



**The Pars Foundation**

**CHILD WELLBEING AND PROTECTION  
IN SCOTTISH FOOTBALL**

**POLICIES AND GUIDELINES**

# CHILDREN'S RIGHTS POLICY STATEMENT

**The Pars Foundation is fully committed to embedding a rights-based approach in Scottish football. We recognise and work within the general principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) for the best interests of the child, non-discrimination, participation as well as survival and development.**

**For the purposes of this policy a child is recognised as someone under the age of 18 years. This policy applies to all children regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, race, religion, socio-economic status or family circumstance.**

The Pars Foundation will:

- Respect the rights of children as paramount.
- Provide opportunities for every child interested to play football to gain a positive experience.
- Include and involve children in decision making, providing opportunities for children to be heard.
- Promote and implement policies and procedures to safeguard the wellbeing of children and protect them from abuse, ensuring they know what to do and who they can speak to if they need help.
- Promote and implement policies and guidelines to prevent and respond to bullying, ensuring they know what to do and who they can speak to if they need help.
- Require members of staff, volunteers and members of the club to adopt and abide by this policy.
- Train, support and supervise its volunteers and members of staff, to adopt best practice in embedding children's rights in Scottish football and promoting, protecting and respecting these rights to children.
- Respond to any concerns raised where a child's rights are being denied in Scottish football.
- Regularly monitor and evaluate the implementation of this policy, these procedures and associated safeguards in developing our child-rights based approach and include children's views in this process.

## **Review**

This policy and associated policies, procedures and safeguards will be regularly reviewed and will include children's participation and feedback on the content and actual experience of implementation as part of the review:

- In accordance with changes in legislation and guidance on children's rights or following any changes within The Pars Foundation
- Following any issue or concern raised about children's rights being denied within The Pars Foundation
- In all other circumstances, at least every three years.

## **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY STATEMENT**

**The Pars Foundation is fully committed to promoting, supporting and safeguarding the wellbeing of all children in its care. We recognise the child's rights to protection as provided in Article 19 of the UNCRC: all forms of physical or mental violence, injury and abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse. 'Child protection' means protecting a child from child abuse or neglect, as stated within the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2014.**

**For the purposes of this policy a child is recognised as someone under the age of 18 years. This policy applies to all children regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, race, religion, socio-economic status or family circumstance.**

The Pars Foundation will:

- Respect the rights of children as paramount.
- Promote the rights and wellbeing of children by providing opportunities for them to take part in football safely.
- Promote and implement appropriate procedures to safeguard the wellbeing of children and protect them from abuse, ensuring they know what to do and who they can speak to if they need help.
- Require members of staff and volunteers to adopt and abide by this policy and sign up to the Code of Conduct for Safeguarding Children's Wellbeing.
- Safely recruit and select individuals who will be working with children to ensure appropriate measures have been taken and risk assessed when needed.
- Train, support and supervise its members of staff and volunteers to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect children from abuse and to reduce risks.
- Respond to any allegations of poor practice, misconduct or abuse of children in line with procedures as well as implementing, where appropriate, the relevant disciplinary and appeals procedures.
- Observe guidelines issued by local Child Protection Committees for the protection of children.
- Regularly monitor and evaluate the implementation of this policy, these procedures and associated safeguards and include children's views in this process.

### **Review**

This policy and associated procedures will be regularly reviewed and will include children's participation and feedback on the content and actual experience of implementation as part of the review:

- In accordance with changes in legislation and guidance on the protection and safeguarding of children or following any changes within The Pars Foundation
- Following any issue or concern raised about the protection and safeguarding of children within The Pars Foundation
- In all other circumstances, at least every three years.

## **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY STATEMENT**

The Pars Foundation is fully committed to safeguarding the wellbeing of all children in its care. We understand that children's wellbeing can be seriously impacted by bullying behaviour. The Pars Foundation therefore recognises the information provided for children by *respectme*, Scotland's Anti-Bullying Service: 'Bullying is never acceptable; it doesn't make a child better or stronger to get through it and it should never be seen as a normal part of growing up. Bullying is a behaviour that can make a child feel frightened, threatened, left out and hurt. Something only has to happen once to make a child feel worried or scared to go to school or other places they enjoy going'.

For the purposes of this policy a child is recognised as someone under the age of 18 years. This policy applies to all children regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, race, religion, socio-economic status or family circumstance.

The Pars Foundation will:

- Respect the rights of children as paramount.
- Work together to develop positive relationships amongst children and adults which are mutually respectful, responsible and trusting; and promote their emotional health and wellbeing.
- Seek to prevent, reduce and respond effectively to bullying behaviour, through the implementation of this policy and guidelines.
- Require members of staff and volunteers to adopt and abide by this policy.
- Train, support and supervise its members of staff and volunteers to adopt best practice to prevent, reduce and respond to bullying.
- Address the needs of children who are bullied as well as those who bully within a framework of respect, responsibility, resolution and support.
- Respond to any concerns raised either in the experiences of children of poor practice/misconduct or abuse caused by an adult's bullying behaviour.
- Highlight bullying based on prejudice and perceived differences, to ensure our practices are effective in dealing with these issues.
- Regularly monitor and evaluate the implementation of this policy and guidelines and include children's views in this process.

### **Review**

This Policy and guidelines will be regularly reviewed and will include children's participation and feedback on the content and actual experience of implementation as part of the review:

- In accordance with changes in guidance on anti-bullying or following any changes within The Pars Foundation .
- Following any issue or concern raised about bullying within The Pars Foundation .
- In all other circumstances, at least every three years.

## RESPONDING TO CONCERNS ABOUT A CHILD PROCEDURE

Children have the right to say what they think in all matters affecting them and to have their views taken seriously (Article 12, UNCRC). This must be at the forefront of any concerns that are raised about children. Their views must be considered based on the age and maturity of each child. They also have a right to privacy (Article 16, UNCRC) which is also important to consider when assessing if and at what stage information is shared and who with.

These procedures apply to all members of staff and volunteers involved in Pars Foundation activities with children under 18 years old.

### 1. Best interests of the child

The Pars Foundation is committed to working in partnership with parents/carers whenever there are concerns about a child. Parents/carers have the primary responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of their children.

Where concerns are raised about a child, this will be considered in line with the wellbeing indicators and *may* be discussed with parents/carers. 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 and the best interests of the child will be considered as to what is the best support for each individual child. Children will be asked who they feel is suitable to be informed and when relevant, consent gained from the child.

Confidentiality will not be maintained if it is assessed that a child is at risk or their wellbeing is being impacted in such a way that their right to be protected becomes more significant. Any incidents which cause concern about the wellbeing of a child should be recorded on the Concern Recording Form and reported to the Pars Foundation Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer as soon as possible.

### 2. Information regarding a concern about a child

Members of staff and volunteers may be informed in different ways with regards to details of a concern about a child. This may be a direct disclosure by the child. In this situation follow section 4 in responding to that disclosure. The details may become clear due to the observation of a child, which is perhaps demonstrated in a change in their behaviour, appearance, or nature. A third option could be information that is shared from another individual or organisation. A concern or possible abuse of a child may be observed by another young person or adult.

Depending on the nature of the concern, observations, or information from others, this may not need to be discussed with the child, instead the information recorded then reported. Advice should be sought from the Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer if there is any uncertainty about the appropriate course of action where there are concerns about a child's wellbeing which can be discussed by anonymising the child, therefore maintaining confidentiality if appropriate.

If the Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer is not available and an immediate response is required, the police and social work services must be contacted. 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, actions taken and the response by other agencies. At the earliest opportunity, thereafter the Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer should be informed.

### 3. Concerns affecting a child's wellbeing

If a concern about a child is identified that affects one or more of their eight wellbeing indicators (SAFE, HEALTHY, ACTIVE, NURTURED, ACHIEVING, RESPECTED, RESPONSIBLE, INCLUDED), complete Part A of the Concern Recording Form.

When information is being recorded about a child, it is important that the young player understands why we are recording their details and gain their consent where possible for further reporting of the concern. If a child recognises that people can help and support, and that this is the purpose of their details being shared, they will be more included and informed of the processes.

Where there is information or details in relation to the conduct an adult affecting a child's wellbeing, this should be recorded in Part B of the Concern Recording Form.

### 4. Child's right to be protected

Where the concern about a child's wellbeing suggests they are in need of protection, the information must be passed on with or without their consent for the purposes of their protection. Allegations of abuse must always be taken seriously. ***No member of The Pars Foundation shall investigate allegations of abuse or decide whether or not a child has been abused.*** 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.

#### What to Do if a Child Discloses Abuse

##### 4.1 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. What? When? Where? Who?
- 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.

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

Take whatever action is required to ensure child's immediate safety.

Pass the information immediately to the police and seek their advice.

**4.2 Record**

Make a written record of the information as soon as possible using the Concern Recording Form completing as much of the form as possible.

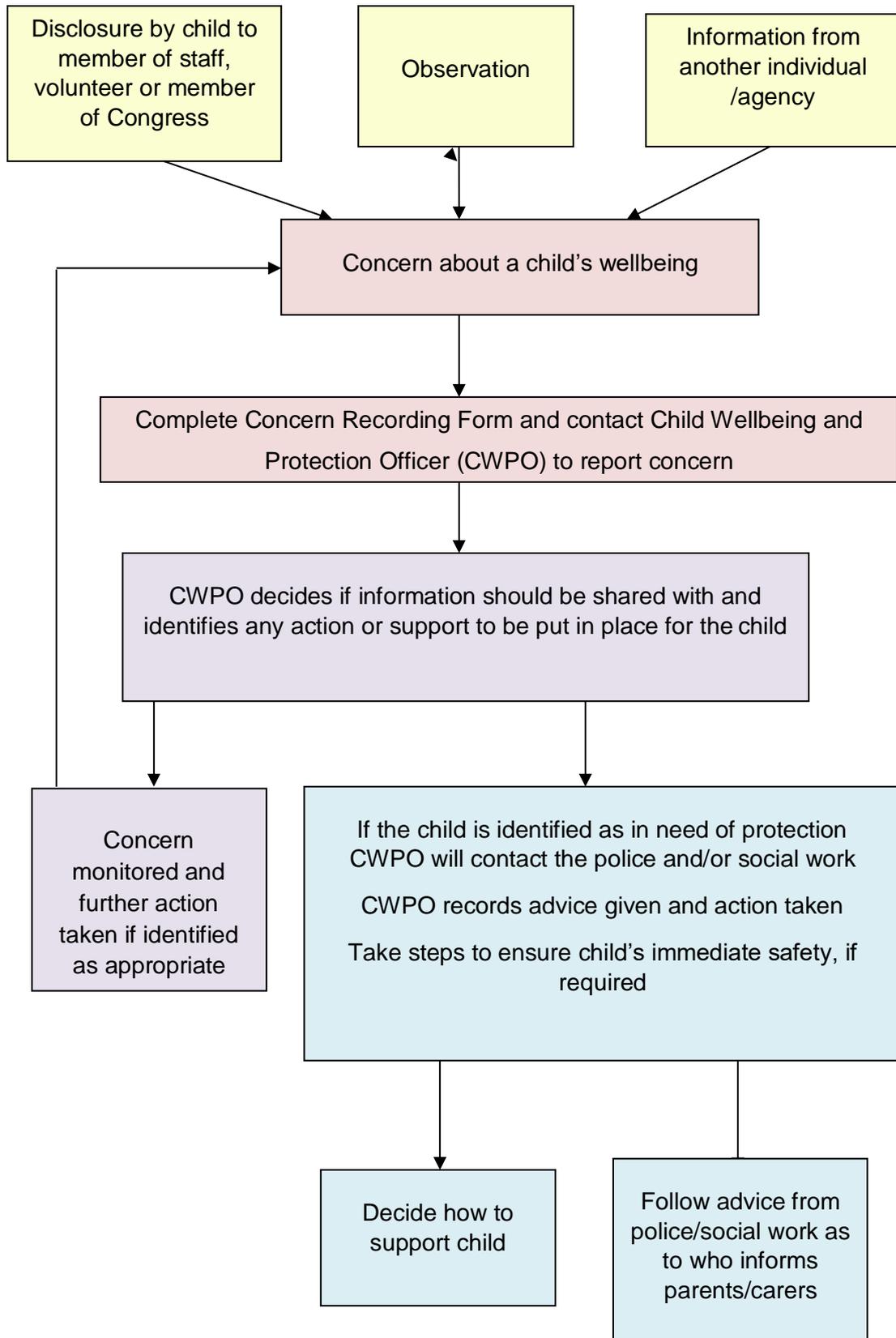
**4.3 Report**

Contact the Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer on 07368270400 to report the concern then email the completed form to [kelly@parsfoundation.co.uk](mailto:kelly@parsfoundation.co.uk) as soon as possible after completion; do not delay by attempting to obtain information to complete all sections. Please do not keep any electronic, printed or written versions of this form. It is important to maintain confidentiality to delete or shred as soon as the information has been passed on.

**4.4 Sharing Concerns with Parents/Carers**

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

# RESPONDING TO CONCERNS ABOUT A CHILD PROCEDURE FLOWCHART



# RESPONDING TO CONCERNS ABOUT THE CONDUCT OF AN ADULT PROCEDURE

In all cases where there are concerns about the conduct of an adult towards a child, the best interests and wellbeing of the child will be the paramount consideration. These procedures aim to ensure that all concerns about the conduct of an adult are dealt with in a timely, appropriate and proportionate manner.

No member of staff or volunteer in receipt of information that causes concern about the conduct of an adult towards children shall keep that information to himself or herself or attempt to deal with the matter on their own.

***At any point in responding to concerns about the conduct of an adult, advice may be sought from the police or social work services.***

## 1. Initial Reporting of Concerns

Any concerns for the wellbeing of a child arising from the conduct of an adult must be reported to The Pars Foundation Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer on the day the concern arises, as soon as practically possible.

Where the concern is about the Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer it must be reported to the General Manager of The Pars Foundation. In this situation, they will then take on the role and responsibilities as listed below of the Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer.

## 2. Recording and Reporting

Concerns must be recorded using the [Concern Recording Form](#) as soon as possible. Contact the Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer on 07368270400 to report the concern then email the completed form to [Kelly@parsfoundation.co.uk](mailto:Kelly@parsfoundation.co.uk) as soon as possible after completion; do not delay by attempting to obtain information to complete all sections. Please do not keep any electronic, printed, or written versions of this form. It is important to maintain confidentiality to delete or shred as soon as the information has been passed on.

All subsequent actions taken and reasons for decisions shall be recorded (in the order in which they happened). These records should be signed and dated by the Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer. Where The Pars Foundation Disciplinary Procedures are invoked for members of staff or volunteers, a written record will be made of all actions and reasons for decision.

## 3. Establishing the Basic Facts

Once the concerns have been reported, the Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer will:

- Conduct an initial assessment of the facts to determine the appropriate course of action.
- Consult external agencies such as the police and social work services for advice at any time. This is important because they may hold other important information which, when considered alongside the current concerns, builds a significant picture of concern.

#### **4. Conducting the Initial Assessment**

The Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer will conduct the initial assessment.

The purpose of the initial assessment is to clarify the nature and context of the concerns. It should determine if the adult's conduct was inappropriate behaviour, serious poor practice/misconduct or whether there is reasonable cause to suspect an adult's behaviour and conduct has been criminal. Every situation is unique, so guidance cannot be prescriptive.

- Where the established facts support a concern of criminal behaviour, the initial assessment will not form part of the disciplinary investigation.
- Subject to the nature and seriousness of the situation, if it is not clear at this stage whether a criminal offence may have been committed, the member of staff or volunteer *may* be approached as part of the information gathering process.
- Where the nature and seriousness of the information suggests that a criminal offence *may* have been committed, or that to assess the facts may jeopardise evidence, advice will be sought from the police before the member of staff or volunteer is approached.
- An initial assessment of the basic facts may require the need to ask a child some basic, open-ended, non-leading questions *solely with a view to clarifying the basic facts*. It may also be necessary to ask similar basic questions of other young players, or other appropriate individuals.
- Interviewing children about possible abuse and criminal offences is the sole remit of specially trained police officers and social workers. Questioning of children by those conducting an initial assessment should always be avoided as far as possible. If it is necessary to speak to the child to clarify the basic facts, best practice suggests that consent from the parent/carer be obtained.

Possible outcomes of initial assessment:

- (i) No further action (facts do not substantiate complaint).
- (ii) Situation is dealt with under the Pars Foundation Disciplinary Procedures for members of staff and volunteers.
- (iii) Child protection investigation (jointly by police and social work services).
- (iv) Criminal investigation (by the police). The results of a criminal investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation, but not in all cases.
- (v) Civil proceedings (by the child/family who raised the concern).

#### **5. Initial Assessment Supports Concerns about Poor Practice and/or Misconduct**

The Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer will deal with the concern in line with the Pars Foundation Disciplinary Procedures for members of staff and volunteers. In the event of an investigation into the conduct of a member of staff or volunteer, the principles of natural justice will inform all actions:

- They will be made aware of the nature of concern.
- They will be given an opportunity to put forward their case.
- The Pars Foundation will act in good faith, ensuring the matter is dealt with impartially and as quickly as possible in the circumstances.

Pending the outcome of any investigation, precautionary suspension will be considered in all cases where there is significant concern about the conduct of a member of staff or volunteer towards children.

#### **6. Initial Assessment Supports Concerns about Possible Criminal Behaviour**

Where the initial assessment of information gives reasonable cause to suspect an adult's behaviour and conduct has been a criminal offence, the Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer will report the concerns to the police as soon as possible on the day the information is received. The Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer will make a written record of the name of the police officer to whom the concerns were passed together with the time and date of the call, in case any follow up is required.

Referrals to the police will be confirmed in writing by the Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer within 24 hours. A copy of the Concern Recording Form should be provided to the police on request. Appropriate steps will be taken to ensure the safety of the child(ren) who may be at risk. The parents/carers of the child(ren) involved will be informed as soon as possible following advice from the police.

Advice will firstly be obtained from the police about informing the member of staff or volunteer involved in the concerns. If the advice is to inform them, they will be told that information has been received which may suggest an allegation of abuse or possible criminal offence. As the matter will be *sub judice* (i.e. under judicial consideration) no details will be given unless advised by the police. All actions will ensure the best evidence is preserved for any criminal proceedings while at the same time safeguarding the rights of the member of staff or volunteer.

The Pars Foundation will take all reasonable steps to support a member of staff or volunteer against whom a concern has been raised.

## **7. Precautionary Suspension**

Suspension is not a form of disciplinary action. The member of staff or volunteer involved may be suspended whilst an investigation is carried out. Suspension will be carried out in accordance with The Pars Foundation Disciplinary Procedures. At the suspension interview the member of staff or volunteer will be informed of the reason for suspension (within the confines of sharing information) and given the opportunity to make a statement – which will be recorded – should they wish to do so.

Notification of the suspension and the reasons will be conveyed in writing to the member of staff or volunteer in accordance with the Pars Foundation Disciplinary Procedures.

## **8. Disciplinary Investigation**

An ongoing criminal investigation does not necessarily rule out disciplinary action. However, any action taken must not jeopardise the criminal investigation. Advice must be taken from the police on this. Sufficient information should be available to enable the Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer to make a decision whether to go ahead with disciplinary action.

## **9. False or Malicious Allegations**

In exceptional circumstances where an investigation establishes an allegation or concern raised is false, unfounded or malicious:

- The member of staff or volunteer involved will receive an account of the circumstances and/or investigation and a letter confirming the conclusion of the matter. They may wish to seek legal advice.
- All records pertaining to the circumstances and investigation shall be kept confidentially.
- The Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer will take all reasonable steps to support the individual in this situation.
- In these circumstances, The Pars Foundation will review the child's participation with the football club. It will be appropriate to have a discussion with the child (with parental/carer permission) in determining their views and opinions.
- Data collected for the investigation will be destroyed in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998.

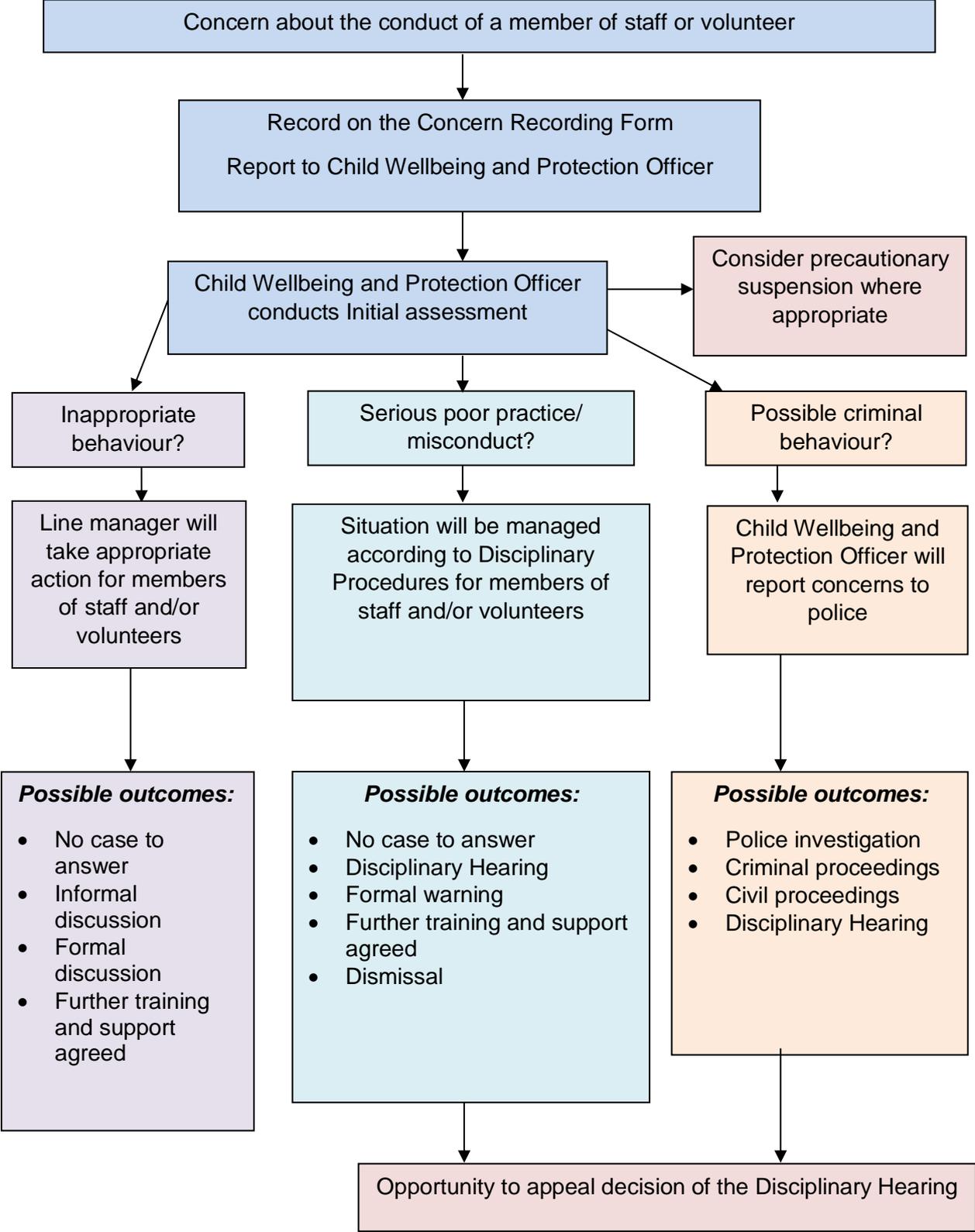
## **10. Historical Allegations of Abuse**

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event e.g. an adult who was abused as a child by someone who is still currently working with children. These procedures will be followed in the event of an allegation of historical abuse.

## **11. Media**

All media enquiries relating to the conduct of a member of staff or volunteer will be referred to the General Manager, The Pars Foundation

# RESPONDING TO CONCERNS ABOUT THE CONDUCT OF AN ADULT PROCEDURE FLOWCHART



Concern about the conduct of a member of staff or volunteer

Record on the Concern Recording Form  
Report to Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer

Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer  
conducts Initial assessment

Consider precautionary suspension where appropriate

Inappropriate behaviour?

Serious poor practice/  
misconduct?

Possible criminal behaviour?

Line manager will take appropriate action for members of staff and/or volunteers

Situation will be managed according to Disciplinary Procedures for members of staff and/or volunteers

Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer will report concerns to police

**Possible outcomes:**

- No case to answer
- Informal discussion
- Formal discussion
- Further training and support agreed

**Possible outcomes:**

- No case to answer
- Disciplinary Hearing
- Formal warning
- Further training and support agreed
- Dismissal

**Possible outcomes:**

- Police investigation
- Criminal proceedings
- Civil proceedings
- Disciplinary Hearing

Opportunity to appeal decision of the Disciplinary Hearing

# REVIEW OF THE MANAGEMENT OF CONCERNS PROCEDURE

## 1. Planning the review.

Set out the remit, aim and purpose of carrying out the review. The Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer should help identify a person to carry out the review and in some circumstances, this may be appropriate to have an independent person. In this case, confidentiality must be maintained. Agree a timescale and format for completing the review.

## 2. Establish the facts of the case, a chronology of events and the roles of individuals and organisations involved.

Set out the actual sequence of events to help to understand what happened, when, and who was involved.

## 3. Identify any issues or key questions relating to the aims of the review.

Having established the sequence of events the reviewer should then be able to answer the questions contained in the specific remit of the review.

If the reviewer considers that a child may still be at risk despite action taken during the case or as a result of Pars Foundations's failure to take appropriate action, they should be prepared to act. Any urgent issues should be addressed immediately without waiting for the conclusion of the review.

## 4. Identify any other relevant points or observations and complete review.

The reviewer may identify issues which are worth exploring further. These may include:

### PROCEDURES

- Were the relevant procedures followed?
- If not, is there a reasonable explanation for this?
- Were the timescales appropriate?
- Do the current procedures provide adequate information about what to do in such a situation?

### OUTCOMES

- Was the outcome appropriate in the case?
- If not, why not?
- Is there a need to take further action in this case; for example, referring the case to police/social work?

### PEOPLE

- Were the right people involved?
- Were the views of the child/family obtained?
- Were those involved aware of the procedures?
- Had the people involved been trained on the procedures?
- Where appropriate, were external organisations involved; for example, the police or social work?

### RECORDING

- Were records kept?
- Is the quality of the information recorded satisfactory?
- Can the forms be improved?

## 5. Respond to anything identified within the review.

On completion of the review, any learning, training needs or update to policy and procedures must be addressed and responded to within an agreed timescale. Where appropriate, outcomes of the review should then be shared for wider learning or specific improvements to particular activities.