

**AMATEUR MARTIAL ASSOC. & WAKO GB (APPROVED BY EKGB)**  
**THIS DOCUMENT APPLIES TO ALL MEMBERS/STYLES OF AMA**

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## Introduction

**The AMA** is the recognised national governing body for Martial Arts in England and has developed a Child Protection Policy for implementation throughout its' member Associations.

All sporting organisations, which make provision for children and young people have a moral and legal responsibility to ensure that:

*The welfare of the child is paramount;*

*All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse;*

*All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately;*

*All staff (paid /unpaid) working in sport have a responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate officer.*

The Children Act 1987 defines a child as a person under 18.

This Child Protection Policy has been accepted by the AMA Management Board and AMA Council and is mandatory for all member Associations.

The English Martial Arts Governing Body is committed to working in partnership with all agencies to ensure that information and training opportunities are available to ensure best practice when working with children and young people, the majority of our membership.

Adopting best practice will help to safeguard those participants from potential abuse as well as protect coaches and other adults in positions of responsibility from any potential allegation of abuse.

This document is binding for all our member Associations and provides procedures and guidance to everyone in Martial Arts in England, whether working on a voluntary or professional capacity.

## 1]. Policy statement

Martial Arts as a sport and pastime has a duty of care to safeguard from harm all children involved in Martial Arts. All children have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account.

The AMA will ensure the safety and protection of all children involved in our sport through adherence to the Child Protection guidelines adopted by the AMA Council, March 2003 and approved by Sport England and the NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit.

The policy will be implemented by all our member Associations and is applicable to all Association officers, club instructors and officials and officers and staff of AMA Ltd.

Sport can and does have a very powerful and positive influence on people, especially young people. Not only can it provide opportunities for enjoyment and achievement; it helps to develop and enhance valuable qualities such as self-esteem, leadership and teamwork. We have to ensure that for these positive experiences to take place that sport is in the hands of those who have the welfare of young people uppermost in their mind and that we have proper procedures and practices to support and empower them.

## **1.2 Policy aims**

The aim of the AMA's Child Protection Policy is to promote good practice by :

- Providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of Martial Arts clubs and instructors affiliated to the AMA.
- Ensure that all incidents of poor practice or suspicions of poor practice and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- Allow all staff /volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.
- The Policy recognises and builds on the legal and statutory definition of a child
- The distinction between ages of consent, civil and criminal liability are recognised but in the pursuit of good practice in the delivery and management of English Martial Arts, a young person is recognised as being under the age of 18 years [Children's Act, 1989].
- The AMA recognised that young people above the age of 18 are vulnerable to undue influence by adults in positions of responsibility, for example junior international athletes aged under 21 years and provision is made for this instance within the AMA Ltd's World Class programmes Athlete Charter included as an appendix.
- Through the AMA's implementation plan attached as an appendix each of our member Associations will provide a suitably experienced and qualified individual to act as their Child Protection Officer and commit to a series of awareness raising and training seminars to help them fulfil their role and will use AMA template forms and reporting sheets.
- Confidentiality will be upheld in line with the Data Protection Act 1984 and the Human Rights Act 2000.

**The Policy will be overseen by the AMA Coach Education department and in turn by the AMA Management Board through quarterly reporting procedures.** Periodic reviews are built into the AMA's implementation policy included within the appendices.

## **2]. Promoting Good Practice with Young People**

### **Introduction**

Child abuse, particularly sexual abuse, can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation. Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and the sporting environment. It is a fact of life that some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with young people in order to harm them.

A coach, instructor, teacher, official or volunteer may have regular contact with young people and be an important link in identifying cases where a young person needs protection.

All cases of poor practice and suspected case of abuse should be reported to the AMA and or relevant authorities following the guidelines in this document.

When a child enters the club having experienced abuse outside the sporting environment, sport can play a crucial role in improving the child's self esteem. In such instances the club must work with the appropriate agencies to ensure the child receives the required support.

### **2.1 Good Practice Guidelines**

All those involved in Martial Arts should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to safeguard children and young people and protect themselves from false allegations. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate within Martial Arts :

#### **Good practice means:**

- always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations, involving parents or carers no secrets).
- treating all young people/disabled adults equally, and with respect and dignity.
- placing the welfare and safety of the child or young person above the development of performance or competition
- maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with players (e.g. it is not appropriate to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them).
- building balanced relationships based on mutual trust, which empowers children to share in the decision-making process;
- making sport fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play.
- ensuring that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly and according to guidelines provided by the Coach Education Programme.
- keeping up to date with the technical skills, qualifications and insurance in Martial Arts
- ensuring your teaching practice reflects the high standards expected of Martial Arts
- involving parents/carers wherever possible (e.g. for the responsibility of their children in the changing rooms). If groups have to be supervised in the changing rooms, always ensure parents/teachers/coaches/officials work in pairs.

- ensuring that if mixed teams are taken away, they should always be accompanied by a male and female member of staff. (NB however, same gender abuse can also occur)
- ensuring that at tournaments or residential events, adults should not enter children's rooms or invite children into their rooms.
- being an excellent role model – this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people.
- giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- recognising the developmental needs and capacity of young people and disabled adults – avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will.
- securing written parental consent to act in “*loco parentis*”, if necessary. For example, to give permission for emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment.
- having up to date records of pupils, including contact numbers and information about medical conditions and lesson plans
- keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.
- requesting written parental consent if club officials are required to transport young people in their cars.

Within our coaching portfolios, we make particular reference to children and young people practising together and this guidance is now included here.

- Martial Arts Instructors need to understand the responsibilities of teaching children and the basic principles of growth and development from childhood to adolescence. Exercises should be appropriate to age and build and stages of development.
- There is no minimum age for a child beginning Martial Arts, as the build and maturity of individuals varies so much. However the nature of the class must be tailored to consider these factors.
- In general, the younger the child, the shorter the attention span. One hour is generally considered sufficient training time for the average 12 year old or below. Young children have a metabolism that is not suited to generating anaerobic power, and therefore they exercise better aerobically, i.e. at a steadily maintained rate. However, they can soon become conditioned to tolerate exercise in the short explosive bursts.
- Children should not do assisted stretching - they generally don't need to, and there is a real risk of damage with an inconsiderate or over-enthusiastic partner.
- Children should be carefully matched for size and weight for sparring practice.
- Great care must be taken, especially where children train in the proximity of adults, to avoid collision injury.
- Children should not do certain conditioning exercises, especially those which are heavy load bearing, for example weight training or knuckle push-ups. Children should not do any heavy or impact work but should concentrate on the development of speed, mobility, skill and general fitness.

The AMA has purchased a copy of the NSPCC Safe Sports Events document and follows the specific guidance around our events and also events we and our members will be travelling to. And our guidance covers –

Transport arrangements, travel checklists, supervision and staffing, emergency procedures, insurance special overnight arrangements and any special health requirements.

Within our provision for young talented athletes we follow, Sport England, UK Sport and BOA guidelines as detailed within our Athlete Charter.

**The following practice/s should never be sanctioned.**

**You should never:**

- **engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay;**
- **spend excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others;**
- **take children to your home where they will be alone with you.**
- **share a room with a child;**
- **allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching;**
- **allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged;**
- **make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun;**
- **reduce a child to tears as a form of control;**
- **allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon;**
- **do things of a personal nature for children or disabled adults that they can do for themselves;**
- **invite or allow children to stay with you at your home unsupervised.**

**NB.** It may sometimes be necessary for staff or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children, perhaps if they are young or are disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents and players. If a person is fully dependent on you, talk with him/her about what you are doing and give choices where possible. This is particularly so if you are involved in any dressing or undressing of outer clothing, or where there is physical contact, lifting/assisting to carry out particular activities. Do not take responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained.

If any of the following occur you should report this immediately to another colleague and record the incident. You should also ensure the parents of the child are told:

*if you accidentally hurt a player.*

*if he/she seems distressed in any manner.*

*if a player appears to be sexually aroused by your actions.*

*if a player misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.*

### **3]. Guidelines for Use of Photographic Filming Equipment at AMA and Martial Arts Events**

There is no intention to stop people photographing their children, club mates, or photography and video been used as an educational tool but this is in the context of appropriate safeguards being in place. There is evidence that some people have used sporting events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young and disabled sportspeople in vulnerable positions. It is advisable that all clubs be vigilant with any concerns to be reported to the Club Child Protection Officer Any parent who wishes to photograph their child must seek permission from the instructor or competition organiser. Official photographers must be registered with an event organiser and wear identification.

The AMA has a policy of recording authorised camera operators and this is implemented at our National junior and senior championships. There is a charge for the pass of £5 per pass, one pass covers both items (camera & video). All passes must be worn while filming or taking snap shots. If an operator cannot produce a pass when asked by an official, they may be asked to leave the Centre.

This pass is for use in the spectator seating or Balcony areas. It is not for permission to use around the Areas. If this privilege is abused and contradicts the well being, ethics and integrity of which it was intended the person will be held responsible and asked to leave the Sports Hall and also reported to the proper authority.

Videoring as a coaching aid: there is no intention to prevent club coaches and teachers using video equipment as a legitimate coaching aid. However, performers and their parents/carers should be aware that this is part of the coaching programme and care should be taken in the storing of such films.

The AMA also follows closely the guidance issued by the Child Protection in Sport Unit advising that :

- Models or illustrations are used in promotional material
- Avoid using the first name and surname of individuals in a photograph
- If the player is named, we do not use their photograph,
- If the photograph is used, we do not name the individual,
- Seek parental permission to use an image of a young participant. Our parental consent form is enclosed as an appendix
- Player permission has been sought via our Athlete Charter

## **4]. Recruitment and selecting staff and volunteers**

The AMA recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children.

It is essential that the same procedures are used consistently for all posts whether staff are paid or voluntary, full time or part time.

Under the Protection of Children Act 1999, all individuals working on behalf of, or otherwise representing, an organisation are treated as employees whether working in a paid or voluntary capacity.

### **New staff –**

#### **When undertaking recruitment, the AMA will undertake the following :**

- Ensure there is a job description and person specification for all roles
- All volunteers /staff involved in Martial Arts will complete an application form. The application form will elect information about an applicants past and a self-disclosure about any criminal record.
- Consent should be obtained from an applicant to seek information from the Criminal Records Bureau and the appropriate check will be carried out – an enhanced disclosure. [The AMA is a registered body for disclosure through the Criminal Records Bureau].
- Advertising will reflect the aims of the AMA, key responsibilities of the role and necessary experience and our open and positive stance on child protection and equity will be implicit.
- Pre-application information will be sent and an application form is necessary for all posts. Following short listing formal interviews will be held and the successful applicant will only be allowed to take up their post and duties once their CRB check has been cleared by the AMA Coaching department.
- There will be a period of induction, on going training and support plus monitoring and appraisal.
- Two confidential references, including where possible, one regarding previous work with children. These references must be taken up and confirmed through telephone contact.
- Evidence of identity (Passport or driving licence with Photo).

### **Existing Staff –**

All current AMA employees and officers are completing a declaration of self-assessment and will go through an enhanced disclosure.

**It is a requirement of all new Associations that their officers have been CRB checked before they are accepted into membership and this is contained within our application and information pack enclosed as an appendix.**

## **5]. Responding to suspicions or allegations**

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in Martial Arts, in a paid or unpaid capacity to take responsibility or to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. This is the role of the child protection agencies. However, there is a responsibility for all involved in Martial Arts to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities. Advice and information is available from the local Social Services Department, the Police or the NSPCC 24 hour Helpline 0800 800 5000

The AMA assures all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child.

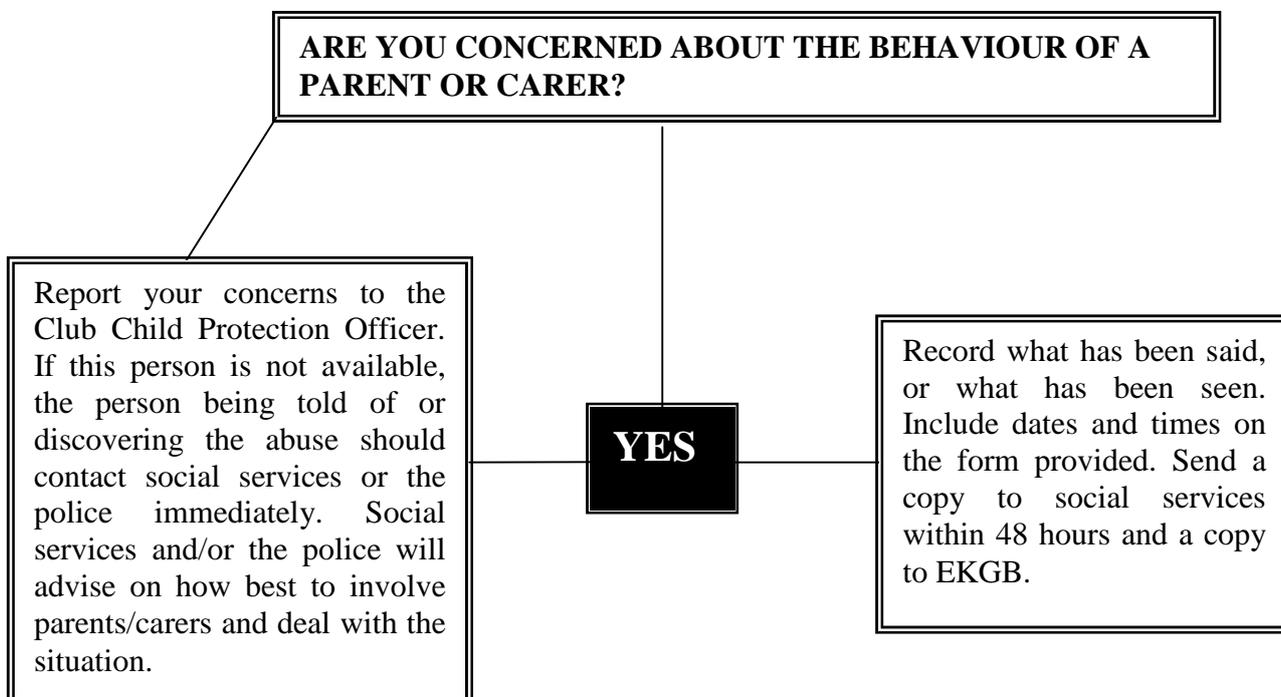
Where there is a complaint against a member of staff there may be three types of investigation

- A criminal investigation,
- A child protection investigation,
- A disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

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

### **5.1 Action if there are concerns**

The following action should be taken if there are concerns



**The Association Child Protection Officer should always inform the AMA on the appropriate form provided.**

## 5.2 Poor Practice

If, following consideration and consultation with AMA, the allegation is clearly about poor practice; the Club CPO in consultation with the AMA will deal with it as a misconduct issue.

Allegations should be reported to the AMA Child Protection Officer in the first instance for the AMA to guide action by the club and to enable AMA to maintain central records and for monitoring purposes. If the allegation is about poor practice by the Association CPO, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, the AMA CPO in consultation will decide how to deal with the allegation and handle the situation.

## 5.3 Suspected Abuse

Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported to the Association 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 Association CPO will refer the allegation to the social services department who may involve the police, or go directly to the police or social services *out-of-hours duty service*.

The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department. [In cases of suspected abuse within the family social services department/police must give advice on who should contact and when].

The Association CPO will also notify the AMA CPO who will advise and/or deal with any procedural issues and media enquiries.

If the Association CPO is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made direct to the AMA Child Protection Officer who will refer the allegation to Social Services.

## 5.4. Confidentiality

Every effort will 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 Association Child Protection Officer;

- The parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused;

- The person making the allegation;

- Social services/police;

- The AMA Regional Development Manager and (*sport*) Child Protection Officer;

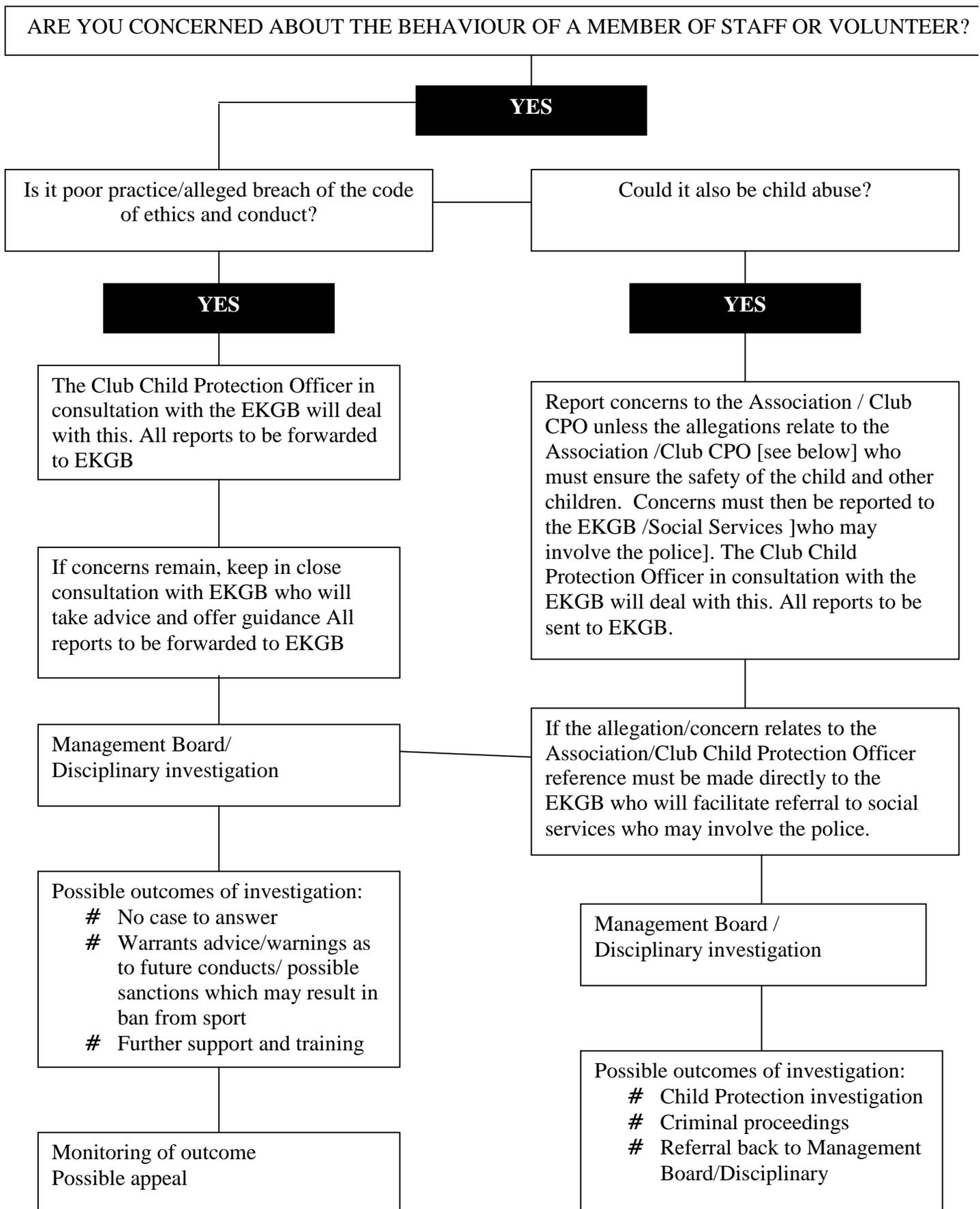
- The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child). \*

\*Seek social services advice on who should approach alleged abuser.

Information will be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

If you do not know who to turn for advice or are worried about sharing your concerns with a senior colleague, you should contact the social services direct (or the NSPCC on 0808 800 5000, or Childline on 0800 1111)

## 5.5. What to do if there are concerns



Information passed to the social services or the police must be as helpful as possible, hence the necessity for making a detailed record at the time of the disclosure/concern. Information passed to the social services or the police must be as helpful as possible, hence the necessity for making a detailed record at the time of the disclosure/concern. Information should include the following;;

- Name of child
- Details of child - Age and date of birth, race, ethnic origin, any relevant disability or special needs
- Home address and telephone number
- Is the person making the report expressing their own concerns or those of someone else
- What is the nature of the allegation? Include dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information.
- Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Behavioural signs indirect signs?
- Witnesses to the incidents.
- The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.
- Have the parents been contacted?
- If so what has been said?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so record details.
- If it is not the child making the report has the child concerned been spoken to? If so what was said?
- Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details.



## **Allegations of Previous Abuse**

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (e.g. by an adult who was abused as a child or by a member of staff who is still currently working with children).

Where such an allegation is made, the club 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 details of the Protection of Children Act 1999.

### **5.6 Internal Enquiries and Suspension**

The AMA Child Protection Officer will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services inquiries. (This should be the Chief Exec on advice from the CPO)

Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries the AMA Disciplinary Committee will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled.

This may be a difficult decision; particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, the AMA Disciplinary Committee will reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on a balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of children should always remain paramount.

### **5.7 Action if Bullying is Suspected**

The same procedure should be followed as set out in the Section relating to responding to suspicions or allegations, 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.

**Remember: In all Child Protection issues –**

**Maintain confidentiality on a *need to know* basis only.**

**Ensure the Association Child Protection Officer follows up with social services.**

**The Association Child Protection Officer should also report the incident to the AMA Child Protection Officer who will advise, support and report as necessary.**