

# National School Sport Strategy Protocol for Safeguarding Children

## Guidelines for schools and sports clubs/organisations involved in the National School Sport Strategy

### 1. Introduction

- This protocol clarifies expectations regarding child protection reporting processes and information sharing between sports National Governing Bodies (NGB), sports clubs, schools and Education services within Local Authority (LA) Children's social care (formerly Social Services).
- It specifically relates to sports clubs which are linking with schools to deliver sporting activities or to support the delivery of sporting activities within the National School Sport Strategy (also called the PE & School Sport Club Links [PESSCL] strategy).
- This protocol complies with government guidance about managing cases of allegations of abuse against people who work with children<sup>a</sup>.
- This protocol has been agreed by the NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit, the Department for Education and Skills, the Department for Culture, Media & Sport, Sport England, the Youth Sport Trust, the PESSCL funded sports National Governing Bodies and other key stakeholders following consultation.

For more information about the National School Sport Strategy (also referred to as the PE and School Sport Club Links [PESSCL] strategy) go to: [www.teachernet.gov.uk/pe](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/pe) , [www.gov.uk/sport/school\\_sport](http://www.gov.uk/sport/school_sport) or [www.thecpsu.org.uk](http://www.thecpsu.org.uk)

### 2. Values and Principles

- The welfare of children and young people is paramount
- All organisations should be building their services for children around the outcomes identified within the *Every Child Matters: Change for Children*<sup>b</sup> framework (be healthy; stay safe; enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution; achieve and enjoy). This protocol specifically relates to the 'stay safe' outcome for children and young people
- Children and young people have the right to participate in sport in a safe, supportive and enjoyable environment
- All children, whatever their age, culture, ability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief or sexual identity, have the right to protection from abuse
  
- All children's PE and School Sport experiences must be guided by a child focussed approach
- All concerns about poor practice or abuse must be taken seriously and responded to swiftly, consistently and appropriately
- It is the responsibility of every adult involved in the National school sport strategy to respond to and report concerns in accordance with this protocol and the child protection procedures of their organisation
- **Note:** Where concerns arise in a context not linked to the National school sport strategy or about a coach who is not affiliated to a recognised sport NGB, all staff and PE Teachers must ensure that they understand and follow the school and Local Authority child protection procedures
- Individuals and organisations involved in the delivery of sporting and PE activities for children and young people are uniquely placed to contribute to safeguarding and promoting their welfare
- All organisations, clubs and individuals who take responsibility for children in PE and School Sport have a duty to ensure that they are competent and have undertaken appropriate training and education consistent with the guidance provided in *Working*

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<sup>a</sup> HM Government 2006. Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter- agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

This document can be downloaded from: [www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/files](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/files)

<sup>b</sup> Department for Education and Skills (2004). Every Child Matters: Change for Children can be downloaded from: [www.everychildmatters.gov.uk](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk)

*Together to Safeguard Children (2006)*<sup>c</sup> to provide safe and rewarding experiences for children

- It is essential to work in partnership with parents/carers, children and young people
- Listening to children and valuing their right to participate is of primary importance
- All information sharing will respect the rights of individuals and the principles of confidentiality in accordance with current legislation

### 3. Accountability

Guidance for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children within Education<sup>d</sup> states that:

*“The Governing Body of a school controls the use of the school premises both during and outside school hours, except where a trust deed allows a person other than a governing body to control the use of the premises, or a transfer of control agreement has been made”*

and:

*“Where the Governing Body provides services or activities directly under the supervision or management of school staff, the school’s arrangements for child protection will apply. Where services or*

*activities are provided separately by another body, the (school’s) Governing Body should seek assurance that the body concerned has appropriate policies and procedures in place in regard to safeguarding children and child protection, and there are arrangements to liaise with the school on these matters where appropriate”*

#### On the basis of this guidance it follows that:

- It is the responsibility of the club welfare officer/designated person of any sports club/organisation linking with a school to ensure that they have the name and contact details of the school’s designated person/teacher for child protection and the designated Local Authority (LA) Officer responsible for providing advice and monitoring cases<sup>e</sup>.
- It is the responsibility of the school which is contracting /inviting a sports club to undertake sporting activities on their behalf to ensure that the club/organisation meets minimum child protection quality assurance standards (for sports clubs this is Clubmark or an equivalent Sports NGB accreditation). This should cover recruitment and selection, child protection policy and procedures, complaints and disciplinary procedures and management structures.  
**Note:** Some NGBs have set higher minimum standards for their club accreditation schemes. Their clubs may have achieved Clubmark standards but still be ‘working towards’ achievement of the NGB club accreditation<sup>f</sup>

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<sup>c</sup> HM Government 2006. Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter- agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This document can be downloaded from: [www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/files](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/files)

<sup>d</sup> Department of Education and Skills (September 2004). Safeguarding Children in Education. DfES, London Ref: DfES/0027/2004, P17 Section 37 and 38 Download this publication from [www.teachernet.gov.uk/childprotection/guidance](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/childprotection/guidance)

<sup>e</sup> Department for Education and Skills (November 2005). Safeguarding Children in Education: Dealing with allegations of Abuse Against Teachers and Staff. (Ref: DfES/2044/2005). Download this publication from: [www.teachernet.co.uk/childprotection/](http://www.teachernet.co.uk/childprotection/) This document identifies the designated LA Officer as the individual responsible for providing advice and monitoring cases of concern arising within an educational setting (see page 3).

<sup>f</sup> For more information, including contact details for NGB Child Protection Lead Officers, go to [www.thecpsu.org.uk](http://www.thecpsu.org.uk), click on ‘National School Sport Strategy’ and then ‘National Governing Bodies’

- The school should ensure that:
  - they have the names and contact details of the sports club's/organisation's designated person/welfare officer and of the sports NGB Lead Child Protection Officer (or County/Regional Child Protection if this reflects the designated person reporting structure within that sport).
  - the name and contact details of the school's designated person/teacher for child protection and the designated LA Officer are provided for the sports club/organisation's designated person/Welfare Officer and made available to coaches or individuals who are providing PE and sporting activities.

Twenty two sports National Governing Bodies are being funded through Sport England to deliver on the National school sport strategy. Future funding for all sports in receipt of funding to deliver the National

school sport strategy and for the forty five County Sports Partnerships in England is linked to achievement of the *Standards for Safeguarding & Protecting Children in Sport*<sup>g</sup>.

For more information about the Standards and child protection guidance for the National school sport strategy go to the Child Protection in Sport Unit website at: [www.thecpsu.co.uk](http://www.thecpsu.co.uk) and click on the National School Sport Strategy (PESSCL) link in the left hand menu

#### **4. Concerns about the conduct or practice of any individual involved in the delivery of the National School Sport Strategy**

All LA's have a policy and procedures for Children's social care regarding managing allegations against people working in positions of trust in line with government guidance<sup>h</sup>. All LA's and education establishments have child protection policies and procedures that are in line with the overarching Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB – formerly Area Child protection Committees) guidelines. In the event of any allegations or concerns relating to possible child abuse or poor practice being raised the designated LA Officer, as the individual responsible for providing advice and monitoring cases of concern arising within an educational setting, must be informed by the designated persons who receive the referral. The reporting processes that are followed will be dictated by the setting in which the incident or concerns arise:

- Concerns/allegations arising within a school or educational setting should be referred to the school's designated person/teacher or the designated LA Officer, who will make a decision about whether the concerns meet the threshold for referral to LA Children's social care, as soon as possible.
- Concerns/incidents arising within a sports club or non-educational setting should be referred to the Club Welfare Officer or sports NGB Child Protection Lead Officer, who will make a decision in partnership with the designated LA Officer about whether the concerns meet the threshold for referral to LA Children's social care, as soon as possible.
- If there are immediate concerns for the safety or welfare of a child, a referral should be made directly to the Police or LA Children's social care in accordance with the government guidance *What to do if You're Worried a Child is Being Abused*

<sup>g</sup> CPSU (2002). Standards for Safeguarding and Protecting Children in Sport. Leicester: NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit. Download the document from:

[www.thecpsu.co.uk](http://www.thecpsu.co.uk) > sports organisations > standards for protecting children

<sup>h</sup> HM Government 2006. Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter- agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

This document can be downloaded from: [www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/files](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/files)

(DoH et al, 2003)<sup>i</sup> and the designated LA Officer should be informed as soon as possible.

- All referrals should be communicated to the designated LA Officer as soon as possible. This individual will take responsibility for managing the process and ensuring that concerns are discussed and communicated with the NGB Lead Child Protection Officer appropriately.
- Decisions about the course of action to be taken in response to concerns (whether it should be responded to as potential child abuse or as poor practice) should be made following discussion of the concerns or a meeting between the NGB Lead Child Protection Officer and the designated LA Officer except where there are immediate concerns for the safety or welfare of a child or other children.
- Where the County Sports Partnership (CSP) have played an active role in promoting, supporting or accrediting a coach or sports club within the delivery of the National school sport strategy, the CSP Child Protection Lead Officer should be informed of any concerns and involved in any decision making process about the course of action to be taken in response to these concerns.
- If the Police or LA Children's social care are going to investigate an allegation, a strategy meeting will be convened which will both plan the child protection investigation and identify the appropriate complaints or disciplinary procedures that will be applied to the individual against whom the allegations have been made. The sports NGB Child Protection Lead Officer (and where appropriate, the CSP Child Protection Lead Officer) should be involved in any child protection strategy meeting.
- The referral should be recorded using an agreed incident/referral form. All parties must also use their own agencies' recording processes.
- Copies of the incident/referral form should be given/sent to the designated LA Officer and LA Children's social care/the Police if a referral has been made to the statutory agencies<sup>j</sup>. The form should also be copied to the NGB Child Protection Lead Officer where concerns are about an NGB affiliated club, coach or volunteer. The designated LA officer holds overall responsibility for managing referrals relating to poor practice or suspected abuse.
- The sports NGB Child Protection Lead Officer will be kept informed of any actions following a child protection referral relating to affiliated clubs, coaches or volunteers who are involved in the delivery of National school sport strategy activities.
- Once a decision about whether or not an individual who is subject to allegations should be temporarily suspended, the disciplinary process will then await the outcome of the formal child protection processes before continuing.
- The flowchart later in this protocol sets out the process to be followed in response to concerns about the conduct or practice of any individual (teacher, coach, employee or volunteer) involved with the delivery of the National school sport strategy
- There are a number of possible processes that may follow a referral:
  - A criminal investigation and proceedings
  - Enquiries and assessment by the LA Children's social care about whether a child is in need of services or in need of protection
  - LA disciplinary processes where there is a direct employment relationship between the school and the individual
  - Sports NGB disciplinary processes where concerns relate to sports club/NGB staff, coaches or volunteers

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<sup>i</sup>This document can be downloaded from: [www.doh.gov.uk/safeguarding-children/index.htm](http://www.doh.gov.uk/safeguarding-children/index.htm)

<sup>j</sup> Agencies with statutory child protection powers comprise the local authority, the police and the NSPCC

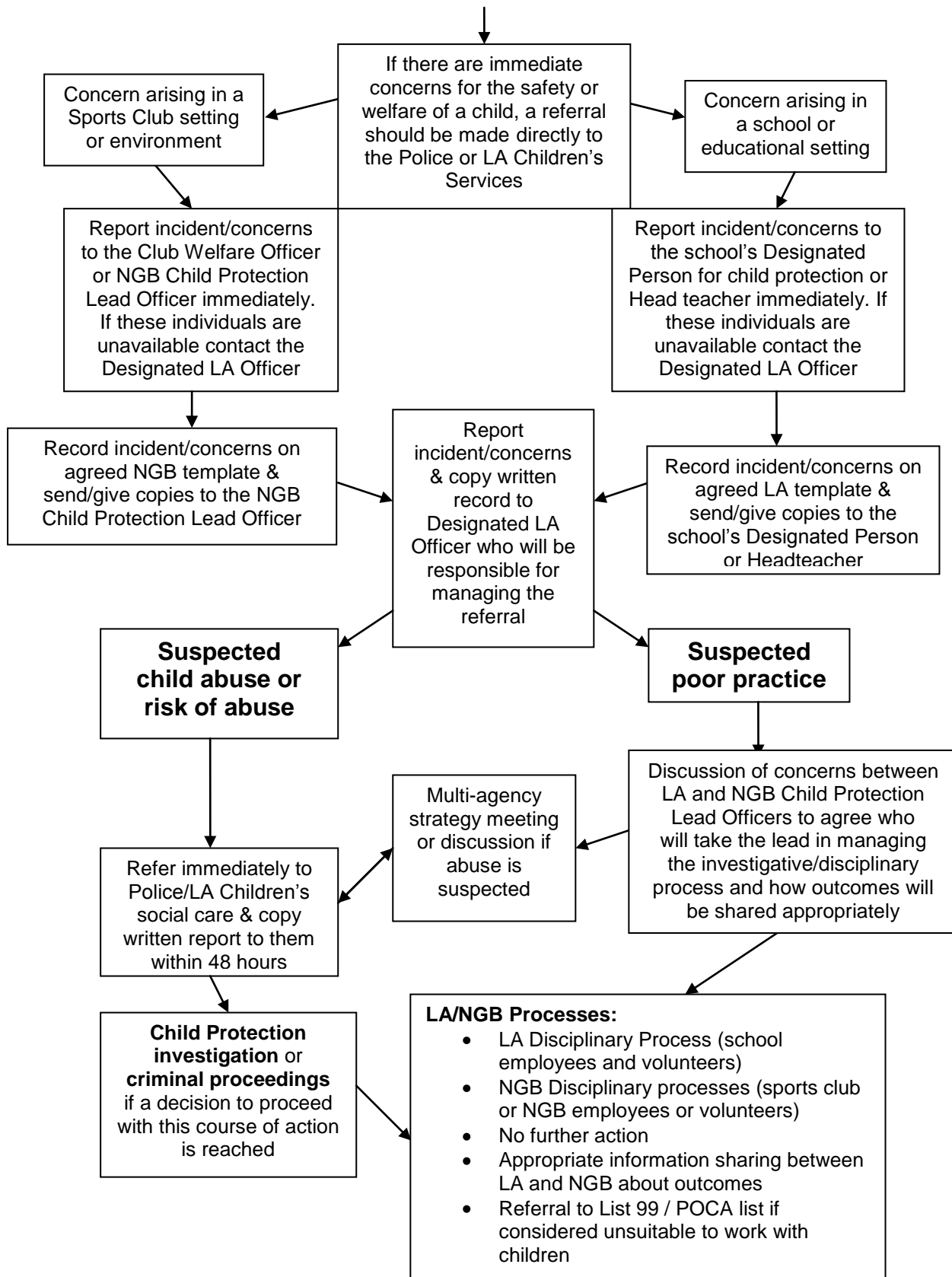
- The sports NGB, school and LA will need to cooperate in any investigation and decision-making processes<sup>k</sup>
- Where there are concerns about a person's suitability to continue working with children, referral to the DfES List 99 (for school employees) or the Protection of Children Act (POCA) list must be considered (for sports club/NGB employees or volunteers where there has been a finding through a disciplinary process that an individual should be banned from working in that sport)
- No further action

**5. Flowchart for Concerns about the conduct or practice of any individual involved in the delivery of the National School Sport Strategy**

**Concern about a child's welfare or about an adult's behaviour identified within a National School Sport Strategy setting**

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<sup>k</sup> See DfES guidance: *Safeguarding Children in Education: Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against Teachers and Other Staff* (Ref: DfES/2044/2005, date of issue November 2005). Download this publication from: [www.teachernet.co.uk/childprotection/](http://www.teachernet.co.uk/childprotection/)



## 6. Concerns about a child's welfare outside of a National School Sport Strategy environment

Where there are concerns about a child's welfare or if a child discloses that they are suffering abuse or reveals information that gives grounds for concern, it is essential that a referral is made to the organisation's designated person as soon as possible.

**If concerns arise in a sports club setting:** Report any child protection concerns to the Club Welfare Officer or sports NGB Child Protection Lead Officer. Follow the sports NGB's child protection procedures.

**If concerns arise in a school setting:** Report any child protection concerns to the designated person for the school or the designated LA Officer. Follow the school's child protection procedures.

- If there are immediate concerns for the safety or welfare of a child, or if the designated Child Protection Officer for your organisation is not available, the person being told or discovering the abuse should contact their local LA Children's social care or the Police immediately
- The statutory agencies and the designated Child Protection Officer will decide how to inform the parents/carers and will advise about any action you should take
- The referral should be recorded using an agreed incident/referral form. All parties must also use their own organisation's recording processes
- Copies of the incident/referral form should be given/sent to both the designated Child Protection Lead Officer for your organisation and to LA Children's social care or the Police if a referral has been made to the statutory agencies. Record details of any referral made (date, time, who the referral was made to) and the advice given to you
- Maintain confidentiality on a need to know basis
- See flowchart on page 9 of this protocol

The primary guidance about what action an individual should take to safeguard a child about whom there are concerns is contained within *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2006)*<sup>l</sup> and in "*What to do if You're Worried A Child is Being Abused*" (DoH et al, 2003)<sup>m</sup>.

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<sup>l</sup> HM Government 2006. Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter- agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

This document can be downloaded from: [www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/files](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/files)

<sup>m</sup> This document can be downloaded from:

[www.doh.gov.uk/safeguarding\\_children/index.htm](http://www.doh.gov.uk/safeguarding_children/index.htm)

**7. Flowchart for concerns about a child's welfare outside of a National School Sport Strategy environment**

