

CHILD PROTECTION & SAFEGUARDING POLICY

'Reporting Adverse and untoward incidents and safeguarding and child protection'

Principle

St. Colmcille's After School Club is committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional harm. The welfare of the children in our care is of paramount importance.

Statement of intent

It is important that staff make themselves aware of the Child Protection Handbook issued by the Health & Social Services Trust, which is available for all staff to consult.

Our policy is to ensure that children are never placed in risk whilst in the charge of our staff. Our staff will be vigilant about the signs of abuse and how to respond to any disclosure.

All of our staff are vetted and undergo an induction program which includes signing they have read and understand of all of our policies. Employment is always subject to a probationary period and staff are not confirmed in their post until a satisfactory period is reached. All staff are encouraged to participate in training on Child Protection regularly.

Procedures

Staff Code of Conduct

At times it is necessary for staff to carry out tasks of a personal nature due to the age of the child in our care. In order to safe guard both staff and children the following code of conduct must be adhered to at all times.

- A minimum of 2 adults will be present in the childcare facilities at all times;
- When taking children to the toilet you must inform your room colleague how many children you are taking with you to the toilet;
- Trained vetted permanent staff are only permitted to accompany children to the toilet;
- Written permission is requested from parents to change children's clothes;
- When toileting or adjusting clothing children are encouraged to do things for themselves;
- If children need changed, this will be done discreetly but within sight of other adults.

Suspected abuse

It is our duty to be aware of the signs and symptoms of abuse. There are four different types of abuse.

Neglect	Actual, persistent or significant neglect of a child or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold and hunger
Physical	The actual or likely physical injury to a child, or willful neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering to a child
Sexual	The actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child. The involvement of children and adolescents in sexual activities they do not comprehend.
Emotional	The actual or likely persistent or significant emotional ill treatment or rejection, resulting in severe adverse effects on the emotional, physical and/or behavioural development of a child.

Even for those experienced in working with child abuse it is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or has already taken place. It is important to recognise therefore that under the Children's (NI) Order 1995 the Department of Health & Social Services have a statutory duty to ensure the welfare of a child. The onus on St. Colmcille's After School Club is to provide a safe environment by employing people who are suitable for working with children and by having effective procedures for reporting any suspicions through their own structures to the relevant Gateway Services.

Indications that a child may be abused include:-

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to injuries;
- An injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent;
- The child describes what appears to be an abusive act;
- Someone else – child, or adult, expressing concern about the welfare of another child;
- Unexplained changes in behaviour over time, eg. Becoming quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden bursts of temper
- Inappropriate sexual awareness;
- Engagement in sexually explicit behaviour in games;
- Distrust of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship will normally be expected
- Difficulty in making friends
- Prevented from socialising with other children
- Loss of weight for no apparent reason
- Increasingly dirty appearance

This list is not exhaustive, but any staff member who works closely with a child in their group should be able to pick up on any changes to a child in their care and have a responsibility to act on their concerns.

It is inappropriate for St. Colmcille's After School Club to inform parents of suspected abuse because:-

- It may put the child at greater risk if it is a family member who is abusing the child;
- Social Services will have the opportunity to assess possible risk to the risk when they inform the parents
- Social services can ensure that the child is protected or removed if necessary, when the parents are informed.

Reporting procedures

Staff must report any concerns to one of the Designated Safeguarding Children's Officers (DSO)

Brendan McKenna	028 25639970	}	07930 669945
Angela Cunningham	028 25639970		
Henry Walls	028 25639970		

The Designated Officer will then make contact with the appropriate link social worker in Gateway Services.

NORTHERN TRUST UNITS
Referral Number 0300 1234333
Out of Hours 02894 468833

SINGLE POINT OF ENTRY TEAM
Referral Number 02894 424459
Out of Hours 02894 468833

The role of the DSO is to :-

- Receive and record information from anyone who has concerns;
- Assess the information promptly and carefully, clarifying or obtaining more information when they need to;
- Consult initially with a statutory child protection agency, to talk about any doubts;
- Make a form referral to a statutory child protection agency or the police.

It is important to know how to react to a child's disclosure of abuse:-

- Listen
- Stay calm
- Reassure, but remember not to ask leading questions and do not keep asking the child to repeat
- Record
- Report to the manager immediately – do not delay

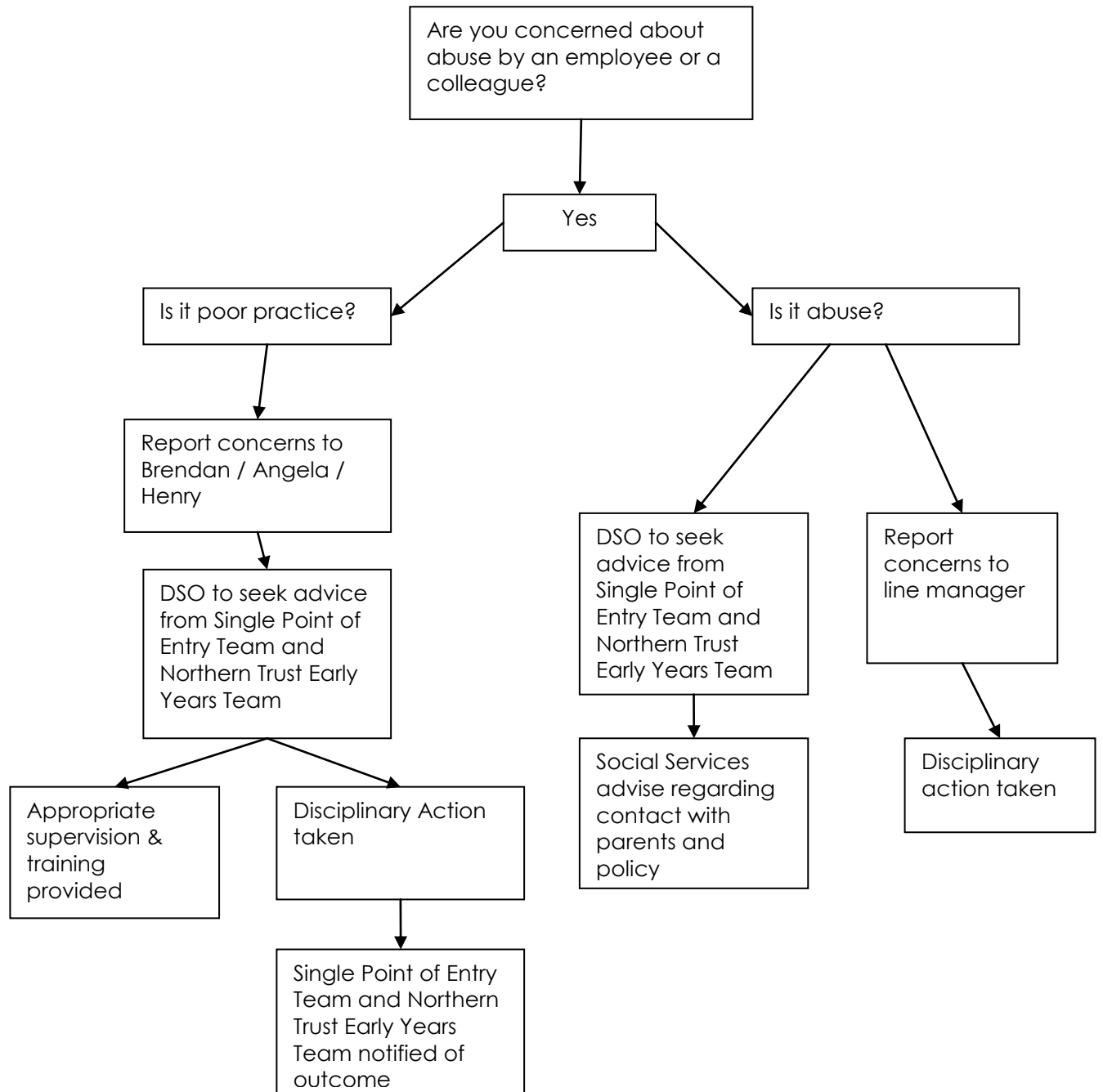
Always remember:-

- Never agree to keep a secret with the child
- Never buy the children gifts as a means of building a relationship or trust
- Never show disgust when the child is telling you something
- Do not smother a child with care and attention – empathy rather than sympathy
- Always convey admiration/praise to the child for telling you
- Always act on what a child has told you
- Always explain and reassure the child what is going to happen next.

Record

Use the incident report in your accident manual to record all relevant details and also keep a written statement of all events surrounding the incident.

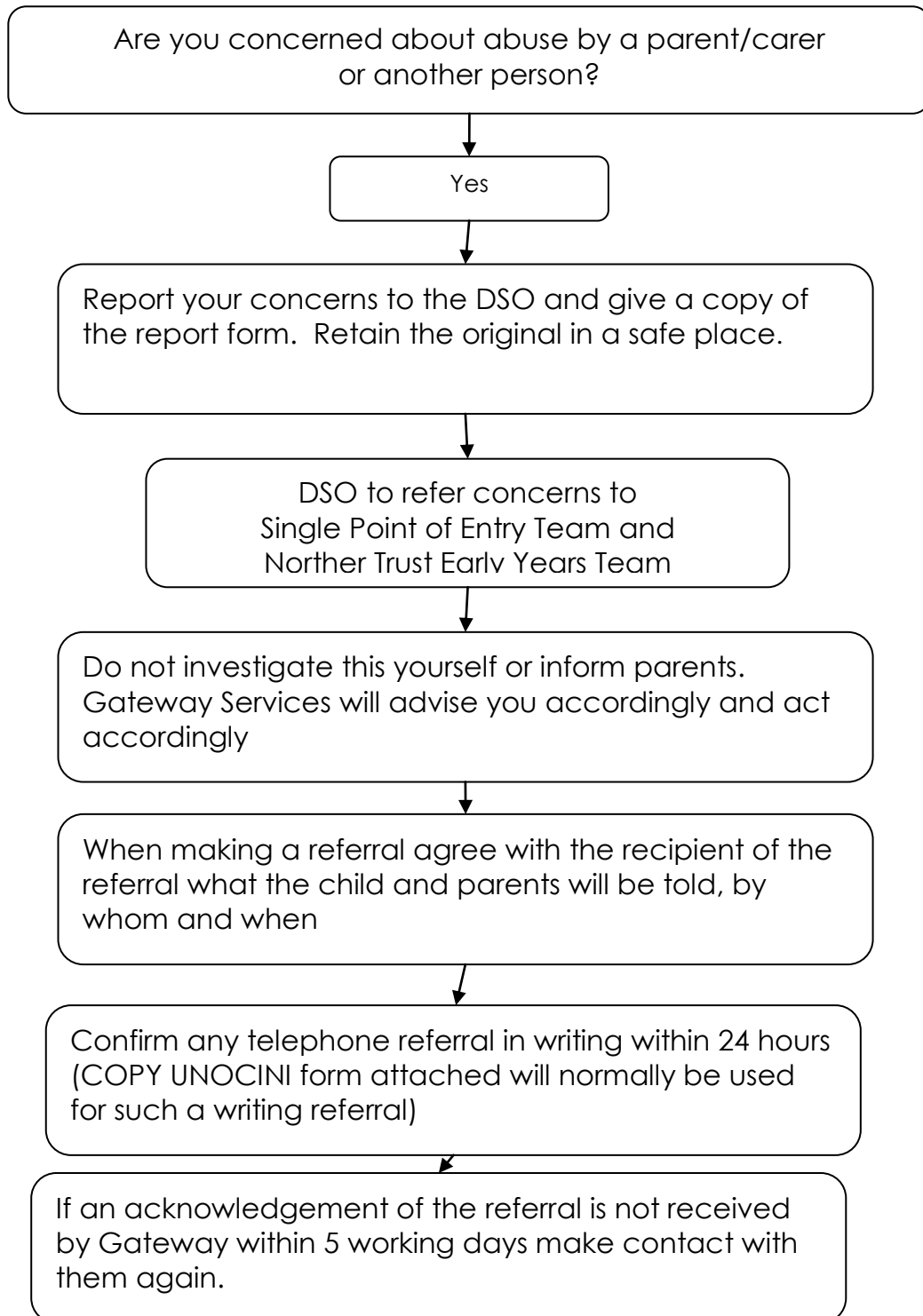
THIS FLOW CHART SHOWS THE REPORTING PROCEDURE WHICH WILL BE FOLLOWED IF A STAFF MEMBER IS CONCERNED ABOUT ABUSE FROM AN EMPLOYEE OF THE COMPANY



DSO = Brendan McKenna; Angela Cunningham; Henry Walls
Telephone: 02825 639970
07930 669945 (out of hours)

	Single Point of Entry Team	Northern Trust Units
Telephone:	02894 424459	0300 1234333
Out of Hours:	02894 468833	02894 468833

THIS FLOW CHART SHOWS THE REPORTING PROCEDURE WHICH WILL BE FOLLOWED IF A STAFF MEMBER IS CONCERNED ABOUT ABUSE FROM A PARENT/CARER OR ANOTHER PERSON TO WHOM A CHILD MAY HAVE COME INTO CONTACT WITH



DSO = Brendan McKenna; Angela Cunningham; Henry Walls
Telephone: 02825 639970
07930 669945 (out of hours)

As these procedures show, any disclosure should be recorded, dated any relevant information added and this should be kept in a confidential file.

It is important to do this as soon as possible and as accurately as possible as it may be necessary to provide information to other professionals about child abuse and it may need to be used later for example, in court.

In accordance with our confidentiality policy, any relating to a child's safety is kept in a confidential file and not discussed within the group (any information given would be on a need to know basis) except with the child's key worker. In order to decide whether it is appropriate to share confidential information one should consider the following relevant factors:-

- What is the purpose of the disclosure?
- What is the nature and the extent of the information to be disclosed?
- To whom is the disclosure to be made (and is the recipient under a duty to treat the material as confidential)?
- Is the proposed disclosure a proportionate response to the need to safeguard the well-being of a child to whom the confidential information relates?

The person designated with dealing with suspected abuse should be informed at once and this person decides whether or not there are grounds for involving the statutory sectors.

If a member of staff is not happy with the way the matter has been dealt with they should make a complaint following the company complaints procedure.

*This policy was adopted at a meeting of St Colmcille's After School Club Management Committee held on **18th May 2016**.*

Signed: _____ (chairperson)

Review date: **May 2017**