

Forth Canoe Club

Club Policy for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults

July 2009

Introduction

This document is based on the Scottish Canoe Association Child Protection Guidelines – which are available on the SCA Website – www.canoescotland.com

The SCA has its own Child Protection Officer who can be reached via the Scottish Canoe Association office or email to [child.protection@canoescotland.com].

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WHAT IS ABUSE?

It is generally acknowledged that there are five main types of abuse:

Physical Emotional Sexual Neglect Bullying

Physical Abuse

As the term implies hurting or injuring a young person or vulnerable adult, by, for example, hitting, kicking, biting, squeezing or shaking them.

Physical abuse can occur also if they are forced to train beyond their capabilities; when the nature of training disregards the capacity of the child's immature and growing body; when training involves them in activities for too long; and where the weather and/or water temperature cause pain, physical damage or hypothermia.

Bullying can also be determined as physical abuse, as can giving children alcohol, inappropriate drugs or poison and also attempted suffocation or drowning.

Sexual Abuse

Adults who use them to meet their own sexual needs abuse young people or vulnerable adults.

It could range from sexually suggestive comments to full intercourse, including fondling, masturbation, oral sex and anal intercourse.

Canoeing or related activities, which might involve physical contact with young person or vulnerable adult, could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed. Also the power of the coach over young or vulnerable athletes, if misused, may lead to abusive situations developing.

There is also the offence of 'Abuse of Trust' where it is illegal for a person aged 18 or over to engage in sexual activity with a person under that age where they are in a position of trust in relation to that younger person (e.g. coach to athlete).

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse occurs when a young person or vulnerable adult is not given love, help and encouragement and/or are constantly derided or ridiculed or, perhaps even worse, ignored.

Other types of emotional abuse are when they are constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted, subjected to unrealistic pressure by the parent or coach, or bullied in order to consistently perform to high expectations.

Conversely it can also occur if a young person or vulnerable adult is over-protected.

Neglect

Neglect usually means failing to meet young person's or vulnerable adult's basic needs such as food, warmth, adequate clothing, medical attention etc.. It can also mean failing to ensure they are safe or exposing them to harm, being constantly left alone unsupervised, exposing canoeists to unsuitable weather conditions, and not ensuring paddlers are wearing suitable clothing.

Bullying

Bullying by adults or other young paddlers can take many forms and is often hard to detect.

RECOGNISING ABUSE

This is not always easy, even for experts. The examples listed below are not a complete list and they **are only indicators**, not confirmation. The term 'child' in this context is used to cover children, young people and vulnerable adults.

- The child says that he or she is being abused, or another person says they believe, or actually know, that abuse is occurring.
- The child has an injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent.
- The child's behaviour changes, either over time or quite suddenly, and he or she becomes aggressive or withdrawn.
- The child appears not to trust adults, e.g. a parent or coach with whom they would be expected to have, or once had, a close relationship, and does not seem to be able to make friends.
- He or she becomes increasingly neglected looking in appearance, or loses or puts on weight for no apparent reason.
- The child shows inappropriate sexual awareness for his / her age and sometimes behaves in a sexually explicit way.

Bear in mind that disabled children and those with learning difficulties are particularly vulnerable to abuse and may have added difficulties in communicating what is happening to them.

Please remember it is not your responsibility to decide whether a child is being abused, but we are asking you to fulfil your legal requirements and **act on your concerns**.

Make a detailed note of what you've seen or heard but do not delay in passing on the information.

If a child tells you that he or she is being abused:

- Stay calm.
- Don't promise to keep it to yourself.
- Listen to what the child says and, *please*, take it seriously.
- Only ask questions if you need to identify what the child is telling you - don't ask the child about explicit details.
- Make a detailed, signed and dated note of what the child has told you but please do not delay in passing on the information.

RECOGNISING AND REPORTING SUSPECTED OR ACTUAL ABUSE

The ability to recognise child abuse depends as much on a person's willingness to accept the possibility of its existence as it does on knowledge and information. It is important to note that child abuse is not always readily visible, and may not be as clearly observable as the text book scenarios might suggest. If a sports leader or parent / carer is uneasy or suspicious about a child's safety or welfare the following responses should be made.

Grounds for concern

Consider the possibility of child abuse if there are reasonable grounds for concern.

Examples of reasonable grounds are:

- A specific indication from a child that they have been abused.
- A statement from a person who witnessed abuse.
- An illness, injury or behaviour consistent with abuse.
- A symptom which may not itself be totally consistent with abuse, but which is supported by corroborative evidence of deliberate harm or negligence.
- Consistent signs of neglect over a period of time.

In some cases of child abuse the alleged perpetrator will also be a child and it is important that behaviour of this nature is not ignored. Grounds for concern will exist in cases where there is an age difference and / or a difference in power or status or intellect between the children involved. However, it is also important to distinguish between normal sexual behaviour and abusive behaviour. Persons unsure about whether or not certain behaviours are abusive and therefore reportable, should contact the duty social worker in the local Social Work Department where they will receive advice.

Reporting Child Abuse

The following process should be followed in reporting child abuse to the Authorities:

- 1) Observe and note dates, times, locations and contexts in which the incident occurred or suspicion was aroused, together with any other relevant information.
- 2) Report the matter as soon as possible to the Forth Canoe Club Child Protection Co-ordinator. If that person has reasonable grounds for believing that the child has been abused, or is at risk of abuse, they should make a report to the local Social Work Department who have statutory responsibility to investigate and assess suspected, or actual, child abuse.
- 3) In cases of emergency, where a child appears to be at immediate and serious risk and the Child Protection Co-ordinator (CPC) is unable to contact a duty social worker, the Police authorities should be contacted. Under no circumstances should a child be left in a dangerous situation pending intervention by the Statutory Authorities.
- 4) If the CPC is unsure whether reasonable grounds exist or not they should informally consult with the Social Work Department and they will be advised whether or not the matter requires a formal report.

- 5) When the CPC is reporting suspected or actual abuse to the Statutory Authorities they should first inform the families of their intention to make such a report, **unless doing so would endanger the child or undermine an investigation.**
- 6) A report should be given in person or by phone **and** in writing, although it is best to make initial contact in person. A copy of the report should be kept by the person reporting the abuse as well as the Club CPC.

RESPONSE TO A YOUNG PERSON OR VULNERABLE ADULT REPORTING ANY FORM OF ABUSE

The following points should be taken in to consideration:

- 1) It is important to deal with any allegation of abuse in a sensitive and competent way through **listening to and facilitating the child to tell about the problem, rather than interviewing the** child about details of what happened.
- 2) It is important to stay calm and not show any extreme reaction to what the child is saying. Listen compassionately, and take what the child is saying seriously.
- 3) It should be understood that the child has decided to tell something very important and has taken a risk to do so. The experience of telling should be a positive one so that the child will not mind talking to those involved in the investigation.
- 4) The child should understand that it is not possible that any information will be kept a secret.
- 5) No judgemental statement should be made against the person against whom the allegation is made.
- 6) The child should not be questioned unless the nature of what they are saying is unclear. Leading questions must be avoided. Open non-specific questions should be used such as "Can you explain to me what you mean by that?"
- 7) The child should be given some indication of what happens next, such as informing parents, or the Social Work Department. It should be kept in mind that the child may have been threatened and may feel vulnerable at this stage.

ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST SPORTS LEADERS

The following points should be noted:

- 1) The safety of the child making the allegations and any others who may be at risk should be ensured, and this should take precedence over any other consideration. In this regard Forth Canoe Club should take any immediate steps to protect the children.
- 2) If a coach or helper is the subject of concern they should be treated with respect and fairness.

Where reasonable grounds for concern exist the following steps should be taken:

- 1) Advice should be sought from the local Social Work Department Child Protection Team with regard to any action deemed necessary by the Club to protect the child or children at risk.
- 2) The matter should be reported to the Local Social Work Department following the standard reporting procedure.
- 3) In the event that the concern is connected to the actions of a coach or helper in the club the person should be asked to stand aside pending the outcome of any investigations.
- 4) The matter should be reported to the SCA Child Protection Officer

GOOD PRACTICE WHICH CAN HELP TO PREVENT ABUSE

- Avoid situations where coach / helper and child are alone. Occasionally there may be no alternative, for example, a child may be taken ill and have to be taken home. However one to one contact must be avoided if at all possible and should never be allowed to occur on a regular basis. Ascertain the child's and the parent / carer's views about manual support for children who need this kind of help, particularly if they are on the water.
- If it is necessary to do things of a personal nature for a young person or vulnerable adult make sure that you have another adult accompanying you. Get their consent if at all possible, and certainly get consent from the parent or carer. Let the person know what you are doing and why.
- Ask parents / carers and/or nominated club officials to be responsible for children and vulnerable adults in changing rooms.
- Get adults to work in pairs if classes or groups of children or vulnerable adults have to be supervised in the changing rooms.
- Ensure that male and female coaches or helpers, particularly on trips or residential outings, always accompany mixed teams.
- Do not allow any physically rough or sexually provocative games, or inappropriate talking or touching by anyone, in any group for which you have responsibility.
- At events and competitions look out for people who do not appear to be relatives or friends of children who are participating but, nevertheless seem to spend a lot of time videoing or photographing them. Report these incidents to the organisers.
- On trips away from base follow the SCA Away Trips policy.

ACTIONS BEFORE TAKING ON ANY VOLUNTEER

- All coaches and helpers should be checked to ascertain whether they are on the Disqualified from Working with Children list by having a Disclosure Scotland check. This should be repeated every 3 years.
- All volunteers should complete a self reference form and a registration form
- References should be taken up
- Coaches and other helpers should sign a code of conduct

PADDLER'S WELFARE GUIDELINES

Characteristics of a Child Protection Co-ordinator within Forth Canoe Club include:

- An understanding of, and support for, the introduction of a Child Protection Code of Good Practice.
- An understanding of the implications of the Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003
- An understanding of, and appreciation for, the need for confidentiality.
- Experience in liaising with organisations such as Social Work or Police, or experience in representing views clearly to others.
- The ability to follow procedures and to know when to seek advice and not rely solely on own judgement.

The Child Protection Co-ordinator is expected to fulfil the following tasks:

- Ensure all persons working with children and young people in the Club are fully aware of what is required of them within the protocols of the Code of Good Practice.
- Inform the SCA Child Protection Officer of new coaches / helpers so that Disclosure checks can be carried out.
- Liaise closely with club youth coaches, ensuring that agreed procedures for the prevention of risk are followed.
- Counsel / advise the club on matters of policy relating to Child Protection.

- Act as the contact person on matters relating to Child Protection for the Club.

If abuse is disclosed or alleged:

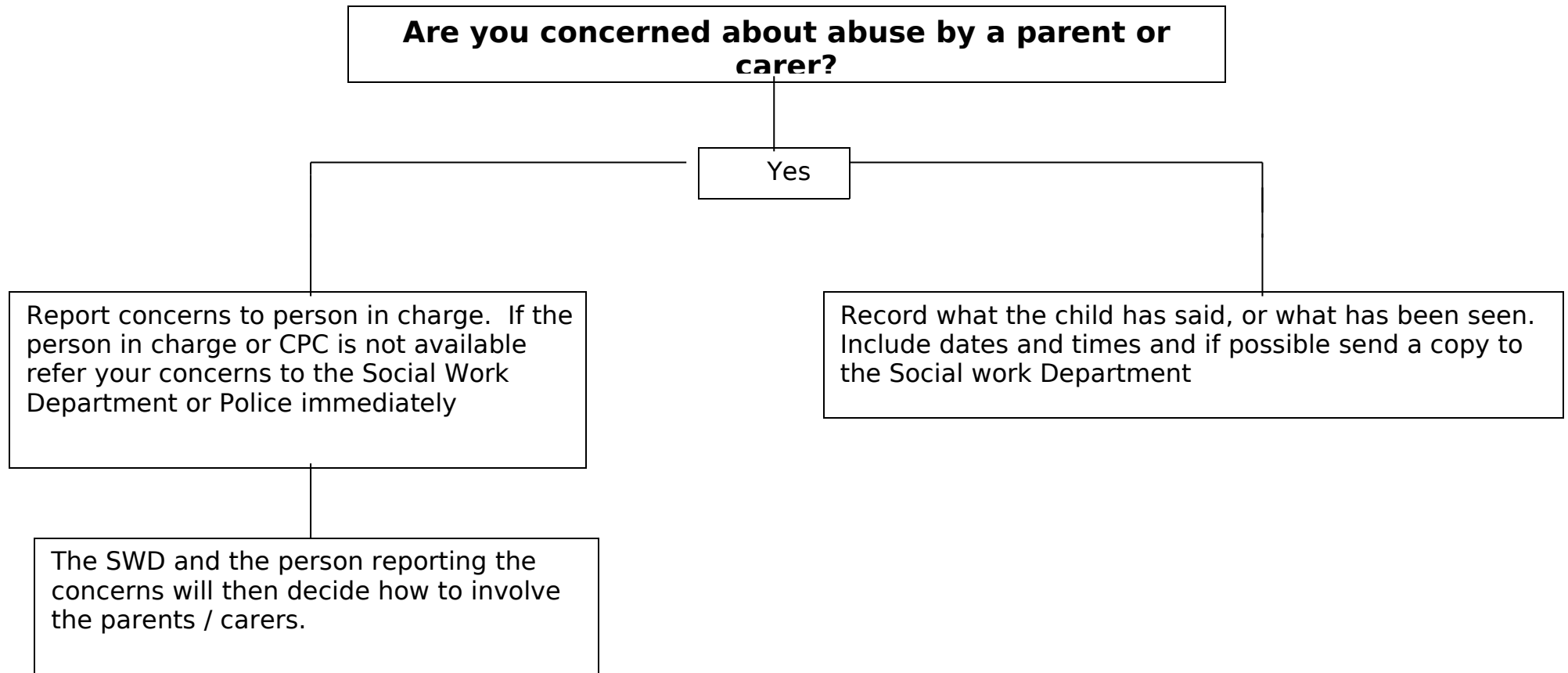
The Forth Canoe Club Child Protection Co-ordinator will activate the process when abuse is alleged or disclosed.

The Co-ordinator will take details of the allegation/suspicion/concern and inform the SCA Child Protection Officer.

Remember: The task of deciding whether or not abuse has occurred rests with the professional agencies.

APPENDICES

- i. 'Alleged abuse by parent or carer' flowchart
- ii. 'Alleged abuse by staff or volunteer' flowchart
- iii. Volunteer Reference form
- iv. Registration form for coaches / helpers
- v. Code of conduct for coaches
- vi. Code of conduct for non coaching volunteers
- vii. Self declaration form
- viii. Recording allegations or suspicions of abuse



| Are you concerned about abuse by a member of staff or a volunteer? | | |
|---|---|--|
| If 'Yes' is it: | | |
| Poor practice? | Abuse? | |
| Report concerns to person in charge | Report concern to Club Child Protection Co-ordinator | Unless the allegation relates to the CPC |
| Person in charge deals with it as a misconduct issue | Person in charge must ensure safety of child and other children | Is so refer directly to SCA Child Protection Officer |
| If concerns remain report to a Director of the SCA for a Board decision on how to handle the issue. | Refer concerns to Social Work Department who may involve the Police | |
| | Arrange contact with parent or carer after advice from Social Work Department Report to SCA Child Protection Officer The SCA then decides whether to suspend the person pending enquiries. The SCA CPO will handle any media interest. The Board will decide if disciplinary or misconduct proceedings should be initiated. | |

VOLUNTEER REFERENCE FORM

_____ has expressed an interest in becoming a volunteer with Forth Canoe Club and has given your name as a reference. This post involves:

The information you give will be treated in the utmost confidence and will only be shared with the applicant's immediate supervisor if they are offered a volunteer position. We would appreciate you being extremely honest in your evaluation of this person.

- How long have you known this person? _____
- In what capacity? _____
- What attributes does this person have that would make them a suitable volunteer?

- How would you describe their personality?

- Please rate this person on the following:

| | Poor | Average | Good | Very good | Excellent |
|---------------------|------|---------|------|-----------|-----------|
| Responsibility | | | | | |
| Maturity | | | | | |
| Self motivation | | | | | |
| Can motivate others | | | | | |
| Commitment | | | | | |
| Energy / Health | | | | | |
| Trustworthiness | | | | | |
| Reliability | | | | | |

This post involves substantial access to children We are anxious to know if you have reason at all to be concerned about this applicant being in contact with children and vulnerable adults YES / NO

If you have answered 'yes' we will contact you in confidence.

Signed _____

Date

SCA

**CHILD PROTECTION
POLICY**

Navigating for the Future

REGISTRATION FORM FOR COACHES / HELPERS WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

Forth Canoe Club is responsible for the acceptance of all coaches who are working with children and vulnerable adults on behalf of the Club. All coaches and regular helpers must fill in a copy of this form, which should be returned to the Club Child Protection Co-ordinator:

Name Cynthia Berry

Address 42 Thirlestane Road
Edinburgh

Telephone 0131 447 9494
Email cynthia.berry@gmail.com

COACH / HELPER DETAILS

Full Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Date of Birth _____

Telephone (Day) _____ (Evening)

E-mail address _____

Occupation _____

Please outline details of previous experience of looking after or working with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Please outline details of any relevant qualifications or appropriate training:

Are you prepared to take appropriate training as required e.g.(BCU Coaching Courses, RYA Boat Driving, First Aid etc.)?

I have already completed a Disclosure check for Forth Canoe club.

YES / NO

If 'NO' are you willing to complete a Disclosure check?

YES / NO

I understand the nature of the work I will undertake with children and / or vulnerable adults. I have read the SCA Paddler's Code of Conduct (see Page 9 of SCA Guidelines) for the safeguarding of young people in a canoeing context. I also understand that it is my duty to protect the young people with whom I come in to contact. I know what action to take if abuse is discovered or disclosed.

Signed: _____ Date _____

A responsible sports coach helps the development of individuals through improving their performance.

This is achieved by:

- Identifying and meeting the needs of individuals.
- Improving performance through a progressive programme of safe, guided practice, measured performance and / or competition.
- Creating an environment in which individuals are motivated to maintain participation and improve performance.

Coaches should comply with the principles of good ethical practice listed below:

- Coaches must abide by the British Canoe Union Child Protection Policy with the Scottish Canoe Association Guidelines.
- Coaches must respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person and treat everyone equally within the context of the sport.
- Coaches must place the well being and safety of the performer above the development of performance. They should follow all guidelines laid down by the SCA and hold appropriate insurance cover.
- Coaches must develop an appropriate working relationship with performers (especially children and vulnerable adults) based on mutual trust and respect. Coaches must not exert undue influence to obtain personal benefit or reward.
- Coaches must encourage and guide performers to accept responsibility for their own behaviour and performance.
- Coaches should hold up to date and nationally recognised governing body coaching qualifications.
- Coaches must ensure that the activities they direct or advocate are appropriate for the age, maturity, experience and ability of the individual.
- Coaches should, at the outset, clarify with performers (and where appropriate with their parents) exactly what is expected of them and what performers are entitled to expect from their coach. A contract may sometimes be appropriate.
- Coaches should co-operate fully with other specialists (e.g. other coaches, officials, sport scientists, doctors, physiotherapists, etc.) in the best interests of the performer.
- Coaches should always promote the positive aspects of their sport and never condone rule violations or the use of prohibited substances.
- Coaches must consistently display high standards of behaviour and appearance.

I agree to abide by the above principles

Signed Date

Print Name

Position

Volunteers have a duty of care to all those they come in to contact with during their time with paddlers. They should take steps to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure the safety of any person involved in any activity for which that individual is responsible.

This is achieved by:

- Identifying and meeting the needs of individuals.
- Creating an environment in which individuals are motivated to maintain participation and improve performance.

Coaches should comply with the principles of good ethical practice listed below:

- Volunteers must abide by the British Canoe Union Child Protection Policy with the Scottish Canoe Association Guidelines.
- Volunteers must respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person and treat everyone equally within the context of the sport.
- Volunteers must place the well being and safety of the performer above everything. They should follow all guidelines laid down by the SCA and hold appropriate insurance cover.
- Volunteers must develop an appropriate working relationship with paddlers (especially children and vulnerable adults) based on mutual trust and respect.
- Volunteers must encourage and guide paddlers to accept responsibility for their own behaviour and performance.
- Volunteers must ensure that the activities they direct or advocate are appropriate for the age, maturity, experience and ability of the individual.
- Volunteers should co-operate fully with other specialists (e.g. coaches, officials, sport scientists, doctors, physiotherapists, etc.) in the best interests of the performer.
- Volunteers should always promote the positive aspects of their sport and never condone rule violations or the use of prohibited substances.
- Volunteers must consistently display high standards of behaviour and appearance.

I agree to abide by the above principles

Signed Date

Print Name

Position

SCA

Navigating for the Future

Self Declaration Form

Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence or been the subject
of Caution or a Bound over order YES / NO

If Yes please state below the nature and date(s) of the offence(s).

Signed Date

.....

Name (please print)

.....

Maiden name

.....

Any other surname known by previously

.....

Address

.....

.....

.....

Post Code

.....

Date of Birth

.....

National Insurance Number

.....

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) (Amendments) Order 1986 you should declare all convictions, including 'spent' convictions)

Recording allegations or suspicions of abuse

Checklist

The following is a checklist of what should be recorded:

Name of Person

Date of Birth or Age

Any special factors

Name of Parent or Guardian

Home address and telephone

Is the person making the report expressing their own concerns or passing on those of somebody else?

If for somebody else record their details

What has prompted these concerns?

Continued over

Are there any

• physical signs? _____

• behavioural signs?

• indirect signs? _____

Has the child / vulnerable adult been spoken to?

YES / NO

If yes please record what was said and by whom on a separate sheet.

Have the parents / guardians been contacted?

YES / NO

If yes please record what was said and by whom on separate sheet.

Has the suspected abuser been identified?

YES / NO

If yes please record details on separate sheet.

Has anyone else been consulted?

YES / NO

Signed _____

Date and time

Designation _____

All details as outlined above, plus any other relevant information should be recorded on a separate sheet of paper, which should also be signed and dated and attached to this form.

It is advisable for you to keep a copy of this referral for your own information if needed at a later date.

The completed paperwork should then be given to your Child Protection Co-ordinator immediately.