

A Guide to Dealing with Allegations Made Against Another Child (What to do if You Have Child Protection Concerns)



This guide explains what to do if child protection allegations are made against another child involved with the BTBA and NAYBC. This guide should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, the Anti-Bullying Policy, the Complaints Policy and the Whistleblowing Policy.

1. Aims and purpose of procedure:

- To ensure that children who receive the services of the BTBA and any other children who may come to the attention of the BTBA are protected and supported following an allegation that they may have been abused by another child or young person involved with the BTBA
- To ensure that there is a fair, consistent and robust response to any allegations of this nature so that the risk posed to other children by the child/young person in question is managed effectively
- To facilitate an appropriate level of investigation into allegations, whether they relate to recent alleged activity, said to have taken place during the time that the child/young person in question has been involved with the BTBA or whether they relate to abuse which allegedly took place prior to the child's/young person's involvement with the BTBA
- To ensure that the BTBA continues to fulfil its responsibilities towards children and young people who may be subject to such investigations and are in need of support
- To ensure that there is an appropriate response in situations where allegations are unfounded or deemed to be malicious in origin.

The purpose of the procedure is to provide a clear direction to staff that are called upon to deal with such allegations and to manage investigations and care plans which may result from them.

2. This procedure applies to:

- Any member of staff, volunteer or trustee to whom an allegation of abuse has been made which suggests that another child or young person is responsible
- Anyone in a managerial position, including the named person for child protection, line managers and supervisors, who may be required to deal with such allegations and manage investigations and care plans that result from them.

3. Ways that allegations might be made against another child/young person involved with the BTBA

- A child or parent/carer might make a direct allegation against another child or young person.
- A child or parent/carer might express discomfort with the behaviour of another child or young person that falls short of a specific allegation.
- Another child, member of staff or volunteer may directly observe behaviour from one child/young person towards another that gives cause for concern.
- The group/organisation may be informed by a parent or by the police or another statutory authority that a child or young person is the subject of an investigation.
- A child or young person may volunteer information to the organisation that he/she has harmed another child or is at risk of doing so or has committed an offence against or related to a child.

4. What to do if you have child protection concerns

Is the child who has been allegedly abused, or the child who has allegedly perpetrated the abuse, in immediate danger or does either of them need emergency medical attention?

- If either child is in immediate danger and is with you, remain with him/her and call the police if you are unable to remove the danger yourself.
- If the child is elsewhere, contact the police and explain the situation to them.
- If a child needs emergency medical attention, call an ambulance and, while you are waiting for it to arrive, get help from your first aider.
- If the first aider is not available, use any first aid knowledge that you may have yourself to help the child.
- You also need to contact your BTBA National Council Member or named person for child protection to let them know what is happening.

A decision will need to be made about when and who should inform the families of both the child who has been abused and the child who has allegedly perpetrated the abuse, as well as the local authority children's social care department.

If the child who is the alleged victim is not known to the BTBA it is not our role to inform the child's family. Even if the child who is the alleged victim is known, the police and/or the health services, should be part of the decision-making process if they have been contacted.

The paramount consideration should always be the welfare of the children and young people involved. Issues that will need to be taken into account are:

- The children's wishes and feelings
- The parents' right to know (unless this would place the child who has allegedly perpetrated the abuse in danger, or would interfere with a criminal investigation)
- The impact of telling or not telling the parents
- The current assessment of the risk to the child who has been abused and the source of that risk
- The current assessment of any risk to the child who has allegedly perpetrated the abuse and the source of that risk
- Any risk management plans that currently exist for either child.

Once any immediate danger or emergency medical need has been dealt with, the procedure set out below should be followed:

1. The member of staff who has been informed of the allegation or who has the concern, should make notes of what he/she has been told or of his/her direct concerns using the reporting form, and should discuss these with his/her BTBA National Council Member within 24 hours. The named person for child protection should also be involved in the discussion.
2. If both children/young people are known to the BTBA and if their families do not already know about the allegation or concern, the member of staff, manager or named person should discuss it with them unless:
 - The view is that someone (for example the child who has allegedly perpetrated the abuse) may be put in danger by the family being informed

- Informing the family might interfere with a criminal investigation.
 - If any of these circumstances apply, discussions with the families should only take place after this has been agreed with the local authority children's social care department.
3. If only the child who is alleged to have harmed another child is known to the BTBA then, subject to the considerations set out in above, discussions with only this child's family should take place.
 4. The child who is the subject of the allegation should also be informed of what has been said about him/her. However, if the view is that children's social care or the police should be involved, the child should only be informed after discussion and agreement with these agencies. These agencies may have views about what information should be disclosed to the child/young person at this stage.
 5. If there is still uncertainty about whether the allegation or concern constitutes a child protection issue, the named person (or BTBA National Council Member if named person not available) should discuss with children's social care department or with the NSPCC Helpline without disclosing the identity of either child/family.
 6. If, having discussed the situation fully and taken advice if necessary, the manager/supervisor and the named person concludes that the alleged behaviour does not constitute a child protection issue, then consideration should be given to whether the *anti-bullying policy and procedure* should be used (if both children are known to the organisation) and whether either or both children should be referred for other services.
 7. If the view is that the behaviour does indeed amount to a child protection issue, the named person should refer both children to the local authority children's social care department and confirm the referral in writing within 24 hours.
 8. Pending the outcome of the referral to the children's social care department and the possible investigation or assessment that may follow from this, any risk that may be posed to other children by the child who has allegedly harmed another child will need to be carefully managed. This should be done on an inter-agency basis in accordance with procedures developed by the local safeguarding children board for children who display harmful behaviour towards others.
 9. The named person should enquire of the children's social care department whether these procedures are being used and, if so, should ask to be involved in or at least kept informed of inter-agency decisions made in accordance with these procedures.
 10. If the procedures are not being used but the BTBA remains concerned that the child/young person could pose a risk to other children, then the named person and the BTBA National Council Member should consider whether the child/young person can continue to be involved with the BTBA and, if so, on what basis. This is a situation that needs to be kept under regular review as the investigation and assessment conducted by the statutory agencies is carried out and reaches a conclusion. It may also need to be reviewed regularly following the conclusion of the assessment process, as the child or young person may be receiving support that should, with time, reduce the level of risk he/she presents.
 11. If the allegation is found to be without substance or fabricated, the BTBA will consider referring the child who was said to have been harmed to the children's social care department for them to assess whether he/she is in need of services (for example, the child may have been abused by someone else).
 12. If it is felt that there has been malicious intent behind the allegation, the BTBA will discuss with the police whether there are grounds to pursue any action against the person responsible.

What should I say to a child who says that he/she or another child is being abused by another child/young person?

- Reassure the child that he/she has done the right thing by telling someone about it.
- Tell him/her that you now have to do what you can to keep him/her (or the child who is the subject of the allegation) safe.
- Let the child know what you are going to do next and who else needs to know about it.
- Let the child tell his/her whole story. Don't try to investigate or quiz the child, but make sure that you are clear as to what he/she is saying.
- If possible, explain to the child's parent/carer what has happened. Do this first without the child there, and then summarise it again in front of the child so that it is an open subject between parent/carer and child. This may enable them to talk about it together more easily.
- Check out what the child would like to happen as a result of what he/she has said, but don't make or infer promises you can't keep.
- Give the child the ChildLine phone number, or another helpful number from a selection featured at the end of this document
- Make sure that the parent/carer has support too.

What should I say to a child/young person who says that he/she has abused another child?

- Reassure the child that he/she has done the right thing by telling someone about it.
- Tell him/her that you now have to do what you can to keep him/her and the child who has been abused safe.
- Let the child know what you are going to do next and who else needs to know about it.
- Let the child tell his/her whole story. Don't try to investigate or quiz the child, but make sure that you are clear as to what he/she is saying.
- If there is no risk to the child from the child's parent/carer, then explain to the parent/carer what has happened. Do this firstly without the child there, and then summarise it again in front of the child so that it is an open subject between parent/carer and child. This may enable them to talk about it together more easily.
- Check out what the child expects to happen as a result of what he/she has said. Offer reassurance where appropriate but don't make or infer promises you can't keep.
- Reassure the child that, with help, the problem can be sorted out and that what has happened does not make him/her an abuser for life.
- Give the child the ChildLine phone number, or another helpful number from a selection featured at the end of this document
- Remember that the child who has behaved in this way is a child in need of support.
- Make sure that the parent/carer has support too.

5. Monitoring

5.1 This guide will be reviewed a year after development and then every year after, or in the following circumstances:

- Changes in legislation and/or government guidance
- As required by the Local Safeguarding Children Board, UK Sport and/or Home Country Sports Councils and BTBA
- As a result of any other significant change or event.



6. Useful contacts

- NSPCC Helpline 0808 800 5000
- Childline 0800 1111 / www.childline.org.uk
- Kidscape www.kidscape.org.uk
- Anti-Bullying Alliance www.antibullyingalliance.org

7. Reporting and Recording

- 7.1 Reporting incidents should be made in conjunction with the BTBA Complaints and Disciplinary Procedures and Policies
- 7.2 Reporting of incidents must be made in writing either by an Incident Reporting Form, letter or email
- 7.3 Reports of incidents can be made directly to the NAYBC designated Child Protection Officer or the BTBA Executive Committee

Adapted from the template provided by the NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU)

Added acknowledgement should be made to Safe Network with help in formulating these procedures