

Child Protection

SKIDS programmes are committed to the recognition, and prevention of abuse of children and young people.

In addition to general safety policies already outlined, SKIDS programmes will ensure that volunteers and other adults visiting or working at the programme are well supervised and visible to SKIDS staff when interacting with the children. At no time will any adult be left alone with a child out of sight of other adults.

All SKIDS programmes are committed to the prevention of child abuse with the safety, welfare and well-being of the children always the prime consideration. SKIDS management and staff will respond to suspicions of child abuse by maintaining a good relationship with the child, recording all observations, impressions and communications. SKIDS support the roles of statutory agencies (the Police and the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services) in the investigation of abuse and will report cases of suspected abuse to these agencies according to the process outlined below.

No one staff member will act alone, with any action taken only after consultation with the SKIDS franchisee unless they feel that the child's immediate safety is threatened. Advice will be sought by the SKIDS franchisee from the appropriate authority, such as the Police or the Child Youth and Family Services. Instructions given by the appropriate authority will be followed and acted upon. SKIDS do not need the permission of a child's parents or caregiver to report suspected abuse to the Police or Child, Youth and Family (section 15 CYP&F Act). Any staff member who believes that a child has been, or is likely to be harmed (whether physically, emotionally or sexually), ill-treated, abused, neglected, or deprived may report the matter to a Social worker or a member of the Police.

SKIDS are committed to maintaining and increasing staff awareness of how to prevent, recognise and respond to abuse through appropriate training. As part of their induction, new staff must familiarise themselves with programme policy on child abuse and be encouraged to read any resource material. In addition all staff will attend a course on Child Abuse Awareness which is run by SKIDS and facilitated by Child, Youth and Family specialist staff. Staff will not assume responsibility beyond the level of their experience and training.

Definition of Child Abuse

"Any act by which an individual, institution or society as a whole that interferes with the well-being of a child or young person and deprives that child or young person of his or her rights".

There are four types of child abuse:

Sexual abuse occurs when someone uses his or her power over the child, or takes advantage of the child's trust and respect, to involve the child in sexual activity.

Physical abuse is non-accidental injury by somebody and also includes abusive administration of drugs or alcohol to a child.

Emotional abuse is when a child's self-esteem is attacked by somebody to coerce the child into doing what the abuser wants them to do.

Neglect is a denial of the basic needs/ rights of nurturing, food and shelter, so that the child fails to thrive. It must be seen as a form of child abuse.

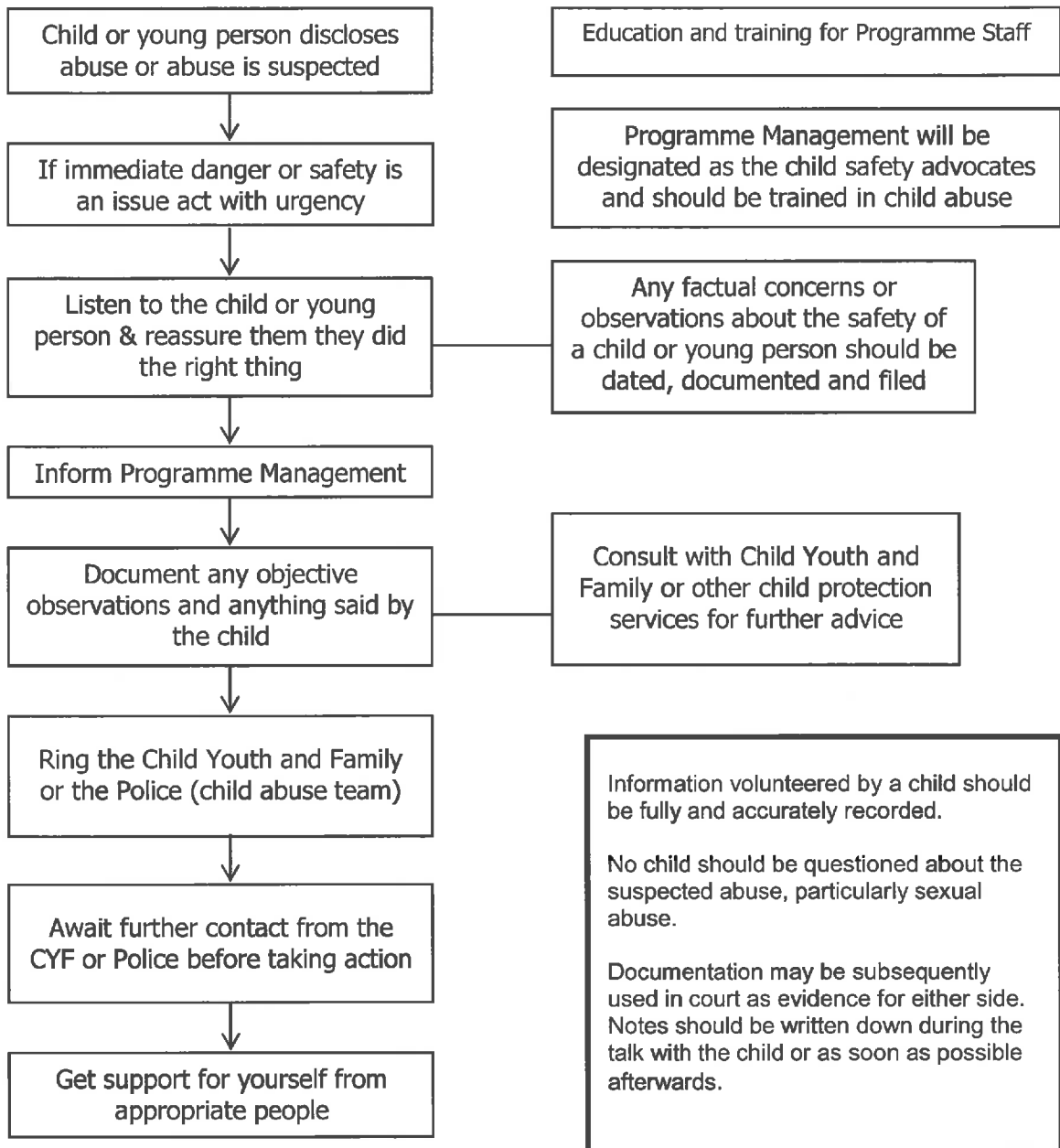
Family violence may be witnessed/experienced by children and involve physical, sexual and emotional abuse.

Responding to Suspicions of Child Abuse

At all times suspicion or allegation of child abuse must be acted upon. Using the following procedures.

- Listen to the child, without making ANY comment or suggestion. Information volunteered by a child should be fully and accurately recorded.
- Record incident and conversation on the SKIDS suspicion of child abuse form
- Report suspicions to your Programme Manager/Franchisee along with the completed report form; this form is to be handed to the SKIDS Franchisee who will keep it in a secure place.
- The Franchisee is responsible for advising either the Police or Child, Youth and Family services.
- The Master Franchisee and Head Office must also be notified immediately by the Franchisee.
- Staff involved identifying cases of suspected child abuse are entitled to have support. The programme will maintain knowledge of such individuals, agencies and organisations in the community who provide support.

When responding to a suspicion or disclosure of abuse the programme will follow this process:

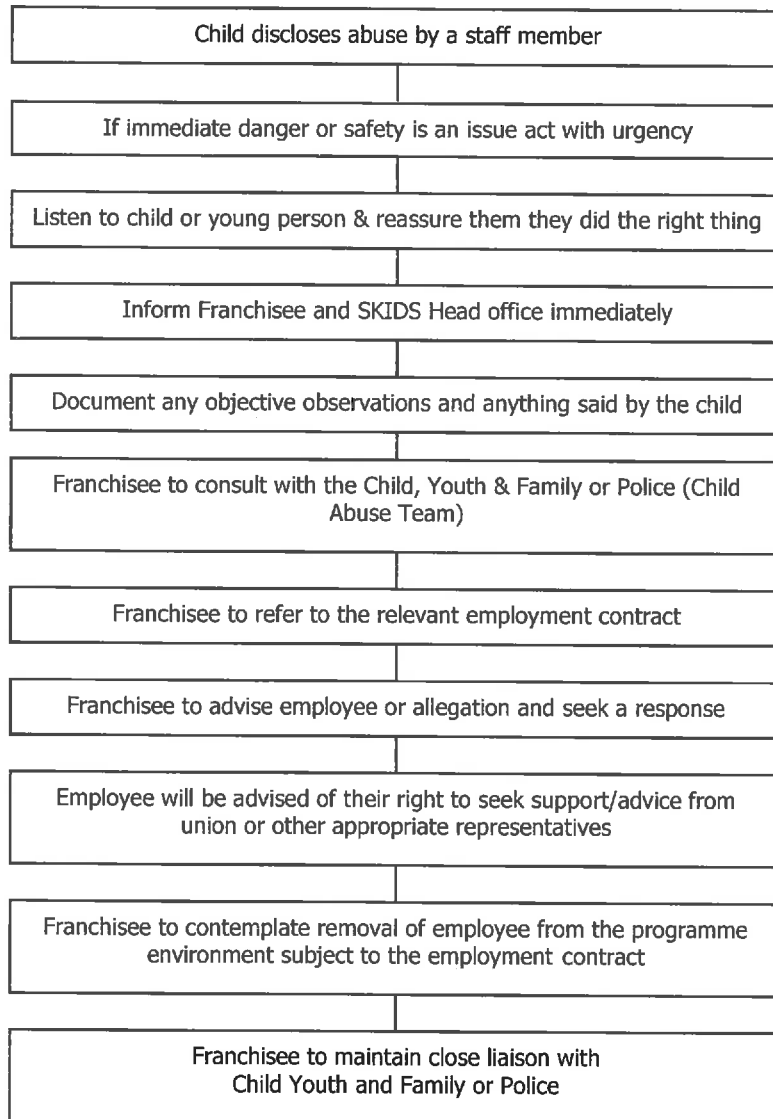


When an allegation of Abuse is made against a Staff Member

Where it is suspected that the child abuse has been perpetrated by a staff member or other person assisting with the programme, the matter must be reported promptly to programme management/franchisee owner.

Under no circumstances should the child making the allegation be exposed to unnecessary risk. This may require removal of the employee from the programme environment, subject to the requirements of the applicable employment contract. All actions will be undertaken discretely and as confidentially as possible.

Franchisee will ensure the following process is undertaken:



Peer Abuse

SKIDS programmes will ensure that the safety of the child or young person is paramount and no form of physical, sexual or verbal harassment or violence from peers will be sanctioned or minimised in any way.

While the situation is being evaluated the children or young persons concerned will be separated. It is essential to reduce further emotional trauma for the victims who may be fearful and distressed if they are in contact with possible abusers.

In some cases where the abuse has occurred at the programme immediate suspension may be appropriate, as outlined in the behaviour guidance policy.

Supervision Guidelines

To minimise the risk of actual or alleged abuse in the programme please follow these guidelines.

The Franchisee should ensure as far as practicable that staff are never one-on-one alone with children.

Wherever possible an open door policy for all spaces should be used (i.e. not possible for toilets). Staff should be aware of where all children are at all times and check to ensure what they are doing is appropriate.

Be aware of situations where children are out of sight together (dens, playhuts etc.) and supervise accordingly.

Visitors to the programme should be monitored at all times by programme staff.

All volunteers and outside instructors should be monitored by the paid programme staff.

If activities require 1:1 physical contact (i.e. classes in swimming, gymnastics etc.) parents and caregivers should be advised.

Unless requested by children or parents there is no need to assist school aged children with toileting. If the situation arises ensure that other staff know you are toileting a child/young person, and that parents are informed.

Where a child or young person requires assistance, e.g. intellectually or physically disabled, if possible involve the parents/caregivers and outside agencies (such as Special Education Service) to assist. If this assistance is not available, ensure that the staff members are aware of the appropriate procedures when giving assistance.

Staff should avoid transporting a child or young person on their own at all times, unless an emergency requires it.

Except in an emergency, children and young people are not to be taken from the programme by SKIDS staff without written parental consent.

