

# CHILD PROTECTION POLICY     Inverness Canoe Club

In Scottish law a 'child' is generally defined as under 16 years of age, however, for the purposes of this guidance, a 'child' is defined as being under the age of 18 years. This is in accordance with legislation covering the recruitment of adults to work / volunteer with children and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child.

**Inverness Canoe Club is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children in its care. It recognises the responsibility to promote safe practice and to protect children from harm, abuse and exploitation.** For the purposes of this policy and associated procedures a child is recognised as someone under the age of 18.

Staff and volunteers will work together to embrace difference and diversity and respect the rights of children and young people.

This document outlines Inverness Canoe Club's commitment to protecting children.

**These guidelines are based on the following principles:**

- **The welfare of children is the primary concern;**
- **All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, race, origin, socio-economic status, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from all forms of harm and abuse;**
- **Child protection is everyone's responsibility;**
- **Children have the right to express views on all matters which affect them, should they wish to do so;**
- **Organisations shall work in partnership together with children and parents/carers to promote the welfare, health and development of children.**

Inverness Canoe Club will:

- Accept that it is our responsibility as a group to check that all adults in positions requiring disclosure checks have been appropriately recruited and vetted. This will include coaches and other adults working with young people.
- Promote the health and welfare of children by providing opportunities for them to take part in kayaking and canoeing safely.
- Respect and promote the rights, wishes and feelings of children.
- Promote and implement appropriate procedures to safeguard the wellbeing of children and protect them from abuse.
- Recruit, train, support and supervise members and volunteers to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect children from abuse and to reduce risk to themselves.
- Require members and volunteers to adopt and abide by this Child Protection Policy and these procedures.
- Respond to allegations of misconduct or abuse of children, in line with this Policy and these procedures as well as implementing, where appropriate, the relevant disciplinary and appeals procedures.
- Observe guidelines issued by Highland Council Child Protection Committee for the protection of children.
- Regularly monitor and evaluate the implementation of this Policy and these procedures.

We believe that every child, regardless of age has at all times and in all situations a right to feel safe and protected from any situation or practice that result in a child being physically or psychologically damaged.

All volunteers are encouraged to share any concerns with the group's Child Protection Officer. If the situation is clearly an urgent case, the child is too frightened to go home or we have serious doubts about a child's safety, we will contact Social Work Services or Police immediately. It is important that all volunteers communicate concerns accurately. To this end, volunteers will follow the procedures below.

1. Upon the receipt of any information from a child or suspicions, it is necessary to make an accurate and detailed written record of what they have seen, heard or known, at the time that event occurs.
2. Share their concerns with the Child Protection Officer for the Club and agree what action to take.
3. Avoid asking any more questions than are necessary to clarify whether there is a concern. Always refer to the statutory services to undertake in depth investigation of any suspicions or allegations.
4. All volunteers will work within the Club code of conduct and guidelines for volunteers

If we have concerns, we must act. Please remember to record and report NOT investigate.

### **Contact Numbers**

If a child or young person is in immediate danger phone the police on 999

Emergency Out of hours Social Work Team 08457 697284

General Child Protection Enquiries 01463 644461 (Mon to Wed only) or 07584 268884

National free phone Child Protection Info Line on 0800 022 3222

For children and young people, Childline free helpline on 0800 1111

NSPCC Child Protection Helpline 0808 800 5000

Child Protection Officer, Inverness Canoe Club, contact at [cpo@invernesscc.org.uk](mailto:cpo@invernesscc.org.uk)

### **Review**

This Policy and these Procedures will be regularly reviewed:

- In accordance with changes in legislation and guidance on the protection of children or following any changes within Inverness Canoe Club.
- Following any issues or concerns raised about the protection of children within the Inverness Canoe Club.
- In all other circumstances, at least every three years.

### **Further information:**

Appendix 1 – ICC Procedure for appointment of volunteers and coaches

Appendix 2 – Code of Conduct for Safeguarding Children

Appendix 3 – Responding to concerns about Child Abuse

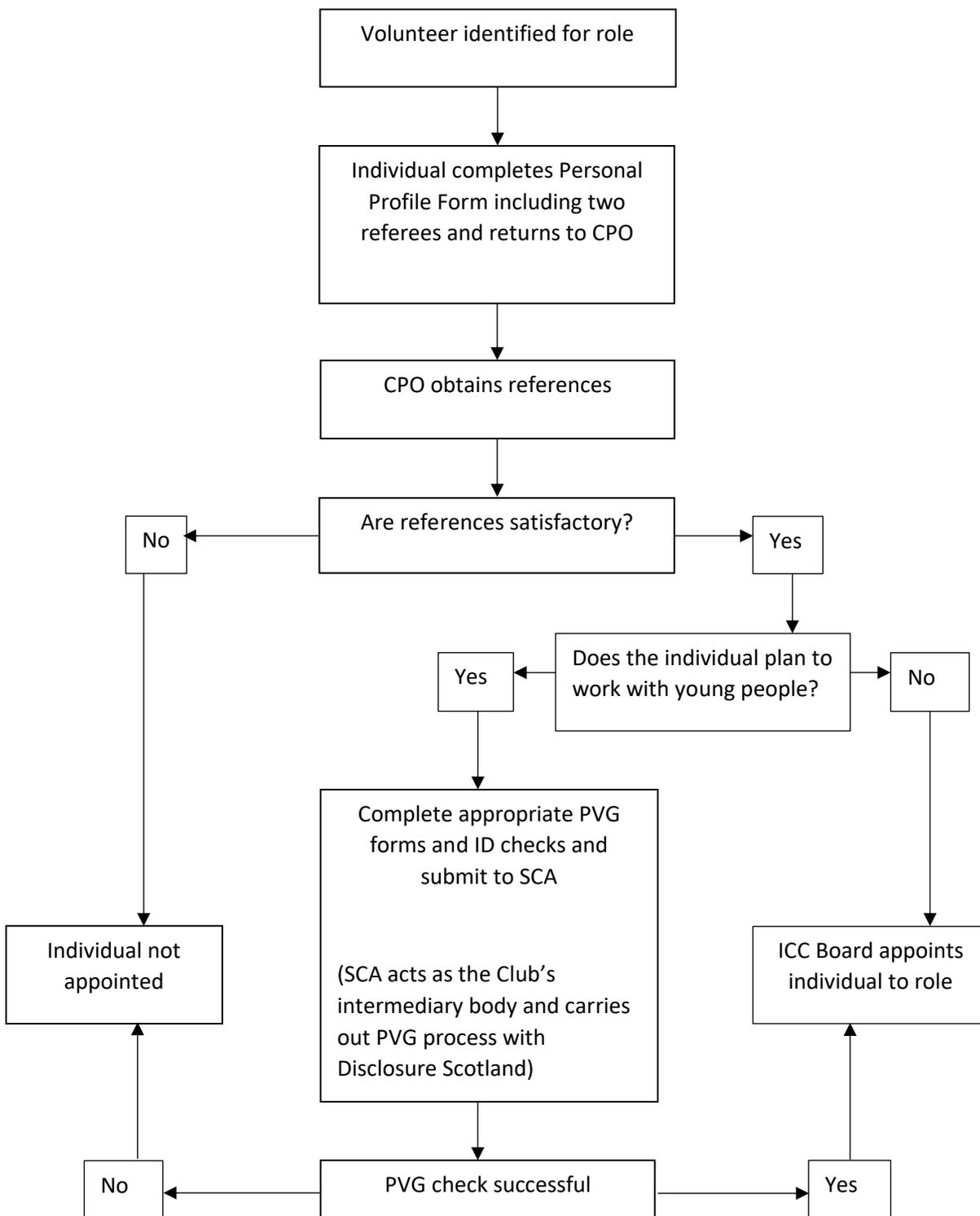
Appendix 4 – Responding to concerns about the conduct of a volunteer

Appendix 5 – Report form for recording concerns

Appendix 6 – Child Protection training requirements



## Appendix 1 – PROCEDURE FOR APPOINTMENT OF VOLUNTEERS AND COACHES



All club volunteers should be made aware of Child Protection policy and procedures  
All club volunteers should attend appropriate levels of training in Child Protection

## **Protection of Vulnerable Groups Scheme (PVG)**

This scheme is managed by Disclosure Scotland and is arranged for the Club through the Scottish Canoe Association. If you wish to work with children and young people (under 18) in any capacity within the Inverness Canoe Club, then you will need to be disclosure checked through this scheme. No disclosure is required for individuals who work with children in an unplanned, one-off basis. However, use of this provision should only be in highly extenuating circumstances and not resorted to on a routine basis.

The Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 gave rise to the Protecting Vulnerable Groups Scheme ("The PVG Scheme") which was introduced in 2011. The legislation applies to all those involved in "regulated work" with young people. Regulated work includes both paid and voluntary work and it is relevant to clubs, centres and others involved in the sport of canoeing. Sports and activities such as canoeing offer a great opportunity for people to get involved in physical activity, learn a new skill and meet new people. Sports coaches and leaders will be only too familiar with the need to have child protection policies and safe recruitment practices in place. Of course, most people who work and volunteer with vulnerable groups are responsible and caring. But there are some who may choose to use their position of responsibility to do harm. Ensuring that children are protected from those who could cause them harm is a priority for us all. People who work with vulnerable groups must join the PVG Scheme and anyone with a known history of harmful or abusive behaviour towards children or protected adults will not be able to become a PVG Scheme member which means they will not be able to work with one or both groups.

The PVG Scheme continuously updates its members' records, adding any new criminal convictions and any information held by the police that they consider relevant to an individual's role. This means that any new information indicating that a person may pose a risk can be acted upon promptly by Disclosure Scotland and by employers. As well as strengthening protection for vulnerable groups, the PVG Scheme will be quick and easy for people to use, reducing the need for people to complete a detailed application form every time a check is required. PVG Scheme checks for volunteers are processed free of charge.

From March 2021, Volunteer Scotland Disclosure Services (VSDS) launched the new online PVG Application Service. This will make the application process faster and simpler to complete. For ICC, this means we request a PVG check from the SCA and carry out the ID checks. The SCA then completes the VSDS Online Application Request and the Club member will receive an automated link from Disclosure Scotland and completes the personal information within 7 days. Disclosure checks are undertaken and a certificate issued to the applicant and the SCA.

Further information can be found at <http://canoescotland.org/child-protection>

## **PVG Scheme Update**

The Disclosure (Scotland) Bill, which has passed its final stage in the Scottish Parliament in 2020, will transform how criminal record disclosures operate and improve the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme. It will modernise and simplify Scotland's disclosure system. The number of disclosure levels will decrease and individuals will have greater control over sharing their information whilst ensuring Disclosure Scotland can continue their vital safeguarding work. Under the new legislation, PVG Scheme membership will be mandatory for those carrying out regulated roles with children and adults, including individuals working in sports, for example, youth coaches and agents.

## Appendix 2 - Code of Conduct for Safeguarding Children in Canoeing

A Code of Conduct has the following important functions:

- sets out what behaviour is acceptable and unacceptable;
- defines standards of practice expected from those to whom it applies;
- forms the basis for challenging and improving practice and ability;
- helps to safeguard staff/volunteers by encouraging them to adhere to agreed standards of practice;
- sets out for children and parents/carers the standards of practice which they and the organisation should expect from those who work/volunteer with children.

Inverness Canoe Club supports and requires all members involved with children and young people (under 18) to observe the following standards of practice, including verbal and non-verbal actions when involved in activities with children. All concerns about breach of this Code of Conduct will be taken seriously and responded to in line with the relevant ICC policies. The standards of practice given below are indicative not exhaustive and serve to highlight key areas.

Good Practice	Unacceptable Practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sport fun, enjoyable and promote fair play</li> <li>• Treat all children equally, with respect, dignity and fairness</li> <li>• Involve parents/carers wherever possible</li> <li>• Build balanced relationships based on mutual trust</li> <li>• Include children in the decision-making process wherever possible</li> <li>• Always work in an open environment, wherever possible. Avoid private or unobserved situations</li> <li>• Put the welfare of each child first before winning or achieving performance goals</li> <li>• Be an excellent role model including not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of children</li> <li>• Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism</li> <li>• Recognise the developmental needs and capacity of children</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engaging in sexually provocative games, including horseplay</li> <li>• Engaging in rough or physical contact unless it is permitted within the rules of the game or competition</li> <li>• Forming intimate emotional, physical or sexual relationships with children</li> <li>• Allowing or engaging in touching a child in a sexually suggestive manner</li> <li>• Allowing children to swear or use sexualised language unchallenged</li> <li>• Making sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun</li> <li>• Allowing children (u18) to consume alcohol</li> <li>• Reducing a child to tears as a form of control.</li> <li>• Allowing allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon</li> <li>• Inviting or allowing children to stay with you at your home</li> <li>• A Coach and/or other leader sharing a room alone with a child</li> </ul>
Practices to be avoided	Sign-Up
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excessive training and competition, pushing children against their will and putting undue pressure on them.</li> <li>• Having 'favourites' – this could lead to resentment and jealousy by other children and could be misinterpreted by others</li> <li>• Spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others</li> <li>• Entering children's bedrooms/sleeping areas on trips away from home, unless in an emergency or in the interest of health and safety. If it is necessary to enter rooms, knock and say that you are coming in. The door should remain open, if appropriate</li> <li>• Where possible, doing things of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves.</li> </ul>	<p><b>I have read and agree to abide by this Code of Conduct. I have also read and agree to abide by the ICC Child Protection Policy, Procedures and Guidelines.</b></p> <p><b>Name:</b></p> <p><b>Signature</b></p> <p><b>Date:</b></p> <p><b>Witnessed by:</b></p> <p><b>(Child Protection Officer, if possible)</b></p>

## **Appendix 3 - RESPONDING TO CONCERNS ABOUT A CHILD**

### **Concerns about the General Welfare of a Child (not involving concerns about child abuse)**

Inverness Canoe Club is committed to working in partnership with parents whenever there are concerns about a child. Parents have the primary responsibility for the safety and well-being of their children. In most situations, not involving the possibility of the abuse of a child, concerns should be discussed with parents. For example, if a child seems withdrawn, he/she may have experienced an upset in the family, such as a parental separation, divorce or bereavement. Common sense is advised in these situations.

Any significant, untoward or unusual incidents which cause concern about the welfare of a child should be recorded on the Significant Incident Form and reported to the ICC Child Protection Officer as soon as possible. Parents should also be informed of the circumstances as soon as possible. Advice should be sought from the ICC Child Protection Officer if there is any uncertainty about the appropriate course of action where there are concerns about the general welfare of a child.

### **Concerns about the Abuse of a Child**

#### **Being alert to signs and symptoms:**

People who abuse others often do so in a manner that makes it difficult for children or young people to tell someone else if they are being abused. However, there may be signs which make you concerned and may be an indication of abuse or neglect.

The child/young person may:

- have unexplained bruising or bruising in an unusual place
- appear afraid, quiet or withdrawn
- appear afraid to go home
- be left unattended or unsupervised
- have inappropriate levels of responsibility for their age
- be acting out in a sexually inappropriate way
- be misusing drugs or alcohol
- be being bullied

The parent/carer (or another adult) may be:

- verbally abusive towards a child or young person
- acting in a violent or sexual manner towards a child, young person or adult who is less able to protect him/herself
- misusing drink or drugs whilst caring for a child or young person

## **What to Do if a Child Tells You about Abuse**

No member of Inverness Canoe Club shall investigate allegations of abuse or decide whether or not a child has been abused.

Allegations of abuse must always be taken seriously. False allegations are very rare. If a child says or indicates they are being abused or information is obtained which gives concern that a child is being abused, the information must be responded to on the same day in line with the following procedure.

### **Respond:**

- React calmly so as not to frighten the child.
- Listen to the child and take what they say seriously. Do not show disbelief.
- Reassure the child they are not to blame and were right to tell someone.
- Be aware of interpreting what a child says, especially if they have learning or physical disabilities which affect their ability to communicate or English is not their first language.
- Do not assume that the experience was bad or painful - it may have been neutral or even pleasurable.
- Avoid projecting your own reactions onto the child.
- Avoid asking any questions. If necessary, only ask enough questions to gain basic information to establish the possibility that abuse may have occurred. Only use open-ended, non-leading questions e.g. Who? Where? When?
- Do not introduce personal information from either your own experiences or those of other children.

### **Avoid:**

- Panicking.
- Showing shock or distaste.
- Probing for more information than is offered.
- Speculating or making assumptions.
- Making negative comments about the person against whom the allegation has been made.
- Approaching the individual against whom the allegation has been made.
- Making promises or agreeing to keep secrets and giving a guarantee of confidentiality.

## **Observation or information from an individual or organisation**

A concern or possible abuse of a child may be observed by another child or adult and information may come from another organisation.

Where there is uncertainty about what to do with the information, The Inverness Canoe Club Child Protection Officer must firstly be consulted for advice on the appropriate course of action.

If the Inverness Canoe Club Child Protection Officer is unavailable or an immediate response is required the police and social work services must be consulted for advice. They have a statutory responsibility for the protection of children and they may already hold other concerning information about the child. Record any advice given.

**If you are concerned about the immediate safety of the child:**

**Take whatever action is required to ensure the child's immediate safety. Pass the information immediately to the Police and seek their advice.**

### **Record**

Make a written record of the information as soon as possible using the Significant Incident Form, completing as much of the form as possible. The following information will help the police and social workers decide what action to take next:

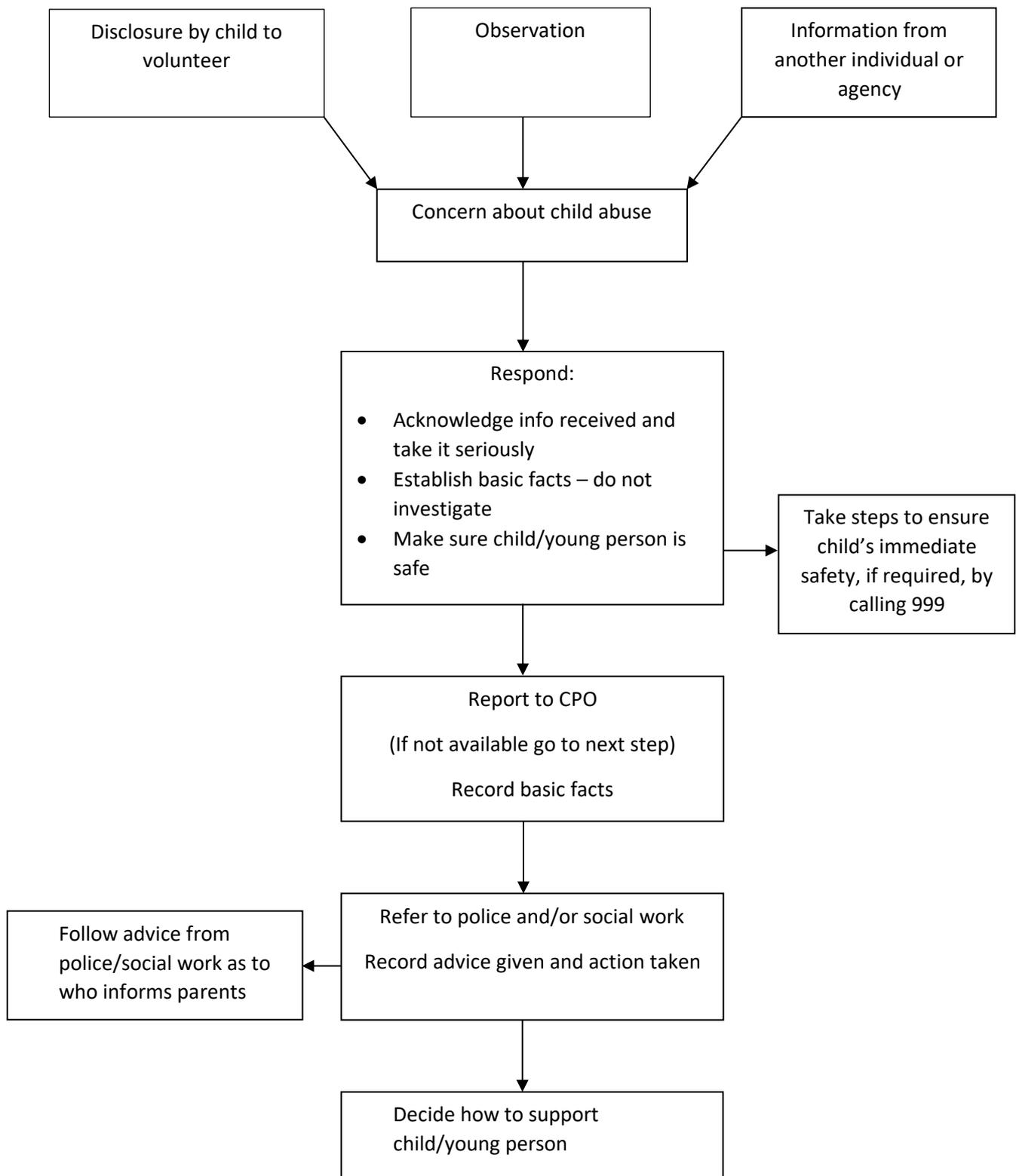
- Child's name, age and date of birth.
- Child's home address and telephone number.
- Any times, dates or other relevant information.
- Whether the person making the report is expressing their own concern or the concerns of another person.
- The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any injuries occurred using the child's own words.
- The nature of the concern (include all of the information obtained during the initial account e.g. time, date, location).
- A description of any visible (when normally dressed) injuries or bruising, behavioural signs, indirect signs (do not physically examine the child).
- Details of any witnesses.
- Whether the child's parents have been informed.
- Details of anyone else who has been consulted and the information obtained from them.
- If it is not the child making the report, whether the child has been spoken to, if so what was said using the child's own words.
- The child's views on the situation.

If completing the form electronically, do not save copies to the hard drive or floppy disk. Print a copy, sign and date and then delete immediately. Pass the record to social work services or the police and to the ICC Child Protection Officer that day.

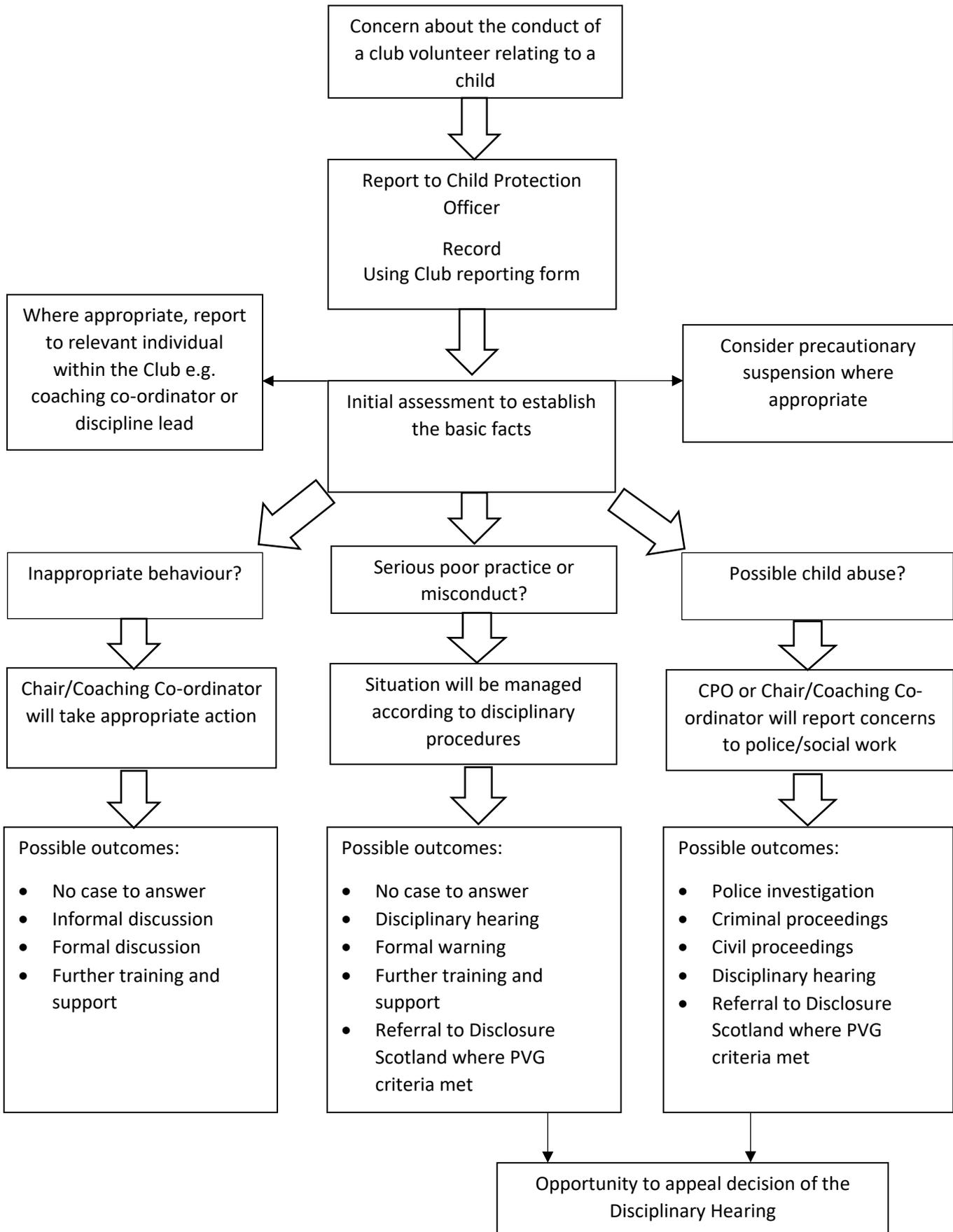
### **Sharing Concerns with Parents/Carers**

Where there are concerns that the parent(s) may be responsible for or have knowledge of the abuse, sharing concerns with the parent(s) may place the child at further risk. **In such cases advice must always firstly be sought from the police or social work services as to who informs the parents.**

## Procedure for responding to concerns about child abuse



## APPENDIX 4 - RESPONDING TO CONCERNS ABOUT THE CONDUCT OF A VOLUNTEER



## Appendix 5 - REPORT FORM FOR RECORDING CONCERNS

It is important to keep an accurate record of the information you know and who you passed it on to. Complete as much information as possible. Continue onto a separate sheet or additional form if necessary. This form must be completed as soon as possible after receiving information that causes concern about the welfare or protection of a child or adult. The form must be passed to the Club Child Protection Officer as soon as possible after completion; do not delay in attempting to obtain information to complete all sections.

<b>PERSON(S) AGAINST WHOM ALLEGATIONS HAVE BEEN MADE</b> (if applicable)	
Full name:	Age:
Address:  Postcode:	
Phone numbers:	
Club/ Centre/ Event:	
Position in Club:	
<b>CHILD/ ADULT INVOLVED</b> (Please complete separate forms for each person involved- if more than one)	
Full name:	
Age/ Date of birth:	Gender:
Ethnicity:	
Parent or carer name(s):	
Address:  Postcode:	
Phone numbers:	
Relationship with the Club:	
<b>YOUR DETAILS</b>	
Full name:	
Position in Club/Centre/Event:	
Address:  Postcode:	
Phone numbers:	

**PROVIDE THE DETAILS OF THE INCIDENT OR CONCERNS THAT YOU HAVE, INCLUDING DATES, TIME AND VENUE:**

**DETAIL EXACTLY WHAT WAS SAID, IF YOUR CONCERNS ARE THE RESULT OF A CHILD/ ADULT SPEAKING TO YOU, INCLUDE DATE, TIME AND VENUE:**

**HAVE YOU SPOKEN TO THE PARENTS? YES  NO**

(If yes, provide details of what was said)

**HAVE YOU SPOKEN TO THE CHILD/ ADULT?** YES  NO

(If yes, provide details of what was said)

**HAVE YOU SPOKEN TO THE PERSON THE ALLEGATIONS ARE BEING MADE AGAINST?**

YES  NO

(If yes, provide details of what was said)

**PROVIDE DETAILS OF FURTHER ACTION TAKEN TO DATE:**

**HAVE YOU INFORMED THE STATUTORY AGENCIES?**

Name of person you spoke to:

Incident Number:

Police YES  NO  \_\_\_\_\_

Children's Social Care YES  NO  \_\_\_\_\_

Adult Social Care YES  NO  \_\_\_\_\_

**WERE THERE ANY WITNESSES TO THE INCIDENT OR CAUSE FOR CONCERN?** YES

NO

(If yes, provide their name, role, relationship (if any) to the child or others involved and contact details)

**PROVIDE THE NAME OF THE PERSON YOU HAVE SPOKEN TO AND THEIR CONTACT DETAILS:**

PRINT NAME: .....

SIGNATURE: .....

DATE/ TIME: .....

.....

Please return this form via email or in an envelope marked **PRIVATE and CONFIDENTIAL** to:

Child Protection Officer, Inverness Canoe Club

## APPENDIX 6 – CHILD PROTECTION TRAINING

Identified Group (Children under 18)	Minimum Child Protection Training Requirements		
	Introduction to child protection (online)	Safeguarding and protecting children (or equivalent)	In Safe Hands
<b>Coaches/Leaders/Instructors</b>			
Working with children		✓	
Incidental/ no contact with children	✓		
Coaching tutors		✓	
<b>Volunteers</b>			
Working regularly with children		✓	
Designated safeguarding officer (Club, trip, event)		✓	✓
Event officials	✓		
Individuals holding contact details of children (membership secretary, website/social media lead)	✓		
Trip leader		✓	
Board Members	✓		

**Introductory Training** – Approximately 45 minutes of online training covering awareness, best practice and what to do if you have a concern This is the minimum training for coaching suitable for coaches, leaders and volunteers who do not work regularly with children.

**Basic Training** – Approximately 3 hour face-to-face workshop (Covid restrictions mean it is currently provided by a 20 minute eLearning session followed by a 3 hour virtual classroom) covering raising awareness of signs of abuse and poor practice and give you the tools to deal with any issues sensitively, appropriately and effectively should the need arise. Suitable for coaches, leaders and volunteers who work regularly with children.

**Specialist Training** – Approximately 3 hours face to face or virtual classroom covering understanding the role and responsibilities of a Safeguarding Officer and statutory agencies and what this means in practice. Putting child protection policies into practice. Suitable for safeguarding officers who have already attended basic training.

**Refresher Training** – Approximately 45 minutes online training refreshing your safeguarding knowledge and providing additional awareness training on a specific topic where safeguarding concerns may arise (the first module looks at social media and further modules are planned). Suitable for those who have completed their basic training and are required to update their safeguarding training every 3 years.