

Port Edgar Yacht Club

Child Protection Policy and Procedures

Relating to the operation of Port Edgar Young Sailors and other young people sailing with Port Edgar Yacht Club

May 2002

The Rear Commodore Shore will be the 'Child Protection Officer', responsible to the Port Edgar Yacht Club for ensuring that the Policy and Procedures contained herein are applied. There shall be a number of Child Protection Co-ordinators appointed, at least one of whom will be easily available when Port Edgar Young Sailors are meeting or taking part in activities under the auspices of Port Edgar Yacht Club. This policy will also apply to any young person sailing from Port Edgar Yacht Club.

The policy statement of Port Edgar Yacht Club is:

The young persons welfare is paramount

all children whatever their age, culture, ability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief or sexual identity, have the right to protection from abuse

all suspicions and allegations of inappropriate behaviour will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately

Any person under the age of 18 will be considered a child for the purposes of this document.

Code of Practice and Procedures

Persons assisting with young people

All persons assisting with Port Edgar Young Sailors will be vouched for to the satisfaction of the Child Protection officer by members of Port Edgar Yacht Club and should preferably be a member of the club.

All persons assisting with Port Edgar Young Sailors will complete a 'Self Declaration' form (Appendix A). It shall not be the policy of Port Edgar Yacht Club to ask for criminal convictions except those of a violent or sexual nature.

Port Edgar Yacht Club reserves the right to carry out police and or social services checks on people assisting with young persons. Any checks carried out will be through the recognised RYA procedures.

Recognising abuse

This section explains what child abuse is, how to recognise it and what to do if you have concerns.

What is child abuse?

Child abuse is a term used to describe ways in which children are harmed, usually by adults and often by people they know and trust. It refers to the damage done to a child's physical or mental health. Children can be abused within or outside their family, at school and in a sports or community environment. Child abuse can take many forms:

Physical abuse where adults or other children:

physically hurt or injure children (e.g. by hitting, shaking, squeezing, biting or burning)

give children alcohol, inappropriate drugs or poison

attempt to suffocate or drown children

in sport situations, physical abuse might also occur when the nature and intensity of training exceeds the capacity of the child's immature and growing body

Neglect includes situations in which adults:

fail to meet a child's basic physical needs (e.g. for food, warm clothing, essential medication)

consistently leave children alone and unsupervised

fail or refuse to give children love, affection or attention

neglect in a sports situation might also occur if a teacher or coach fails to ensure children are safe or exposes them to undue cold or risk of injury

Sexual abuse. Boys and girls are sexually abused when adults (male or female) or other young people use them to meet their own sexual needs. This could include:

full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, fondling

showing children pornographic books, photographs or videos, or taking pictures for pornographic purposes

sport situations which involve physical contact (e.g. supporting or guiding children) could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed. Abusive situations may also occur if adults misuse their power over young people

Emotional abuse can occur in a number of ways. For example, where:

there is persistent lack of love or affection

there is constant overprotection which prevents children from socialising

children are frequently being shouted at or taunted

there is neglect, physical or sexual abuse

emotional abuse in sport might also include situations where parents or coaches subject children to constant criticism, bullying or unrealistic pressure to perform to high expectations.

Bullying

Bullying may be seen as deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. The bully may often be another young person.

Although anyone can be a target of bullying, victims are typically shy, sensitive and perhaps anxious or insecure. Sometimes they are singled out for physical reasons - being overweight, physically small, having a disability or belonging to a different race, faith or culture.

How would I recognise if a child is being abused?

It is not always easy to spot when children have been abused even for the most experienced carers. However, some of the more typical symptoms, which should trigger your suspicions would include:

Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries

sexually explicit language or actions

a sudden change in behaviour (e.g. becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper)

The child describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him/her

a change observed over a long period of time (e.g. the child losing weight or becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt)

a general distrust and avoidance of adults, especially with whom a close relationship would be expected

an unreasonable reaction to normal physical contact

difficulty in making friends or abnormal restrictions on socialising with others.

However, it is important to note that a child could be displaying some of all of these signs, or behaving in a way which is worrying - this does not necessarily mean the child is being abused. Similarly, there may not be any signs, you may just feel something is wrong.

If you are worried, it is NOT your responsibility to decide if it is abuse BUT it is your responsibility to act on your concerns and do something about it.

Good Practice Guide

For the protection of young persons and helpers some common sense guidelines should be followed by helpers to promote good practice. By following these guidelines, the safety of the young person will be ensured and there will be less chance of mistaken or false allegations.

- Do not spend excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others
- Do not take children alone in a car on journeys, however short
- Do not take children to your home

Where any of these are unavoidable, ensure they only occur with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge in the organisation or the child's parents

Design training programmes that are within the ability of the individual child.
(see "Physical Abuse" page 3)

You should never:

Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay

allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form

allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged

make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun

let allegations a child makes go unchallenged or unrecorded; always act

do things of a personal nature that children can do for themselves.

However, it may be sometimes necessary for volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are very young or disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents. In an emergency situation, which requires this type of help, parents should be fully informed. In such situations, it is important to ensure all helpers are sensitive to the child and undertake personal care tasks with the utmost discretion.

In addition, medical consent should be obtained in the event where medication or treatment is required to be administered in the absence of the parent / guardian; this includes hospitalisation. Such procedures would cover the organisation from accusations of neglect.(Appendix 2)

Action if abuse is suspected or alleged

Although it is a sensitive and difficult issue, child abuse can occur and does occur outside the family setting. Child abuse has occurred within institutions and may occur in other settings. If a child has been abused in a public setting, other children may be involved.

Where there is an allegation of abuse against a member of staff, there may be three types of investigation:

1. a criminal investigation
2. a child protection investigation
3. a disciplinary or misconduct investigation

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

Any allegation of abuse will be reported immediately to the Child Protection Co-ordinator on duty

Helpers

What should I do if a child tells me s/he is being abused?

(Appendix 3)

Always:

Stay calm - ensure the child is safe and feels safe

show and tell the child that you are taking what s/he says seriously

reassure the child and stress that s/he is not to blame

be honest, explain you will have to tell someone else to help stop the alleged abuse

make a note of what the child has said as soon as possible after the event

maintain confidentiality - only tell others if it will help protect the child.

Never:

Rush into actions that may be inappropriate

make promises you cannot keep

ask inappropriate questions, which may jeopardise any impending police investigation

See appendix 4

take sole responsibility - consult someone else (the person in charge or someone you can trust) so you can begin to protect the child and gain support for yourself.

If I do something, might it make things worse?

Taking appropriate action if you are worried about abuse is never easy - it takes courage but it protects a young life.

You may be upset about what the child has said or you may worry about the consequences of your actions. Sometimes people worry about children being removed from their families as a result of abuse but in reality this rarely happens. However, one thing is certain - you cannot ignore it. The effects of abuse on children can be devastating, especially if children are left unprotected or do not receive help to cope with the abuse. The most serious effect is that children can and do die as a result of abuse. They can develop behavioural difficulties, problems at school, their development can be delayed and they can become depressed and withdrawn. Some of these problems, if left untreated, can persist into adulthood.

Recording information

(Appendix 5)

When recording information, it is important that you do not carry the process beyond gathering information about the allegation, into beginning an investigation. **Unnecessary interviews with child complainants could prejudice the integrity of evidence that may eventually have to be presented in court.**

There are particular problems with regard to gaining information from children with limited communication skills. Care should be taken that appropriate means are used to find out what the allegation is about without **“leading”** the child.

The environment for recording information needs to be considered carefully. Try and ensure that you are in sight of another adult, but that your conversation won't be overheard. You also need to be careful about physical contact during an interview because it may not be what the child wants. The rule is to let the child initiate any actions and to remain positive and supportive throughout.

An incident report form should be completed as soon as possible (Appendix 5)

Reporting Procedures

Any report or information regarding abuse will be reported immediately to the Child Protection Co-ordinator on duty or available at that time and the information will be acted upon immediately, following the procedures in Appendix 6.

Allegations of misconduct will be reported to the Child Protection Officer who will, if necessary, present a report to the Port Edgar Yacht Club committee for any action deemed necessary.

Self-declaration form

Title: _____ Surname: _____
First Names: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Gender: _____

Have you ever been convicted of any criminal offence relating to violence or of a sexual nature? YES/NO

If yes, please supply details

Note: You are advised that under the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) order 1975 as amended by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) (Amendment) Order 1986 you should declare all convictions including “spent” convictions.

Are you a person known to any Social Services department as being an actual or potential risk to children? YES/NO

If yes, please supply details:

Have you had any disciplinary sanction relating to child abuse? YES/NO

If yes, please supply details

Important: I hereby consent to the RYA undertaking police and/or social services checks against me. I understand that the information contained within this form or supplied by third parties, along with the results of any police or social services checks, will be included on the RYA Child Protection List. I further understand that this may involve, where strictly necessary, disclosing my details to other regulatory bodies and/or third parties who have an interest in child protection issues.

Signed by the above named person
.....

Date.....

Medical consent form

I, the parent / guardian * of :

.....

give permission to the coaches participating in activities during the period
..... (date of event)

to administer any relevant treatment or medication to the named participant, when/if necessary. I shall inform the organising body of any known conditions and medication requirements.

In addition, if the case arises, I authorise the members of staff to take my son/daughter to hospital and give full permission for any treatment required to be carried out in accordance with the hospital's diagnosis. I understand that I shall be notified, as soon as possible, of the hospital visit and any treatment given by the hospital.

Parent / Guardian's* consent

.....(signature)

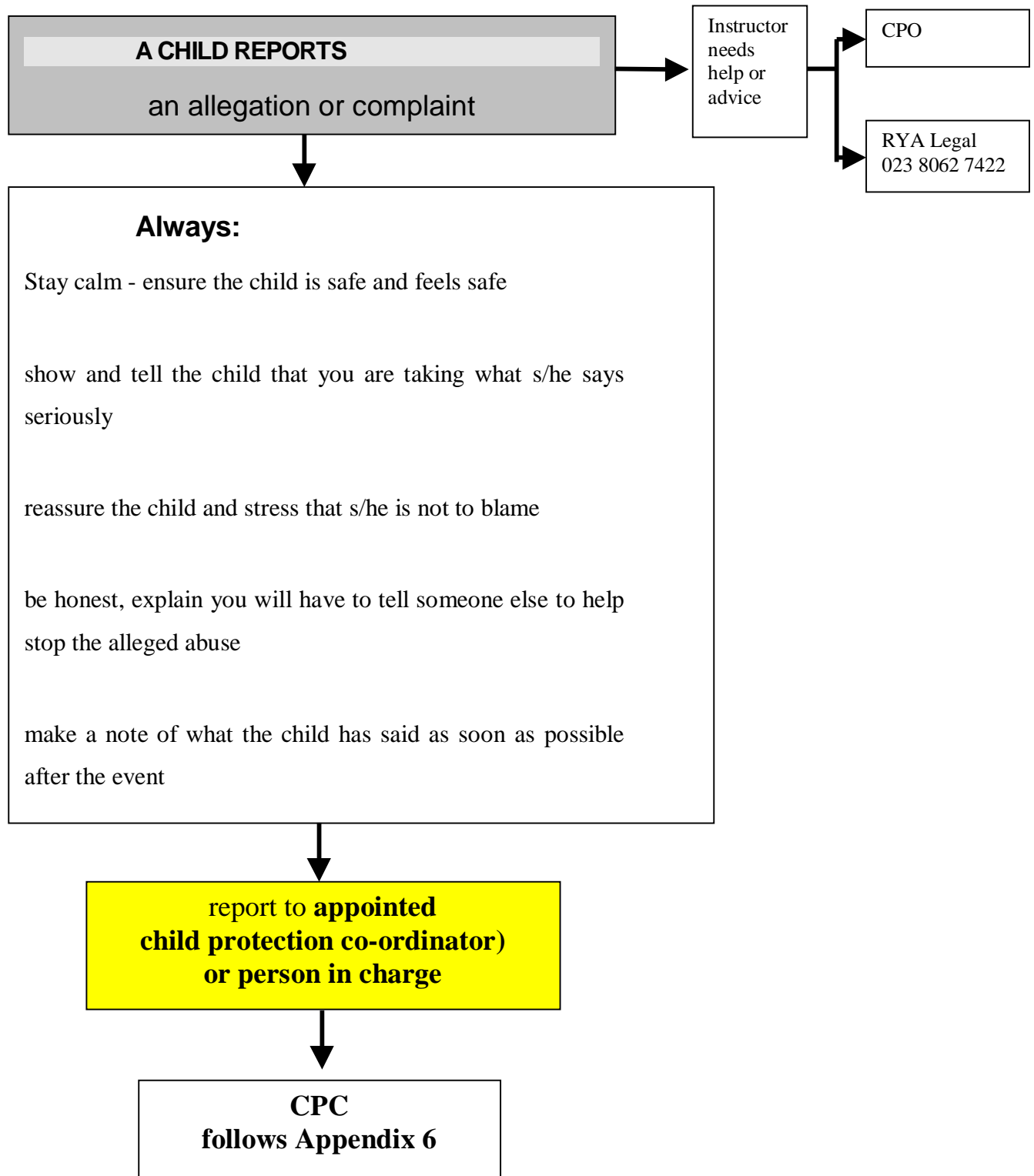
Name..... (please print)

Relationship to participant

.....

* delete as applicable

Reporting procedure for Helpers



Handout for all instructors & volunteers

Good Practice Guide

Do not spend excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others

Do not take children alone in a car on journeys, however short

Do not take children to your home

Where any of these are unavoidable, ensure they only occur with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge in the organisation or the child's parents

Design training programmes that are within the ability of the individual child.
(see "Physical Abuse" page 10)

You should never:

Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay

allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form

allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged

make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun

let allegations a child makes go unchallenged or unrecorded; always act

do things of a personal nature that children can do for themselves.

However, it may be sometimes necessary for your staff or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are very young or disabled. These tasks should only be carried out

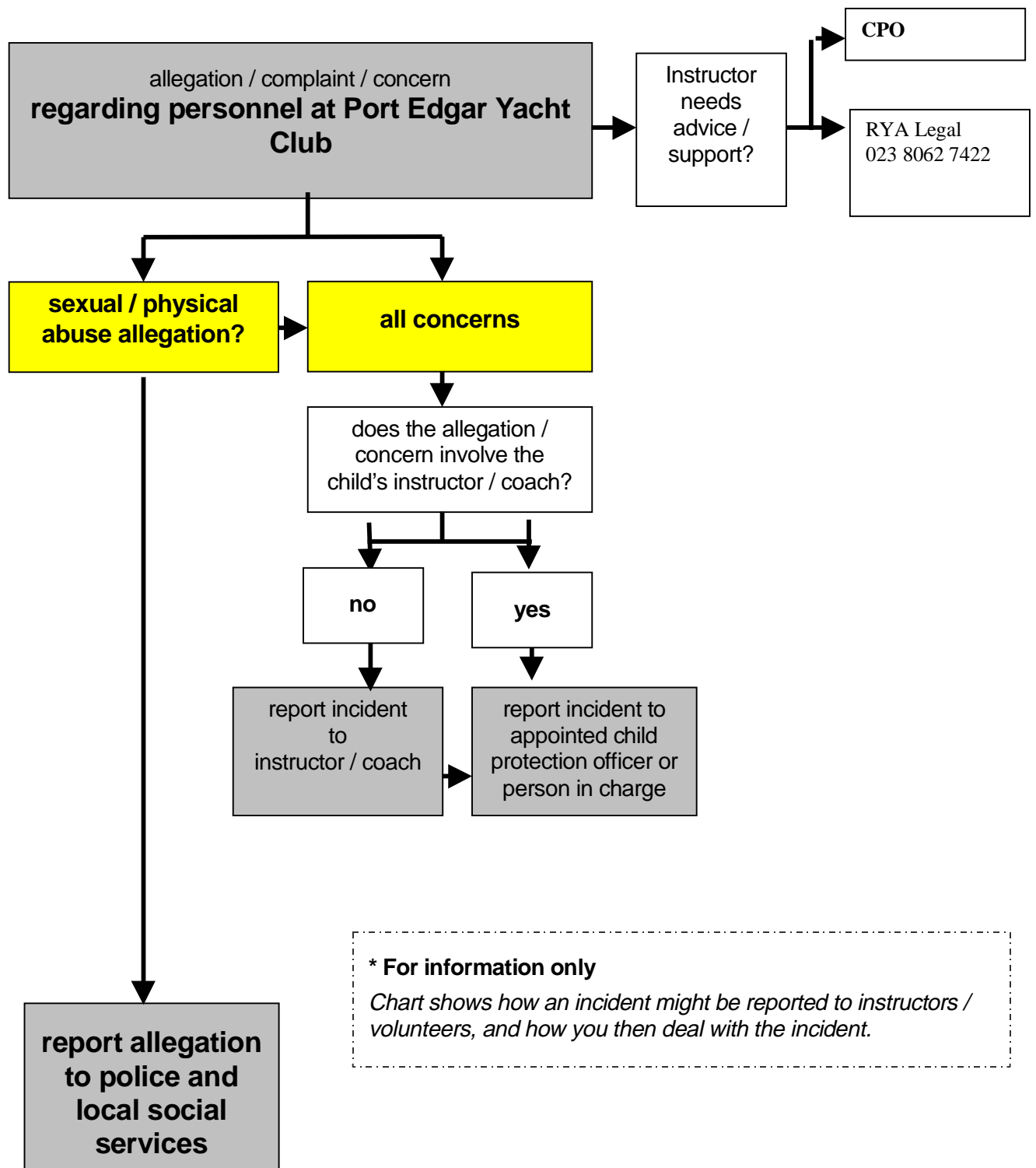
with the full understanding and consent of parents. In an emergency situation, which requires this type of help, parents should be fully informed. In such situations, it is important to ensure all staff are sensitive to the child and undertake personal care tasks with the utmost discretion.

Important

All instructors and volunteers should read Child Protection Policy & Procedures and have access to it at all times Handout for all instructors & volunteers.

Reporting procedure

Advice to children, parents and teachers



Recording information

In cases of child abuse the main aim is to keep calm and provide a positive, friendly attitude to encourage the child to talk.

- **DO** listen
- Do take notes
- Do tell the RYA and make sure that all information is passed onto the police
- **DON'T** ask direct questions
- Don't try to stop the child telling you about their problem
- Don't make promises
- Don't allow anyone else outside the police or social services to interview or ask questions of the child
- Don't assume!

The complexity of child protection issues means that there can never be a set of prescriptive questions. Don't try to get too much information, rather, let the child give you as much as they feel prepared to give. The adult listening should try to act as natural as possible throughout. Makes notes during the interview, but only those necessary; it might be possible to gain certain contact information from existing administrative records.

COMMON QUESTIONS that could be used in some situations.

- **THE DOs - open questions/statements**
 - Would you like to tell me what happened?
 - Can you tell me where/when this happened?
 - Would you like to tell me who was involved?
 - Can you tell me what happened next?
 - Is there anything else you would like to tell me?
 - Thank you for telling me this but you do realise I will have to do something about it
- **THE DON'Ts - leading/closed questions/comments**
 - Was it your father/coach/friend that did this to you?
 - Are you sure that's what happened?
 - Why did you let them do that to you?
 - Why do you think this happened?
 - I expect you must be very upset about this.
 - This can be our little secret

Appendix 5

Incident report form

Try and keep the process friendly rather than a formal; you want the child to feel as comfortable as possible during this stressful process.

Interviewer's details

Name: Position:

Child's details

Name: Date of birth:

Address:

Parents / Carers names:

Address:

Record what was said and reported (use additional paper, as required)

Action taken

POLICE: reported to which police station?

Officer reported to:

Date / time incident reported:

Details of advice received:

RYA: reported to Child Protection Officer? YES /NO

Date / time incident reported:

Details of advice received:

OTHER: contacted other organisations for advice? Date / time of call:.....

Which organisation(s):

Person advice received from:

Details of advice received:

Signed by interviewer, as above: Date:

Reporting Procedure

