

Downshire YM Football Club

Safeguarding Children & Young People Policy

This Safeguarding policy is based on guidelines and legislation outlined in the following documents:

- Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport, Sport Northern Ireland 2007.
- Children (NI) Order 1995.
- Our Duty to Care NI, DHSSPS 2012.
- Getting It Right, DHSSPS 2012.
- Co-operating to Safeguard Children DHSSPS 2003.
- Area Child Protection Committee – Regional Child Protection Policy 2005.
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007.
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012

SAFEGUARDING

The term child protection has been changed to safeguarding as it reflects the wider responsibility for health and safety and prevention as well as just protection from abuse. The word safeguarding has been used with increasing frequency over the last few years in a wide range of settings and situations, going well beyond the world of children and child protection. It may be defined as "Doing everything possible to minimise the risk of harm to children and young people."

Safeguarding is about being proactive and putting measures in place in advance of any contact with children to ensure that children are going to be kept safe. This could include:

- Ensuring staff are properly checked when they are recruited;
- Guidelines for people who come into contact with children as part of their role to ensure they know what they need to do to keep children safe; and
- Guidelines for planning an event or activity with children and putting measures in place to minimise the risk of safeguarding issues occurring. The following is a safeguarding policy for Downshire Football Club

Date Agreed by Club Committee: December 2025

Date for Review: December 2026

POLICY STATEMENT

We at Downshire Football Club are committed to good practice which protects children¹ from harm. Staff and volunteers accept and recognise their responsibility to provide an environment which promotes the safety of the child at all times. To achieve this we will:

- Develop an awareness of the issues which may lead to children being harmed.
- Create an open environment by identifying a 'Designated Safeguarding Children Officer (DSCO)' to whom the children can turn to if they need to talk.
- Adopt child centred and democratic coaching styles.
- Adopt safeguarding guidelines through codes of conduct for members and all adults working at the club. Adult workers include coaches, parents and volunteers.
- Ensure careful recruitment, selection and management procedures. These procedures will include regular support and supervision is provided to staff/volunteers.
- Ensure complaints, grievance and disciplinary procedures are included in our constitution.
- Share information about concerns with children and parents and others who need to know.
- Provide information as required to the management committee.
- Ensure good and safe working/playing practices.
- Be involved in training made available through the various agencies and strengthen links with these agencies.
- Keep Safeguarding policies under regular review (every three years minimum).

The Children (Northern Ireland) Order (1995) is based on a clear and consistent set of principles designed with the common aim of promoting the welfare of children.

Children have the right to be safe. All coaches should ensure that this fundamental principle takes precedence over all other considerations.

This policy applies to all those involved in Downshire Football Club, coaches, administrators, officials, volunteer drivers, parents and young people.

EQUALITY STATEMENT

Downshire Football Club promotes equality of opportunity within the club.

To address the vulnerability of children with a disability, coaches will seek guidance on working with children with a disability from external agencies, parents/guardians and the children themselves.

CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

However, information of a confidential nature will only be communicated on a "need to know" basis, with the welfare of the child paramount.

Considerations of confidentiality will not be allowed to override the rights of children or young members to be protected from harm.

AWARENESS OF THE ISSUES

Background knowledge in relation to child abuse, the general principles of safeguarding and the ability to recognise and respond to abuse are important issues. Of primary concern for Downshire Football Club is the issue of Safeguarding of our young members within the operation of the club. However, being cognisant of the indicators of abuse in respect of young members caused by others outside the club, are of an equal importance for the safety and wellbeing of that child.

Co-operating to Safeguard Children 2003 formally recognises four types of abuse:

1. Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is the deliberate physical injury to a child, or the wilful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering. This may include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, confinement to a room or cot, or inappropriately giving drugs to control behaviour.

2. Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone. Domestic violence, adult mental health problems and parental substance misuse may expose children to emotional abuse.

3. Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including

penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include noncontact activities, such as involving children in looking at or the production of pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

4. Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's physical, emotional and/or psychological needs, likely to result in significant harm. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate foods, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment, lack of stimulation or lack of supervision. It may also include non-organic failure to thrive (faltering growth).

In addition to these Downshire Football Club recognises that we have a responsibility to:

“protect children from bullying and to have policies and procedures in places to do so”

Co-operating to Safeguard Children DHSSPS, 2003

Coaches should challenge bullying in any form i.e. physical or emotional. Physical bullying can take the form of attacks, such as hitting, kicking, taking or damaging belongings. Emotional bullying may be a verbal assault, including name-calling, insults, repeat teasing, sectarian/racist assaults, or it may take more indirect forms, such as spreading malicious gossip, rumours or excluding someone from a social group. This can be done face to face, but equally young people can experience bullying through online activity or texting. Bullying is not an accepted behaviour towards anyone at Downshire Football Club be they child, coach, volunteer or parent. Anyone found to be bullying others will be dealt with seriously both in regard to the behaviour exhibited and the reasons for the behaviour.

INDICATORS OF ABUSE

The following is a list of some indicators of abuse, but it is not exhaustive:

PHYSICAL INDICATORS	BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS
☐ Unexplained bruising in soft tissue areas ☐ Repeated injuries ☐ Black eyes ☐ Injuries to the mouth ☐ Torn or bloodstained clothing ☐ Burns or scalds ☐ Bites ☐ Fractures ☐ Marks from implements ☐ Inconsistent stories/excuses relating to injuries	☐ Unexplained changes in behaviour - becoming withdrawn or aggressive ☐ Difficulty in making friends ☐ Distrustful of adults or excessive attachment to adults ☐ Sudden drop in performance ☐ Changes in attendance pattern ☐ Inappropriate sexual awareness, behaviour or language ☐ Reluctance to remove clothing

RESPONDING TO DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE

- Record what has been said
- Remain sensitive and calm
- Reassure the child that they
 - ☐ • are safe
 - ☐ • were right to tell
 - ☐ • are not to blame
 - ☐ • are being taken seriously
- Let the child talk - do not interview
- Listen and hear, give the child time to say what they want
- Ensure the experience is as positive as it can be
- Explain that you must tell others to ensure action is taken to increase their safety, but will maintain confidentiality
- Tell the child what will happen next
- Involve appropriate individuals immediately
- Stay calm

Reassure them that they have done the right thing in telling and that it will be dealt with appropriately

Never

- Question unless for clarification
- Make promises you cannot keep
- Rush into actions that may be inappropriate

- Make/pass a judgment on alleged abuser
- Take sole responsibility, consult the designated officer so you can begin to protect the child and gain support for yourself

DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN OFFICER (DSCO)

The DSCO within Downshire Football Club is:

Ian Walker	downshirefootballclub@gmail.com
NAME	CONTACT DETAILS

Ian Walker shall be made known to young members, coaches and parents alike; as the DSCO to whom concerns will be addressed. If the concern is about the DSCO please report to the Academy Director, Ryan Crossey.

SAFE RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES FOR VOLUNTEERS/COACHES

- Volunteers and coaches are carefully selected, trained and supervised. The office bearers of the club committee must vouch for new volunteers/coaches potential involvement and their participation must be ratified by the unanimous approval of executive group/remaining coaches.
- All new coaches/volunteers working with children or young people must complete the sports own application form which includes a self declaration section).
- Individuals must complete and sign the Access NI Disclosure Certificate Application Form which gives permission to enable The IFA to administer an Access NI check (proof of identity MUST be provided).
- Declaration of past convictions or cases pending and agreement to have an Access NI check completed, is of course a pre-requisite to approval to coach/volunteer to work with young people.
- ALL volunteers/coaches must agree to abide by the club's Safeguarding Policy and all are required to sign the Code of Conduct.
- Any concerns or objections with regard to suitability of a coach should be submitted to the Governing Body designated person. These matters will be raised with the IFA case management committee with appropriate action taken including a formal response in writing to the concerned party if required. Clubs should not deal with concerns about a coach in isolation.

TRAINING FOR VOLUNTEERS/COACHES

This club will:

- Ensure the IFA approved coaching sessions for volunteers/coaches have been scheduled at the club and ALL participants are expected to qualify to the minimum level.
- When appointing volunteers/coaches consider their current or previous experience either playing or coaching football.
- Education and training in the basics of Safeguarding will apply to all coaches/volunteers/management committee members working with the children or young members. Downshire Football Club is committed to continuous updating and review of our current safeguarding policy.
- Safeguarding training should include:
 - Basic awareness of Safeguarding issues
 - Our club/organisation's safeguarding policies and procedures including our code of conduct
- Training will be carefully selected to ensure it is sufficient. For instance a one-hour training session is unlikely to be very useful. A minimum of three hours is required for basic awareness raising, and we will seek that training from a specific training provider with experience and knowledge of good practice in sport.
- Ensure that all new coaches have attended safeguarding awareness workshop within six months of taking up their post. This opportunity should also be made available to parents and other volunteers to enable a culture of a child-focused club to prevail.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers should receive induction, and training appropriate to their role. Training should be updated and reviewed regularly for new staff/volunteers and in line with changing legislation.

CODES OF CONDUCT

A Code of Conduct lets all our staff/volunteers in our club/organisation know what behaviour is expected and what is unacceptable. It will also let all involved know what sanctions will be applied for non-compliance with the code. A written code of conduct will be prominently displayed or communicated to everyone associated with your club/organisation. It will be applied consistently. DFC has a Code of Conduct for coaches/volunteers and young people and a code of expectations for parents/guardians.

GUIDELINES RELATING TO AWAY DAYS AND RESIDENTIALS

Travelling to away fixtures and residentials are a regular event for this clubs. Trips may vary from short journeys across town to play another local team or involve more complicated arrangements involving overnight stays. But Downshire Football Club is committed to ensuring that we follow certain standards to ensure the safety of our members.

SUPPORT AND SUPERVISION

Downshire Football Club recognises that it is good practice to set up a system of support and supervision of staff/volunteers. This will enable staff/volunteers to become more effective by identifying training needs, dealing quickly with difficulties and will contribute to safe activities for children. (For those with staff see staff handbook for further details on supervision).

Volunteers will be offered regular opportunities to review their experiences at Downshire Football Club and to identify any training or further support they require.

Good management will also create an atmosphere where volunteers feel valued, are listened to and where issues can be dealt with quickly by systems already in place. Therefore as a club we will ensure;

- ❑ Volunteers should be made aware of how to access training. Football requires all those coaching/instructing children to attend safeguarding training. In addition to this we will ensure all their volunteers are made aware of IFA reporting procedures.
- ❑ We will take time to induct volunteers on club/ sports policies and procedures.
- ❑ We will introduce a system for reviewing a volunteer's role on an annual basis, perhaps as part of pre-season planning. This will help to ensure we get the best out of volunteers and will provide volunteers with the opportunity to progress to new roles that accommodate their own particular skills and aptitude.

GUIDELINES FOR REPORTING ACCIDENTS

In the event of an accident, the following procedure will be carried out:

- Fill in the Accident Form
- Make contact with parents/guardians.
- Forward to DSCO for record keeping/action required.
- Contact emergency services/GP if required.
- Record in detail all facts surrounding the accident, witnesses, etc.
- Sign off on any action required from senior management officer.

GUIDELINES FOR REPORTING ALLEGATIONS/INCIDENTS

- Record all incidents reported or observed on an Incident Form
- Inform DSCO ASAP.
- One copy to designated person within 24 hours.
- Ensure confidentiality - only "need to know basis"
- Inform parents, unless to do so may put the child at further risk.
- The DSCO will be responsible for storing any report in a safe and secure environment and forwarding a copy on to statutory agencies if required.

HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDELINES

This club are committed to ensure the safety of all members by completing a risk assessment for activities and endeavouring to provide first aid treatment for injury, accidents and cases of ill health during coaching sessions or at competitions.

USEFUL NUMBERS	
NSPCC Helpline	0808 800 5000
PSNI Public Protection Unit	028 9065 0222 Ask for your local Public Protection Unit
Childline	Freephone 0800 1111
Sport Northern Ireland	028 9038 1222
Child Protection in Sport Unit	0203 222 4246
Lifeline	0808 808 8000

Health and Social Care Trusts Clubs adopting this policy should insert the number of their local HSCT.

Health and Social Care Trusts in NI - Each trust will have a Gateway team to deal with reports of abuse and also more local contacts for on-going professional liaison for advice on concerns.

Northern HSC Trust - Tel: 030 0123 4333 / Out of hours 028 9446 8833

South Eastern HSC Trust - Tel: 030 0100 0300 / Out of hours – 028 9056 5444

Southern HSC Trust - Tel: 080 0783 7745 / Out of hours – 028 3833 4444 Belfast HSC Trust

Tel: 028 9050 7000 / Out of hours – 028 9056 5444

Western HSC Trust Tel: 028 7131 4090 / Out of hours – 028 7134 5171

IMPLEMENTATION AND AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION

It is important that there is a free flow of information between coaches/volunteers, children and parents, in terms of promotion of good practice and holding up to date information. This club will insist that a parent/guardian consent form is completed for each under 18-year-old member

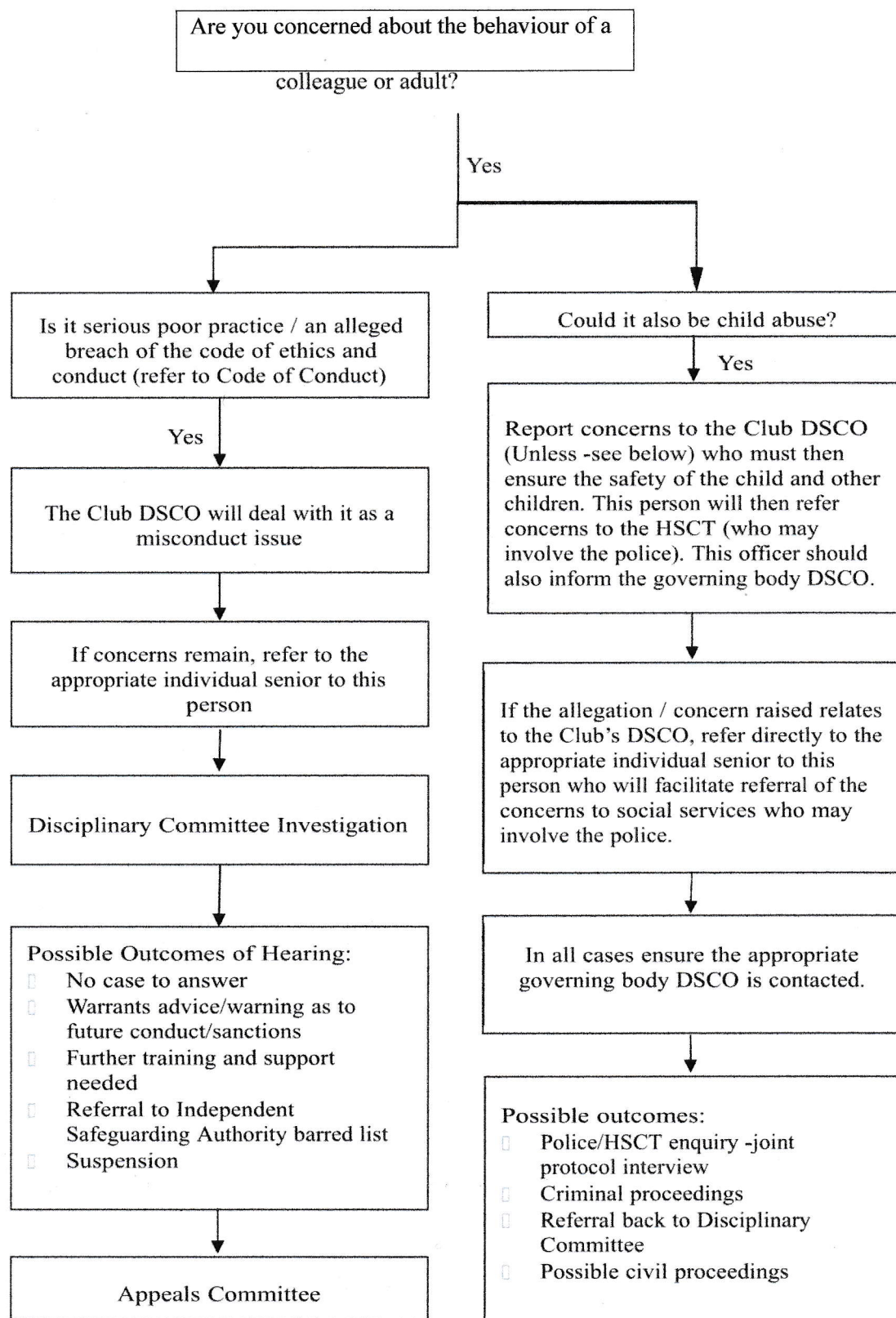
Parents should know what we do and how we do it, and the coaches will always be on hand during, or after coaching sessions, for consultation or advice.

When appropriate, letters (or telephone contact) will be issued in relation to further information or specifics in respect of an event etc.

A regular review of club policies will take place through meetings with coaches/volunteers and feedback from children and parents. As a club we have developed a plan for implementing our safeguarding

INTERNAL CONCERNS REPORTING GUIDELINES

Note HSCT : Health and Social Care Trust



If you do not know who to turn to for advice or are worried about sharing your concerns with a senior colleague, you should contact the Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT) Gateway Team direct (or the NSPCC on 0808 800 5000). At any stage during the process in the left hand column the issue can be referred externally either formally or informally for advice. Following the external (right column) outcome the matter may be referred back to the organisation's Disciplinary Committee.

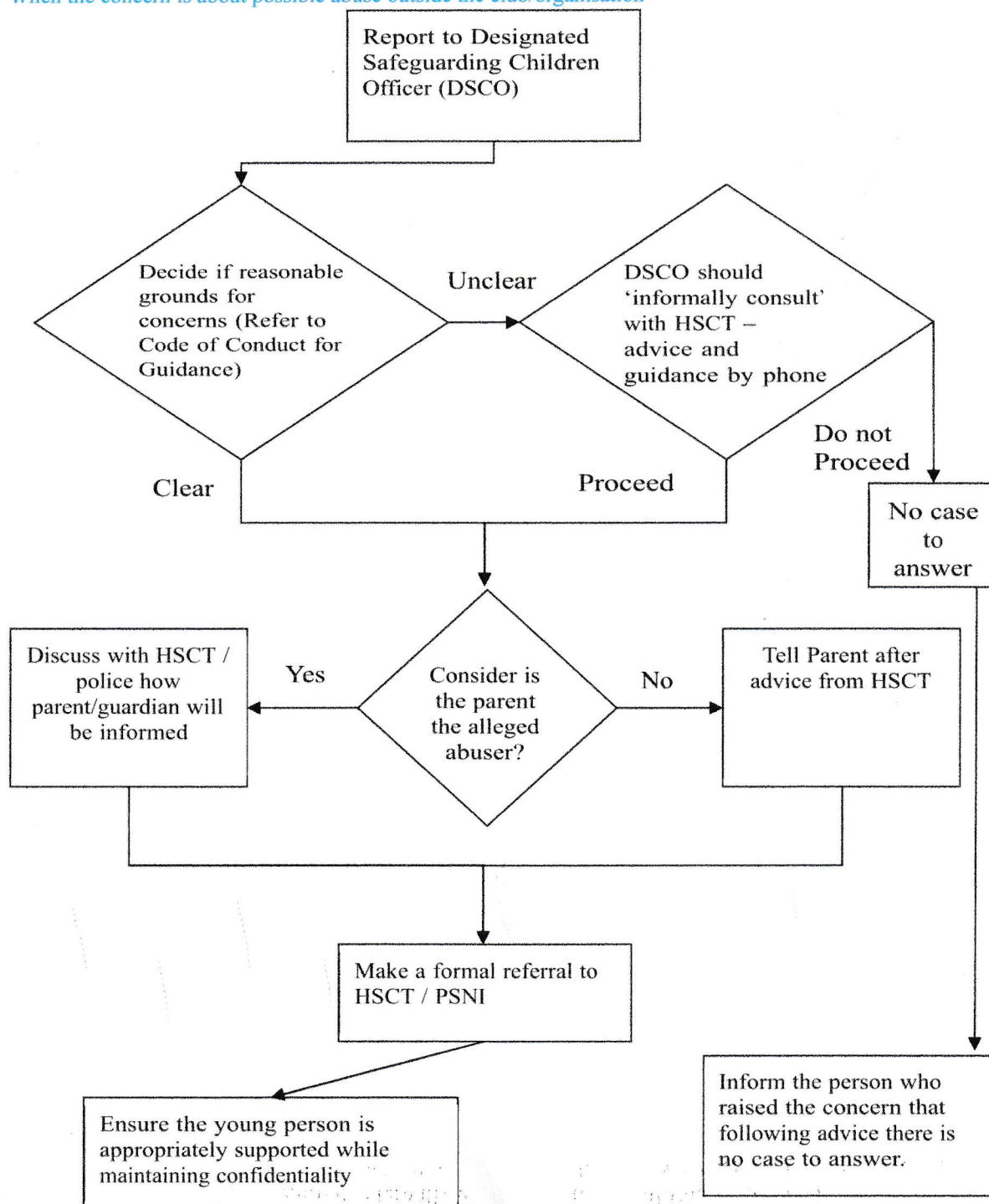
DEALING WITH CONCERNS ABOUT A COLLEAGUE

The vast majority of people who work with children are well motivated and would never harm a child. Unfortunately, a few do and it is essential that the organisation creates a culture that makes staff/volunteers willing and comfortable to voice their concerns, particularly those about someone with whom they work or whom they know. Again, the organisation's Safeguarding Procedures should be followed.

During an investigation, support should be given both to the individual who voices concerns and to the suspected abuser. Once the investigation is completed, the organisation must decide what action, if any, is necessary to prevent a similar situation arising again.

EXTERNAL CONCERNS FLOW CHART

When the concern is about possible abuse outside the club/organisation



Approved By

Carl Rossey Chairman

Date 17th - 2 - 26.

Nat Oke ^{ASST.}
Secretary

Date 17/2/26