

- conveying to a child that they are worthless, unloved or inadequate
- not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate
- imposing expectations which are beyond the child's age or developmental capability
- overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction
- allowing a child to see or hear the ill-treatment of another person
- serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger
- the exploitation or corruption of children
- emotional abuse in sport might also include situations where parents or coaches subject children to constant criticism, bullying or pressure to perform at a level that the child cannot realistically be expected to achieve..
- Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child.

Sexual abuse. Sexual abuse involves an individual (male or female, or another child) 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, to gratify their own sexual needs. The activities may involve:

- physical contact (eg. kissing, touching, masturbation, rape or oral sex)
- involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images
- encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or watch sexual activities
- grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet)
- sport situations which involve physical contact (eg. supporting or guiding children) could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed. Abusive situations may also occur if adults misuse their power and position of trust over young people.

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- ensure adequate supervision
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
- respond to a child's basic emotional needs

• neglect in a sport situation might occur if an instructor or coach fails to ensure that children are safe, or exposes them to undue cold or risk of injury.

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity in exchange for something the victim needs and wants (eg. attention, money or material possessions, alcohol or drugs), and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation can also occur online without involving physical contact.

Extremism goes beyond terrorism and includes people who target the vulnerable - including the young - by seeking to: sow division between communities on the basis of race, faith or denomination; justify discrimination eg. towards women and girls; persuade others that minorities are inferior; or argue against the primacy of democracy and the rule of law in our society.

Bullying (not included in 'Working Together' but probably more common in a sport situation than some of the other forms of abuse described above)

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

Bullying can include:

- physical pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching etc
- name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing and emotional torment through ridicule, humiliation or the continual ignoring of individuals
- posting of derogatory or abusive comments, videos or images on social network sites
- racial taunts, graffiti, gestures, sectarianism
- sexual comments, suggestions or behaviour
- unwanted physical contact.

The acronym STOP – Several Times On Purpose - can help you to identify bullying behaviour.

Peer on Peer Abuse

Peer-on-peer child abuse is a term used to describe children abusing other children. Peer-on-peer child abuse can include: bullying (including online bullying and bullying because of someone's race, religion, sexuality, disability or trans status).

Poor Practice

Lower-level concerns may include:

- inadvertent or thoughtless behaviour that can raise doubts about the person's motivation or skill to work with young people;
- behaviour that might be considered inappropriate depending on the circumstances;
- behaviour which breaches the organisation's code of conduct but does not meet the threshold for statutory investigation, such as coaching with alcohol on the breath; smoking or swearing in front of children; not paying due care and attention to all participants; showing favouritism; shouting aggressively

Recognising Abuse

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

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

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

If you are concerned

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