

# SCOTTISH DANCE TEACHERS' ALLIANCE



## Safeguarding Policy

## Safeguarding Code of Practice, Implementation & Procedures

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# Safeguarding Policy

## Introduction

The SDTA's main objective is to ensure that all young persons' welfare and enjoyment, pertaining to all aspects of dance, are of an exemplary standard. To this end the SDTA has introduced a Safeguarding Policy coupled to a Safeguarding Code of Practice, Implementation & Procedures document. The SDTA recognises the importance of ensuring every young person's safety and protection from any form of abuse.

The SDTA recognises its own responsibilities to try to ensure that as far as possible all its many Members and helpers are familiar with, and adopt, its Safeguarding of Practice, Implementation & Procedures and Safeguarding Policy.

Child abuse takes many forms, and we at the SDTA are sure that everyone will join us in working towards ensuring a safe environment for all Young Persons involved in dance.

## SDTA Child Protection Officer

Miss Amanda Letarte

Contact: [CPO@sdta.co.uk](mailto:CPO@sdta.co.uk)

## **1. Policy Statement**

The Scottish Dance Teachers' Alliance accepts a moral and legal responsibility to provide a duty of care for young people involved in dance, to safeguard their well-being and to protect them from abuse.

It respects and promotes the rights, wishes and feelings of young people.

It will recruit, train and supervise its adult members/officers/volunteers/officials who may be involved with young people's dance activities to help them to adopt best practices that safeguard and protect young people from abuse, and themselves against false allegations.

It will require members, officers, and volunteers, to abide by its Child Protection Policy. It will respond to any concerns or allegations and, where necessary, implement appropriate disciplinary and appeals procedures.

## **2. Principles**

The welfare of all young people is SDTA's primary concern. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) defines a young person as "under 18 (eighteen) years of age".

The Children (Scotland) Act 1995 defines a child as any person under the age of 16 or, any person under the age of 18 if subjected to a supervision requirement or, looked after by the Local Authority.

All young people, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.

It is everyone's responsibility to report any concerns of suspected child abuse or poor practice. The responsibility for determining whether abuse has taken place will be made by the appropriate experts.

All incidents of suspicious behaviour or poor practice and all allegations should be taken seriously, noted and passed through the appropriate channels swiftly.

Confidentiality will be upheld in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Human Rights Act 1998.

**Glossary of terms used in this document**

**SDTA** – Scottish Dance Teachers’ Alliance

**Parents** – a generic term to represent parents, adoptive parents, step-parents, carers, guardians, and those with parental responsibility

**Young People/Persons’** – people under the age of eighteen years, adults with disabilities, and vulnerable adults.

**CP** – Child Protection

**CPO** – Child Protection Officer

**Professional(s)** – Members of a professional society for example the SDTA.

**Person in Charge** – Promoter, Proprietor, Person named as responsible in any building(s) where dance or training for dance takes place.

**LA** – Local Authority

### **3. SDTA Child Protection Procedure**

This Policy should be read in conjunction with, and forms part of the SDTA Child Protection Code of Practice.

#### **3.1 Responsibility**

**It is NOT the responsibility of anyone working under the auspices of dance in a paid or voluntary capacity, or those working in affiliated organisations to take responsibility for, or to decide, whether or not child abuse is taking place.**

All adults associated with dance have a responsibility to protect children where abuse is suspected and to pass on all relevant information to the appropriate agencies (referred to below) so that they can make enquiries and take any necessary action.

#### **3.2 Reporting Incidents - Action**

If anyone connected with dancing has any reason to suspect any form of Child abuse, whether physical, emotional or psychological, it should be reported to an appropriate person in charge (school principal, promoter, proprietor, coach, tutor, official, etc.) immediately, and, if anyone concerned is an SDTA member, to an SDTA CPO, whose details are printed on the front of this document.

If there are any concerns regarding child safety in any form, then in the first instance such concerns should be communicated to the person in charge of the premises being used. He/she will decide upon an appropriate course of action. If contact with the person in charge is not appropriate or he/she is not available, the matter can be referred to the SDTA Child Protection Officer and the Local Authority's CPO (LA Social Services Department).

If the concern (whether it has or may have happened, is happening or may well happen) is of a serious nature one should call the NSPCC 24 hour free phone Helpline on 0800 800 500 and/or the LA CPO. The Police also have specially trained child protection teams who will give advice and support. They too can deal with out of hours enquiries. An SDTA Child Protection Officer should be informed and will advise on these matters.

## **4. Child Protection – SDTA CPO**

Designated Officer

The SDTA has appointed a designated person to handle child protection issues. They have completed a self-declaration form and have undergone a voluntary police check for quality assurance purposes and appropriate training for the role.

## **5. SDTA Implementation, Monitoring & Dissemination**

### **5.1 Implementation**

The SDTA has implemented this policy and hereinafter will operate appropriate recruitment policies for officers, officials, and voluntary staff in accordance with it.

### **5.2 Monitoring**

The SDTA has established a CP Management Sub-Committee within the remit of the SDTA Executive Council to meet between Council Meetings to review and monitor the day-to-day operation of its CP Policy.

### **5.3 Distribution**

The SDTA will distribute its CP Policy and Code of Practice, to its Members and CP Officers. An information sheet outlining the CP Policy and the CP Code of Practice will be distributed to all full members. Requests for full documents should be submitted to the SDTA CP Committee.

## SCOTTISH DANCE TEACHER'S ALLIANCE



# Safeguarding Code of Practice

This Code of Practice should be read in association with the Safeguarding Policy.

SDTA's Child Protection Officer

Miss Amanda Letarte

Contact: [CPO@sdta.co.uk](mailto:CPO@sdta.co.uk)

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## **Glossary of terms used in this document**

**SDTA** – Scottish Dance Teachers' Alliance

**Parents** – A generic term to represent parents, adoptive parents, step-parents, carers, guardians, and those with parental responsibility.

**Young people/persons** – people under the age of eighteen years, adults with disabilities, and vulnerable adults.

**NGB** – National Governing Body (As appropriate for dance)

**CP** – Child Protection

**CPO** – Child Protection (Safeguarding) Officer

**Professional(s)** – members of a professional society for example the SDTA

**Person in Charge** – Promoter, Proprietor, Person named as responsible in any building(s) where dance or training for dance takes place.

**LA** – Local Authority

# 1. Promoting Good Practice with Young People

One of the most important factors in dealing with child abuse is to use correct judgement about what action to take. A coach, officer, official, teacher or volunteer, dealing regularly with Young People is an important link in identifying cases where young people require protection.

The following examples of good practice are recommended to provide a positive culture and a caring climate within dance. The list is not definitive, but serves to provide a basic guide. Professional dance practitioners should consider this list along side and in light of their own procedures and the advice of their society (ies).

- 1.1 Always work in an open environment where at least one or other adult is present (avoiding private or unobservable situations).
- 1.2 Treat all Young People fairly, with respect and dignity.
- 1.3 Always put Young People's welfare first.
- 1.4 Always maintain a safe and appropriate physical and psychological distance from Young People.
- 1.5 Obtain permission (written is desirable so as to avoid future dispute) of Parents to hold, guide, direct Young People.
- 1.6 Obtain mutual parental permission (written is desirable so as to avoid future dispute) for young people partner contact.
- 1.7 Tell young people, before any move with touching positions, exactly what intention is, and ensure they agree and do not show discomfort.
- 1.8 After demonstration (tactile), release hold immediately.
- 1.9 Refrain from welcoming/farewell embraces.
- 1.10 Never share rooms with young people, eg. overnight accommodation.
- 1.11 Coaches should be sensitive to the needs of the young persons allowing them a share in the decision-making process.
- 1.12 Praise and positive encouragement is always a more successful teaching tool than negative attitude/comments.
- 1.13 Never play off one of the partners against the other.
- 1.14 When coaching a couple of young people, ensure that both receive 'equal' amounts of attention.
- 1.15 Observe couple (young people) and look out for

- a) any discomfort from 'hold'
  - b) any embarrassment at hold or certain positions
  - c) any reluctance to join/touch
  - d) any bullying/aggression on part of one partner
  - e) any inappropriate/improper words/action by either/both partners
  - f) any dominating/oppressive /bullying behaviour by either partner
  - g) be alert to any whispered comments take sensible and appropriate action where necessary.
- 1.16 Note any irregularity of attendance, late cancellations, regular late coming. If late cancellations and the like, note whether telephone call is from parent or young person and whether there is any unease (as to reason). Upon resumption of classes informally ascertain reason for absence, etc.
- 1.17 Note (late) regular withdrawal from competitions, lessons, practices on the part of either partner.
- 1.18 Try to ascertain reasons for unpunctuality by casual conversation and note reaction. Always put welfare of young person first, before any consideration of expertise/success/failure at dancesport.
- 1.19 Involve parents/carers wherever and whenever possible, eg in changing rooms. It is essential that coaches, officers, officials, parents, and helpers, work in pairs in such places.
- 1.20 If teams or couples are taken away on trips, try to ensure, male and female coach/officer/official/helpers accompanies them. Written consent of parents is essential beforehand. An appropriate balance of escorts is required when young couple/teams are away from parents.
- 1.21 When on tour etc., adults should not enter young people's rooms or invite them into theirs except in cases of emergency.
- 1.22 Enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative.
- 1.23 Awareness of developmental needs/capacity of young people. Avoid excessive training/competitions. Learn to see signs of young people's unwillingness to carry out programmes/routines.
- 1.24 Know young people's appropriate medical condition(s) to establish if problems are likely to arise eg. Asthma etc., and ensure medication is available – parental permission is required.
- 1.25 Record, in detail, any accident/injury/unusual incident and any treatment in an appropriate register.
- 1.26 Request written permission if officers/officials required to transport young people in their car etc.

- 1.27 Avoid spending time alone with young people in general.
- 1.28 Avoid taking young people to your home.
- 1.29 Never swear, use rough language, or make any comments with sexual overtones/ implications and never allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- 1.30 Never reduce children to tears.
- 1.31 Never allow any allegations to go unchallenged, unrecorded and not acted upon.
- 1.32 Avoid doing things of a personal nature that young children can do for themselves eg. Tying shoes, buttoning coats, etc.
- 1.33 Always invite full involvement and open comment by young people in any aspect of coaching. Parents also must be similarly involved. This openness may affect method(s) of coaching.
- 1.34 Promote fair play and enjoyment aspect of dance.
- 1.35 Keep up-to-date with technical skills, qualifications and insurance.
- 1.36 Never discuss such matters as a disagreement/break with the other coaches/teachers/adjudicators, as this is a breach of confidentiality.
- 1.37 If either partner is 'dropped off' and/or 'not picked up' punctually, try to ensure young person is not left alone, or exposed to intimate situation with you or other person(s).
- 1.38 Always ensure there is a fully maintained First Aid box on the premises.
- 1.39 Note in an appropriate register and report any observed injuries, bruises, scratches, or unusual behaviour.
- 1.40 Adjudicators should behave in such a manner as to ensure that, apart from formal courtesies, they are – and are seen to be – strictly neutral at all competitions.
- 1.41 Ensure that photographic equipment is used only in appropriate places and by appropriate people.
- 1.42 Where possible, young people should have separate changing facilities from adults. These should be gender-based and the young persons should be supervised by their parents/guardians. If this is not possible, it is recommended that the changing facilities be gender-based and the parents/guardians of the Young People be advised that they are responsible for their supervision when using such facilities. If the gender of a parent prevents him/her from entering, he/she should take up a position near to the door of the changing room.
- 1.43 Role model – Smoking and the drinking of alcohol should be avoided in young people's company.

All the above points place a corresponding reciprocal/joint responsibility on “Parents” and volunteer helpers not to abuse their relationships with Young People. They also may become aware of situations of possible abuse which have occurred, are occurring or may occur.

All concerns should be communicated to the Person In Charge and, if appropriate, to the SDTA’s Child Protection Officer.

## **2. Recognition of Poor Practice, Abuse & Bullying**

Although not everyone will have expertise at recognising situations where abuse may occur, all young people, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity, have the right to protection from abuse.

It is the responsibility of everyone to report any concerns, including suspicions of abuse or bullying which may be occurring outside the environment in which there is contact with young person(s).

All incidents of suspicious behaviour or poor practice and all allegations, will be taken seriously, noted, and passed through the appropriate channels swiftly and according to adopted procedures. Confidentiality will be upheld in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Human Rights Act 1998.

### **2.1 Poor Practice**

This is any behaviour which contravenes this Code of Practice, Implementation & Procedures document and the SDTA’s Safeguarding Policy.

(The SDTA recognises that abuse of young people, in any form, will not be tolerated, and will act if any form of abuse is detected and communicated to the appropriate CP officer. This abuse can arise because of disability, race and racism, sexuality, neglect, physical or emotional mistreatment)

### **2.2 General indications of abuse**

- 2.2.1 Unexplained or suspicious bruises, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries.
- 2.2.2 An injury for which the explanation seems
- 2.2.3 inconsistent.
- 2.2.4 The young person describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him/her
- 2.2.5 Someone else (any age) expresses concern about the welfare of another young person
- 2.2.6 Unexplained changes in behaviour
- 2.2.7 Inappropriate sexual awareness
- 2.2.8 Engaging in sexually explicit behaviour
- 2.2.9 Distrust of adults, especially those with whom relationship would usually be close
- 2.2.10 Difficulty in making friends
- 2.2.11 Inability to mix with other friends
- 2.2.12 Showing variations in eating patterns, including over-eating or loss of appetite
- 2.2.13 Loss of weight, without reason

## 2.2.14 Pattern of unkempt/dirty/dishevelled appearance

### 2.3 Bullying by Peer or Adult in any Form

All adults connected with young people must be aware that bullying can be verbal, psychological, or physical aggression by an individual or group against another individual or group.

Targets of bullying are sometimes singled out because of physical characteristics – weight, size, disability, or race, faith or culture.

Bullying mostly occurs where there is inadequate supervision. A good practice is never to leave young people alone in the coaching area, changing rooms, cars etc. except for very short periods. If partners retire together, be aware of time element and be alert to recall/check. This practice applies to all safeguards against any possible abuse.

All adults connected with young people's dance should be aware of sophisticated forms of bullying such as:

- Parental, in wish for success
- Coaching, in drive for success
- Intimidation by one competitor towards another

Bullies come from all walks of life; they bully for a variety of different reasons and may even have been abused. Typically, bullies can have low self-esteem, be excitable, aggressive and jealous. Crucially, they have learned how to gain power over others and there is increasing evidence to suggest that this abuse of power can lead to crime.

#### 2.3.1 Bullying can include:

- a. Physical: eg. hitting, kicking and theft.
- b. Verbal: eg. name-calling, constant teasing, sarcasm, racist or homophobic taunts, threats, graffiti and gestures.
- c. Emotional: eg. tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating and ignoring.
- d. Sexual: eg. unwanted physical contact or abusive comments.

The damage inflicted by bullying can frequently be underestimated. It can cause considerable distress, to the extent that it affects their health and development or, at the extreme, causes them significant harm (including self-harm). There are a number of signs that may indicate when someone is being bullied.

- i. Behavioural changes such as reduced concentration and/or becoming withdrawn, clingy, depressed, tearful, emotionally up and down, reluctance to go to training sessions or competitions etc.
- ii. A drop-off in performance.
- iii. Physical signs such as stomach-aches, headaches, difficulty in sleeping, bed-wetting, scratching and bruising, damaged clothes and bingeing for example on food, cigarettes or alcohol.
- iv. A shortage of money or frequent loss of possessions.

### 3. Action to Take if there are Concerns

The following action should be taken if there are concerns:

#### 3.1 Poor Practice

- If, following, consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice, the person in charge should deal with it as a misconduct issue.
- If the allegation is about poor practice by the person in charge, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be referred to the LA Child Protection Officer and an SDTA Child Protection Officer also. The SDTA CPO will decide how to deal with the allegation and whether or not to initiate disciplinary proceedings, or referrals.
- If the incident of poor practice is suspicious, all details should be recorded and reported to the SDTA CPO.

#### Suspected Abuse

- Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff or any other person should be reported to the person in charge and the SDTA CPO, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.
- The person in charge will refer the allegation to the social services department who may involve the police. If the situation appears particularly urgent and there is need to intervene to stop a criminal offence occurring, the person in charge will go directly to the police if out of social services normal working hours. The person in charge should also notify the SDTA CPO and LA CPO.
- The parents or carers of the child will be contacted by the SDTA CPO or LA CPO as soon as possible following advice from the social services department or police.
- If the person in charge is the subject of the suspicion/allegation the report must be made directly to the SDTA CPO.

#### 3.2 Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a **need to know basis only**. This includes the following people

- The person in charge.
- The parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused.
- The person making the allegation.

- Social services/police.
- Designated officers within the governing body of sport, the SDTA CPO and the CP committee.
- The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child).

The person in charge, the LA CPO or SDTA CPO will, after consultation with Social Services and/or police, advise who should approach the alleged abuser.

Information must be stored in a secure place with access limited to designated people, in line with data protection laws (eg. the information must be accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure). The SDTA headquarters will be the storage centre of all documentation.

### **3.3 Internal Enquiries and Suspension**

- The SDTA must make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services enquiries.
- Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police enquiries, the SDTA must assess all individual cases under the appropriate misconduct/ disciplinary procedure, to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer who has been suspended can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled with other officials, staff or volunteers. This may be a difficult decision, particularly where there is insufficient evidence to substantiate any action by the police. In such cases, the SDTA must reach a decision based on the available information that could suggest, on a balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of children should always remain paramount.

### **3.4 Support to Deal with the Aftermath**

- Consideration should be given about what support may be appropriate to children, parents and members of staff. Use of Help lines, support groups and open meetings will maintain an open culture and help the healing process. The British Association of Counselling Directory and NSPCC may be a useful resource.
- Consideration should be given about what support may be appropriate to the alleged perpetrator of the abuse.

### **3.6 Allegations of Previous Abuse**

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (eg. by an adult who was abused as a child or by a member of staff who is still currently working with the children). Where such an allegation is made, the SDTA should follow the procedures as detailed above and report the matter to the social services or the police. This is because other children, either within or outside sport, may be at risk from this person. Anyone who has a previous criminal conviction for offences related to abuse is automatically excluded from working with children. This is reinforced by the Protection of Children Act 1998.



### **3.7 Action if bullying is suspected**

The same procedure should be followed as set out above if bullying is suspected. All settings in which children are provided with services or are living away from home should have rigorously enforced anti-bullying strategies in place.

Action to Help the Victim and Prevent Bullying in Sport:

#### **Take all signs of bullying very seriously**

- Encourage all children to speak and share their concerns.
- Help the victim to speak out and tell the person in charge or someone in authority. Create an open environment.
- Investigate all allegations and take action to ensure the victim is safe. Speak with the victim and the bully (ies) separately.
- Reassure the victim that you can be trusted and will help him/her, although you cannot promise to tell no one else.
- Keep records of what is said (what happened, by whom, when).
- Report any concerns to the person in charge at the dance school (or wherever the bullying is occurring).

### **3.8 Action towards the Bully(ies)**

Talk with the bully (ies), explain the situation, try to get the bully (ies) to understand the consequences of behaviour. Seek an apology to the victim(s).

- Inform the bully (ies) parents.
- Recommend the return of borrowed items and that the bully (ies) compensate the victim.
- Provide support for the coach of the victim.
- Impose sanctions as necessary.
- Encourage and support the bully (ies) to change behaviour.
- Hold meetings with the families to report progress.
- Inform an SDTA CP officer, original complainant(s) and all affected people of action taken.
- Keep a written record of action taken.

## 4. Child Protection – General Principles

### 4.1 Designated Officer

The SDTA has identified a designated person to handle child protection issues. This person must complete self-declaration forms and undergo a voluntary police check for quality assurance purposes. The designated person will require support from the SDTA, with appropriate training and information. This support should be provided as part of the Child Protection Policy being adopted by the SDTA.

It is the responsibility of the designated person in charge to inform the social services without delay of any concerns. If the person in charge is not available or the concern is about the person in charge, the person with concerns or the person being informed of them should immediately contact the social services or the police. The numbers are in the telephone directory. In these circumstances, you do not have to give your name but it is helpful if you can. The social services, together with the designated person in charge where appropriate, will decide how and when parents or carers will be informed.

Incidents should also be referred to the LA Child Protection Officer immediately and/or an SDTA Child Protection Officer if appropriate. Designated CPO's must be kept up-to-date with legislation and developments. Attending appropriate courses will be necessary.

SDTA complies fully with this requirement. Please see the SDTA Child Protection Policy document for full details. Contact details of the SDTA's CPO's are contained on the front cover of this document.

### SDTA Child Protection Officers

Procedures for dealing with disclosures, allegations, suspicions.

**It is not the responsibility of anyone working under the auspices of dance in a paid or voluntary capacity, or of those working in affiliated organisations, to decide whether or not child abuse is taking place or has taken place or may take place.**

If allegation concerns Poor Practice and reference to the person in charge has been made, note details and ask for written copy of any details from allegor. Consult with the other CPO (or member of CP committee). Call to person i/c to inform him/her of allegation. Phone complainant to report the SDTA's action. These actions to be completed within 48 hours of receipt of allegation. If alleged offender is an SDTA member, the SDTA disciplinary procedure may come into effect.

If allegation concerns Poor Practice by Person i/c, or matter is handled inadequately and concerns remain, consult with the other CPO (or member of CP Committee), consult LA CPO as to next action. These actions to be completed within 24 hours. If allegor does not wish to proceed, he/she to be informed that it is the SDTA's policy to proceed. Inform allegor within 24 hours of action advised by LA CPO.

If alleged incident of Poor Practice is suspicious, proceed as immediately above.

If abuse is suspected, alleged, disclosed, and the SDTA CPO informed, first other CPO (or member of CP Committee) must be consulted. All details must be recorded, and copy of informant's notes obtained. It must be ascertained whether the person i/c has been informed, and if not he/she must be informed immediately. LA CPO or Police must be notified forthwith, (the informant having been notified of this course of action), for advice on contact with parents, victim, abuser. This should have been carried out within 24 hours. If suspicion/allegation is re. person i/c, proceed as in section immediately above. Lead SDTA CPO must have safe repository for all documentation dealing with all documentation for every referral to any SDTA CPO. The SDTA CP Committee must meet within one month if any referrals are made to the CPO. The SDTA CP Committee must meet within one month if any referrals are made to any CPO.

## **4.2 Expert Advice**

If unsure what to do, one can obtain advice by telephoning the local social services department and speaking to the duty worker or call the NSPCC 24-hour free phone Helpline on 0800-800-5001. The police also have specially trained child protection teams who will give guidance and support, and deal with out-of-office hours enquiries when social services are not available. The SDTA CPO's can and will advise if the enquiry concerns any dance-related matter or SDTA member.

## **4.3 Records and Information**

Information passed to the social services, police, NSPCC or SDTA must be as helpful as possible. Hence, it is necessary to make a detailed record at the time of the disclosure/concern.

Information should include the following:

- How the information came to light.
- The nature of the allegation.
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries.
- The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred. Do not probe for more information than is offered.
- The demeanour of the child, whether distressed, unusually quiet or any other striking behaviour.
- Witnesses to the incident(s).
- Any times, dates or other relevant information.
- A clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.

Date, time and sign (with status/position) any notes/ records made.

Reporting the matter to the police or social services department should not be delayed by attempts to obtain more information. Wherever possible, referrals telephoned to the social services department should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours. A record should also be made of the name, department and contact details of the social services member of staff or police officer to whom the concerns were passed, together with the time and date of the call, in case any follow-up is needed.

A copy of all relevant information should be retained.

**All information is liable for future disclosure in the event of any civil or criminal proceedings and, therefore, should be accurately and diligently recorded and stored securely.**

#### **4.4 Handling Allegations**

Ensure communication channels for complaints, allegations and suspicions are clear. Ensure confidentiality, and support the victim. This applies to all staff.

- Provide support for victim/accused.
- Encourage victim /accused to provide details of event, in own words.
- Note fully in writing all details, date, time and sign (with status/position).
- Review existing reported cases.
- Monitor new incidents.
- Annual Review, at SDTA (General Meeting before AGM).
- Speed of action/response an essential element.

#### **4.5 Course of Action**

4.5.1 Listen

4.5.2 Assure and ensure confidentiality on a 'need to know basis' only.

4.5.3 Obtain as much information as possible without causing distress/anxiety and without probing.

4.5.4 Write down all details.

4.5.5 Notify head of centre or proprietor/principal of school. Reinforce confidentiality.

4.5.6 Notify SDTA CP Officer

4.5.7 Notify Social Service/ Police/ Parents/ NSPCC on CP advice.

#### **4.6 Awareness Training**

Maintain communications with coaches, members, officials, via Child Protection Officer, on updates, training and news. Ensure new entrants are fully aware of policy and procedures. This may require regional officers.

## **4.7 Recruitment and Licences**

- Aim is to prevent unsuitable persons from working with young persons in sport.
- Registration forms, self-declaration forms and PVG clearance for coaches, officials, officers, and Council members.
- Review of Constitutional and Disciplinary Issues
- Ensure that all SDTA's processes and programme take account of Child Protection issues.
- Monitor and evaluate effectiveness of policy and procedures at each SDTA Executive Council Meeting.

## **5. Responding to Disclosure, Suspicions and Allegations**

### **5.1 Introduction**

Although the majority of child abuse allegations are genuine, there are occasions when false allegations occur. However, if a young person says or indicates that he/she is being abused, or information is obtained which gives concern that a young person may be experiencing abuse, the information should be taken seriously and urgent action taken in line with these procedures.

In all cases the SDTA CPO is available for advice and help.

### **5.2 Responding to Disclosure**

#### **5.2.1 Actions to Take**

The person receiving information concerning disclosure should:

- React calmly so as not to frighten the child
- Tell the child he/she is not to blame and that he/she was right to tell
- Take what the child says seriously, recognising the difficulties inherent in interpreting what is said by a child who has a speech disability and/or differences in language.
- Keep questions to the absolute minimum to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said
- Try not to ask leading questions (ie. Those which suggest the answer). Let the child tell you what has happened in his/her own words.
- Try not to take on the role of the Police and/ or Social Services. If, from an initial complaint, there is reason to believe that abuse has occurred, report it immediately to those authorities who have trained officers to deal with the matter in accordance with

the law. It is important that possible future civil or criminal proceedings are not prejudiced by virtue of inappropriate questioning of the victim or suspect.

- Reassure the child but do not make promises of confidentiality which might not be feasible in the light of subsequent developments
- Make a full record of what had been said, heard and/or seen as soon as possible. This must be signed (status/position), dated and timed.

NB. It may not be that all young people or people with disabilities are able to express themselves verbally. Communication difficulties may mean that it is hard for their complaint to be understood. Sometimes it is difficult to distinguish the signs of abuse from the symptoms of some types of disabilities or conditions. However, where there are concerns about the safety of a young person or adult with disabilities, record what has been observed in detail and follow the SDTA's procedures to report these concerns. Where there are no procedures in place, seek advice from social services.

### **5.2.2 Actions to Avoid**

The person receiving the disclosure should not:

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

### **5.3 Responding to Suspicions**

**It is not the responsibility of anyone working under the auspices of sport in a paid or voluntary capacity, or those working in affiliated organisations, to take responsibility or to decide whether or not child abuse is taking place, or has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to protect children in order that appropriate agencies can then make enquiries and take any necessary action to protect the young person.**

#### **5.3.1 Social Services**

Social services have a statutory duty under The Children Act 1989, to ensure the welfare of children and work with the local Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) to comply with its procedures. When a child protection referral is made, the social services staff have a legal responsibility to make enquiries if there is a reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm (Section 47, Children's Act 1989). This may involve talking to the child and family, and gathering information from other people who know the child. Enquiries may be carried out jointly with the police. If action needs to be taken urgently and/or out of office hours, then the police will deal with the enquiry sensitively and effectively. Local authorities will need to link in closely with their respective ACPC and cross-reference the guidance produced by the ACPC.

### **5.3.2 Sharing Concerns with Parents**

There is always a commitment to work in partnership with parents or carers where there are concerns about their children. Therefore, in most situations, it would be important to talk to parents or carers to help clarify any initial concerns. For example, if a child seems withdrawn, there may be a reasonable explanation. He/she may have experienced an upset in the family, such as a parental separation, divorce or bereavement.

### **5.3.3 When it is Not Appropriate to Share Concerns with Parents**

There are circumstances in which a young person might be placed at even greater risk if concerns are shared (eg. where a parent or carer may be responsible for the abuse or not able to respond to the situation appropriately). In these situations or where concerns still exist, any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to the person in charge as soon as possible and recorded.

## **5.4 Allegations against Staff or Volunteers**

This includes anyone working with children in a paid or voluntary capacity. Child abuse can and does occur outside the family setting. Although it is a sensitive and difficult issue, child abuse has occurred within institutions and may occur within other settings (eg sport or other social activities). Recent research indicates that abuse that takes place within a public setting is rarely a one-off event. It is crucial that those involved in sport are aware of this possibility and that all allegations are taken seriously and appropriate action taken. It is important that any concerns for the welfare of the child, arising from abuse or harassment by a member of staff or volunteer, should be reported immediately.

### **5.4.1 Seek Advice**

The SDTA's CPO's are available and should be informed of situations where anyone is concerned or unsure as to what action to take. There may be circumstances where allegations are about poor practice rather than abuse but those responsible should always consult senior colleagues and gain advice from social services, police or the NSPCC if there is any doubt. This is because it may be just one of a series of other instances which together cause concern.

### **5.4.2 Support for the Reporter of Suspected Abuse**

It is acknowledged that feelings generated by the discovery that a coach, official, member of staff or volunteer is, or may be, abusing a child, will raise concerns among other staff or volunteers. This includes the difficulties inherent in reporting such matters.

The SDTA assures all members, volunteers and people working with young persons that it will fully support and protect anyone who, in good faith (without malicious intent), report his or her concern about a colleague's practice or the possibility that a child may be being abused.

### **5.4.3 Types of Investigation**

Where there is a complaint against a member of staff or volunteer, there may be three types of investigation:

- Criminal
- Child Protection
- Disciplinary or misconduct

Civil proceedings may also be initiated by the person/family or the person who alleged the abuse.

The results of the police and social services investigation may well influence the SDTA's disciplinary investigation, but not necessarily.

Further information on the potential actions of social services etc may be found in the local ACPC guidelines.

## **6. Recruitment, Employment and Development of Staff & Volunteers**

### **6.1 Introduction**

All reasonable steps must be taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with Young People and disabled adults. The same procedures should be adopted whether staff are paid or unpaid, full or part-time.

### **6.2 Pre-recruitment Checks**

The following pre-recruitment checks should always be carried out: this will need to be decided by the EC.

### **6.3 Advertising**

If any form of advertising is used to recruit staff, it should reflect the:

- aims of the Organisation and where appropriate, the particular programme involved
- responsibilities of the role
- level of experience or qualifications required (eg experience of working with children is an advantage)
- the Organisation's open and positive stance on child protection

### **6.4 Pre-Application Information**

Pre-application information sent to interested or potential applicants should contain:

- a job, description including roles and responsibilities
- a person specification (eg stating qualifications or experience required)
- an application form



## 6.5 Applications

All applications whether for paid or voluntary, full or part-time positions should complete and application form which should elicit the following information.

- Name, address and National Insurance Number (to confirm identity and right to work)
- Relevant experience, qualifications and training undertaken
- Listing of past career or involvement in sport (to confirm experience and identify any gaps)
- Whether the applicants are known to any social services department as being an actual or potential risk to children or young people, a self-disclosure question to establish whether they have ever had action taken against them in relation to child abuse, sexual offences or violence.
- The names of at least two people (not relatives) willing to provide written references that comment on the applicant's previous experience of, and suitability for, working with children and young people (previous employer)
- Any former involvement with the sport
- The applicants consent to criminal record checks being undertaken if necessary
- The applicant's consent to abide by the Organisation's Code of Ethics and Conduct appropriate to the position sought (eg coach, official etc).

The form should also state that failure to disclose information or subsequent failure to conform to the Code of Ethics and Conduct will result in disciplinary action and possible exclusion from the Organisation.

## 6.6 Checks and References

A minimum of two written references should be taken up and at least one should be associated with former work with children/ young people. If an applicant has no experience of working with children, training is strongly recommended. Written references should always be followed up and confirmed by telephone. A self-disclosure form should be adopted as part of the Organisations Coaches/Helpers Register (registers need to be extended to all those with substantial access to children).

Checks may be carried out with the following organisations that maintain information about individuals who are deemed to be unsuitable to work with children:

- In England & Wales: Department of Health Consultancy Index
- In Scotland: PVG details
- In Northern Ireland: The DHSS Pre-employment Consultancy Services (PECS)

## 6.7 Interview and Induction

It may or may not be appropriate to conduct a formal interview. If it is, it should be carried out according to acceptable protocol and recommendations.

All staff, paid or voluntary, will undergo a formal or informal induction in which:

- their qualifications as a coach/official are substantiated
- they complete a profile to identify training needs/aspirations
- they sign up to the Organisation's Code of Ethics and Conduct
- the expectations, role and responsibilities of the job are clarified (eg through a formal or informal work programme or goal-setting exercise). This should include observation of practical coaching. Induction is essential if work is to be with Young People.
- Child protection procedures are explained and training needs established

## 6.8 Training

Checks are only part of the process to protect children from possible abuse.

Appropriate training will enable individuals to recognise their responsibilities with regard to their own good practice and the reporting of suspected poor practice/concerns of possible abuse.

It is recommended that all staff working with children must be up to date, or receive training in the following areas:

- Child protection awareness (eg NC17 workshop on Good Practice and Child Protection)
- First aid (eg NCF/BRC Emergency First Aid for sport, St John or St Andrews Ambulance First Aid qualifications)
- How to work effectively with children (eg NCF workshops on Working with Children, Coaching Children and Young People, Responsible Sports Coach)
- Child-centred coaching styles (eg NCF workshop Coaching Methods and Communication)

## **6.9 Monitoring and Appraisal**

At regular intervals (or following a programme), all staff or volunteers should be given the opportunity to receive formal (eg through an appraisal) or informal feedback, to identify training needs and set new goals. Managers should be sensitive to any concerns about poor the practice or abuse and act on them at an early stage. They should also offer appropriate support to those who report concerns/ complaints.

## **6.10 Complaints Procedures**

The SDTA's complaints and appeals procedures should be used to deal with any formal complaints and/or appeals. The SDTA will endeavour to ensure that parents and Young People are aware of the existence of these procedures.

## **7. SDTA Sources of Information and useful contacts:**

### **Expert Advice**

If unsure as to what to do, advice can be obtained by telephoning:

- the local social services department and speaking to the duty worker
- the NSPCC 24 hour free phone Helpline on 0800 800 5001
- Childline Freephone on 0800 1111
- Police also have specially trained child protection teams who will give guidance and support, and deal with out-of-office hours enquiries when social services are not available.
- The SDTA's CPO's who will advise if the matter concerns any dance-related matter or SDTA member. (Details can be found on the cover of this document)

The legislative framework that underpins the welfare and protection of Children and Young People in Scotland is the Children Scotland Act (1995)