SNAAP Child Protection Policy
Safeguarding Children

Child Protection Statement

SNAAP believes that it is always unacceptable for a child or young person to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people, by a commitment to practice which protects them.
We recognise that:

- the welfare of the child/young person is paramount
- all children regardless of age. Disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

The purpose of the policy:

- To provide protection for the children and young people who receive SNAAP's services, including the children of adult members or users.
- To provide staff and volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a child or young person may be experiencing, or be at risk of, harm.

This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers and Board of Trustees, paid staff, volunteers and Sessional workers, agency staff, students or anyone working on behalf of SNAAP. We will endeavour to safeguard children and young people by:

- valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- adopting child protection guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- recruiting staff and volunteers safely ensuring all necessary checks are made
- sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers
- sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training

We are also committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

Definitions of abuse

What are abuse and neglect?
It is generally accepted that there are four main forms of abuse. The following definitions are based on those from Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government 2005).

1. Physical Abuse
Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Physical abuse, as well as being a result of an act of commission can also be caused through omission or the failure to act to protect.

2. Emotional Abuse
Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capacity, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploring and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

3. Sexual Abuse
Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (eg, rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts (oral sex). They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Boys and girls can be sexually abused by males and/or females, by adults and by other young people. This includes people from different walks of life.

4. Neglect
Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food and clothing, shelter including exclusion from home or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of adequate care-takers, or failure to ensure appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Other forms of harm
Chapter 10 of Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government 2006) and other inter-agency guidance draws attention to other sources of stress or harm for children and families such as social exclusion, domestic violence, the untreated mental illness of a parent or carer, or drug or alcohol misuse. All these areas may have a negative impact on a child's health and development and may be noticed by someone caring for a child. If it is felt that a child's well-being is being adversely affected by any of these circumstances, the same procedure for reporting concerns should be followed. For example, children who are involved in prostitution and other forms of commercial sexual exploitation should also be treated primarily as victims of abuse and their circumstances require careful assessment by the statutory agencies.

Recognising child abuse

Recognising child abuse is not easy, and it is not your responsibility to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place or if a child is at significant risk. You do, however, have a responsibility to act if you have a concern about a child's welfare or safety. The following is not designed to turn you into an expert but will help you to be more alert to the signs of possible abuse.

1. **Physical abuse**
   Most children will collect cuts and bruises in their daily life. These are likely to be in places where there are bony parts of their body, like elbows, knees and shins. Some children, however, will have bruising which can almost only have been caused non-accidentally. An important indicator of physical abuse is where bruises or injuries are unexplained or the explanation does not fit the injury. A delay in seeking medical treatment for a child when it is obviously necessary is also a cause for concern. Bruising may be more or less noticeable on children with different skin tones or from different racial groups and specialist advice may need to be taken.

   Patterns of bruising that are suggestive of physical child abuse include:
   - bruising in children who are not independently mobile
   - bruising in babies
   - bruises that are seen away from bony prominences
   - bruises to face, back, stomach, arms, buttocks, ears and hands
   - multiple bruises in clusters
   - multiple bruises of uniform shape
   - bruises that carry the imprint of an implement used, hand marks or fingertips
   - although bruising is the commonest injury in physical abuse, fatal non-accidental head injury and non-accidental fractures can occur without bruising. Any child who has unexplained signs of pain or illness should be seen promptly by a doctor.

   Other physical signs of abuse may include:
   - cigarette burns
   - adult bite marks
   - broken bones
   - scalds.

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate physical abuse:

- fear of parents being approached for an explanation
- aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts
- flinching when approached or touched
- reluctance to get changed, for example wearing long sleeves in hot weather
- depression
- withdrawn behaviour
- running away from home.

2. **Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse may be difficult to measure, and often children who appear to well cared for may be emotionally abused by being taunted, put down or belittled. They may receive little or no love, affection or attention from their parents or carers. Emotional abuse can also take the form of children not being allowed to mix/play with other children.

The physical signs of emotional abuse may include:

- failure to thrive or grow, particularly if the child puts on weight in other circumstances, eg, in hospital away from their parents' care
- sudden speech disorder
- developmental delay, either in terms of physical or emotional progress

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate emotional abuse include:

- neurotic behaviour, eg, sulking, hair twisting, rocking
- being unable to play
- fear of making mistakes
- self harm
- fear of parents being approached regarding their behaviour.

3. **Sexual Abuse**

Adults who use children to meet their own sexual needs abuse both girls and boys of all ages, including infants and toddlers.

Usually, in cases of sexual abuse it is the child's behaviour which may cause you to become concerned, although physical signs can also be present. In all cases, children who talk about sexual abuse do so because they want it to stop, It is important, therefore, that they are listened to and taken seriously.

The physical signs of sexual abuse may include:

- pain or itching in the genital/anal areas
- bruising or bleeding near genital/anal areas
- sexually transmitted disease
- vaginal discharge or infection
- stomach pains
- discomfort when walking or sitting down
- pregnancy.

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate sexual abuse include:

- sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour, eg, becoming aggressive or withdrawn
- fear of being left with a specific person or group of people
- having nightmares
- running away from home
- sexual knowledge which is beyond their age or developmental level
- sexual drawings or language
- bedwetting
- eating problems such as overeating or anorexia
- self harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts
- saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone
- substance of drug abuse
- suddenly having unexplained sources of money
- not allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence)
- acting in a sexually explicit way towards adults.

4. Neglect

Neglect can be a difficult form of abuse to recognise, yet have some of the most lasting and damaging effects on children.

The physical signs of neglect may include:

- constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from other children
- constantly dirty or smelly
- loss of weight, or being constantly underweight
- inappropriate dress for conditions.

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate neglect may include:

- complaining of being tired all the time
- not requesting medical assistance and/or failing to attend appointments
- having few friends
- mentioning their being left alone or unsupervised.

The above list is not meant to be definitive but as a guide to assist you. It is important to remember that many children and young people will exhibit some of these indicators at some time, and the presence of one or more should not be taken as proof that abuse is occurring.

There may well be other reasons for changes in behaviour, such as death or the birth of a new baby in their family, relationship problems between their parents/carers, etc.

Safe Recruitment and Selection for Our Project

Determined abusers have often managed to gain access to children and young people. Our policy and procedures are important safeguards to stop this happening. They will be understood by good applicants and will put ill intentioned people off.

All volunteers and staff, including temporary personnel and helpers should be subject to a careful and rigorous selection and vetting process with the following elements:

- Completion of an application form and checking the person's identity by their birth certificate or passport, preferably by something which has their photograph.
- Taking up references.
- An interview by at least two people.
- Identifying reasons for gaps in employment or inconsistencies.
- Carrying out Criminal Records Bureau checks.
- Allow no unsupervised access to children and young people until this has been completed.
- Advice is sought about recruiting someone with a criminal record.
- A supervised probationary period for new people to the project and a comprehensive induction period that includes our child protection procedures.

Criminal records checks and vetting

Checks to be carried out on all people applying for work with children, including volunteers. The CRB will provide checks of:

- Police criminal records via the Police National Computer
- PoCA list (The Protection of Children Act List) and List 99 – lists of people who are disqualified from working with children and young people.

Responding to a child making an allegation of abuse

- **Stay Calm.**
- **Listen** carefully to what is said.
- Find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others **– do not promise to keep secrets.**
- **Allow** the child to continue at his/her own pace.
- **Ask questions for clarification only,** and at all times avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer.
- **Reassure** the child that they have done the right thing in telling you.
- **Tell them** what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared.
- **Record** in writing what was said using the child's own words as soon as possible – note date, time, any names mentioned, to whom the information was given and ensure that the record is signed and dated.
- Contact your **designated person.**

Remember: It is not your responsibility to decide whether or not abuse has occurred and you should not investigate any suspicions or concerns about a child. That is the role of the statutory services and any worries or concerns should be passed to the designated child protection person.

Reporting allegations or suspicions of abuse

Everyone should be aware of the designated person within SNAAP who should immediately always be informed of any concerns about a child being abused.

Name: Natalie Simmons
Job Title: Leisure Development Coordinator
Address: Windchimes, Reynolds Close, Herne Bay, CT6 6DS
Tel no: 01227 367555 (office hours) or 07985 407 672
If Natalie is unavailable or cannot be contacted contact the Project Manager, Carrie Wood, or Interim Chair of Trustee's, Vanessa Boukharouba on 01227 367555

And of appropriate contacts outside SNAAP
Children's Social Services, Brook House
During office hours Tel No: 01227 598500
Outside office hours: 0845 762 6777

Police Station - Canterbury
Tel No: 01227 817156

NSPCC Child Protection Helpline 0808 800 5000

If for any reason you cannot tell the nominated person, then you should tell a member of staff or member of the Board of Trustees.

Legislation and Guidance

There is a considerable body of legislation, government guidance and standards, which are designed to ensure that children are protected from harm.

The Children Act 1989
The intention of the legislation is to ensure that the welfare and developmental needs of children are met, including their need to be protected from harm.

The key principles of this act are:

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- Wherever possible, children should be brought up and cared for within their own families.
- All interventions must take into account race, ethnicity and culture of children.
- Children with disabilities must be provided with services to promote their achievements.
- Agencies must work in partnership with parents.

It shall be the general duty of every local authority to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in their area.

Section 17 states that local authorities have a duty of care to safeguard the welfare of children who are in need and they must promote the upbringing of such children by their families. Local authorities must provide a range and level of services appropriate to those children's needs.

Section 47 places a duty on local authority social services departments to make enquiries where they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child in their area is likely to be or is suffering significant harm. This is the section that authorises children's social services to investigate concerns about child abuse.

In addition to social services, social work departments and health boards, only the police and the NSPCC have the legal right and responsibility to investigate concerns about child abuse.

The Children's Act 2004
This act legislates for children in England & Wales and underpins a national framework of change for children and young people. Its implementation should be part of a wider process of change for children and young people focussed on five key outcomes of wellbeing for children: being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic well being.

Every Child Matters: Change for Children sets out the national framework in England for local change programmes. *The National Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services* is useful for further reading.

Section 10 establishes a duty on local authorities to make arrangements to promote cooperation between agencies in order to improve children's well-being, defined by reference to the five outcomes and a duty on key partners to take part in those arrangements. It also provides a new power to allow pooling of resources in support of these arrangements.

Section 11 creates a duty for key agencies who work with children to put in place arrangements to make sure that they take into account of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Section 12 allows further secondary legislation and statutory guidance to be made with respect to setting up databases or indexes that contain basic information about children and young people to help professionals in working together.

Sections 13-16 require that local authority set up statutory Local Safeguarding Children Boards and that the key partners take part.

Section 17 establishes a Single Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) to replace a range of current statutory planning.

Sections 18 & 19 require local authorities to put in place a director of children's services and lead member for children's services to be responsible for, as a minimum, education and children's social services functions. Local authorities have discretion to add other relevant functions, for instance leisure or housing, to the role if they feel it is appropriate.

Sections 20-24 require an integrated inspection framework to be established by the relevant inspectorates to inform future inspections of all services for children.

Human Rights Act 1998 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child (ratified by the UK Government in 1991)

This act identifies the rights of adults and children, including children's rights to be protected from harm, and reflects principles that are recognised in UK legislation and international agreements.

Rights include:

- children having their say in their education
- protection of the environment in which children live
- reasonable standard of living
- protection from violence, abuse and exploitation
- protection from children cared away from home and for children with disabilities
- children being able to use their own language, enjoy their own culture and practice their own religion
- reasonable standards of health and development.

The main points are:

- **No Discrimination –** The Government must make sure that children get equal rights and protection irrespective of their race, gender, religion, nationality, political opinion, ability or developing sexuality.
- **Acting in the Child's Best Interests –** The Government has also agreed that, in all decisions concerning children, adults should put the child's best interests first. This includes decisions in courts, in schools, in hospitals, in care or in the prime consideration.
- **Making it Happen –** The Government has promised to make laws and change policies and procedures to give children these rights.
- **The Child's Right to Express An Opinion –** Children should have the right to a say in all decisions affecting them, for example, in court, in school, in hospital. Their opinions should be given more weight depending on their age and maturity.

A committee at the United Nations checks up on whether Governments are keeping their promises. Current legislation in the UK does not make all these rights available to children.

Care Standards Act 2000
Measures identified under this Act are intended to ensure a consistent minimum quality of day care nationally available for children under eight years. Registered providers have to meet 14 national standards and are subject to a regular system of inspections by Ofsted.

Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000
Part II of this Act relates to 'public bodies' responsibilities within child protection and is integral to child protection systems in the UK designed to prevent unsuitable people from working with children.

Protection of Children Act 1999 and The Police Act 1997
These Acts change the routes by which employers can check whether a potential or actual employee has criminal offences against children or whether there has been any reason for that person to be considered unsuitable to work with children.

Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
This act seeks to counteract prejudice against people with convictions seeking employment and allows them to protect their privacy by not declaring spent convictions to employers. However, people seeking to work or volunteer in situations with prolonged or sustained access to children are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders legislation. This means they must declare all criminal convictions whether spent or not. Their criminal record will be taken into account when deciding on their suitability for working with children.

The Data Protection Act 1998
This regulated the handling of personal information and governs how such information can be shared with others. Concerns about the safety or welfare of a child is information that can be shared with social services or another professional as it is in the child's best interests.

Sexual Offenders (Amendments) Act 2000
This Act sets out the range of sexual offences, including those against children. It introduces a new offence of abuse of trust, when a person aged 18 or over engages in sexual intercourse or other sexual activity with someone under that age where they are in a position of trust in relation to the younger person. This applies even if the sexual activity was consensual and in all other respects, lawful. Adults working or volunteering with children and young people are in a position of trust.

Sex Offenders Act 1997
Those who have been convicted of a sexual offence must register their address with the police. If they do not, they are liable to a fine and/or imprisonment. Courts also have the power to issue a Sex Offender Order banning convicted sex offenders from going near specified places, such as schools or from specific activities such as working with children.

Criminal Records Bureau
This allows organisations recruiting individuals to work with children and vulnerable adults, the opportunity to vet these individuals. The CRB provides information about spent and unspent criminal convictions, checks against the Dept of Health and Dept of Education and Skills lists of those considered unsuitable to work with children and provides relevant information from local police authorities.

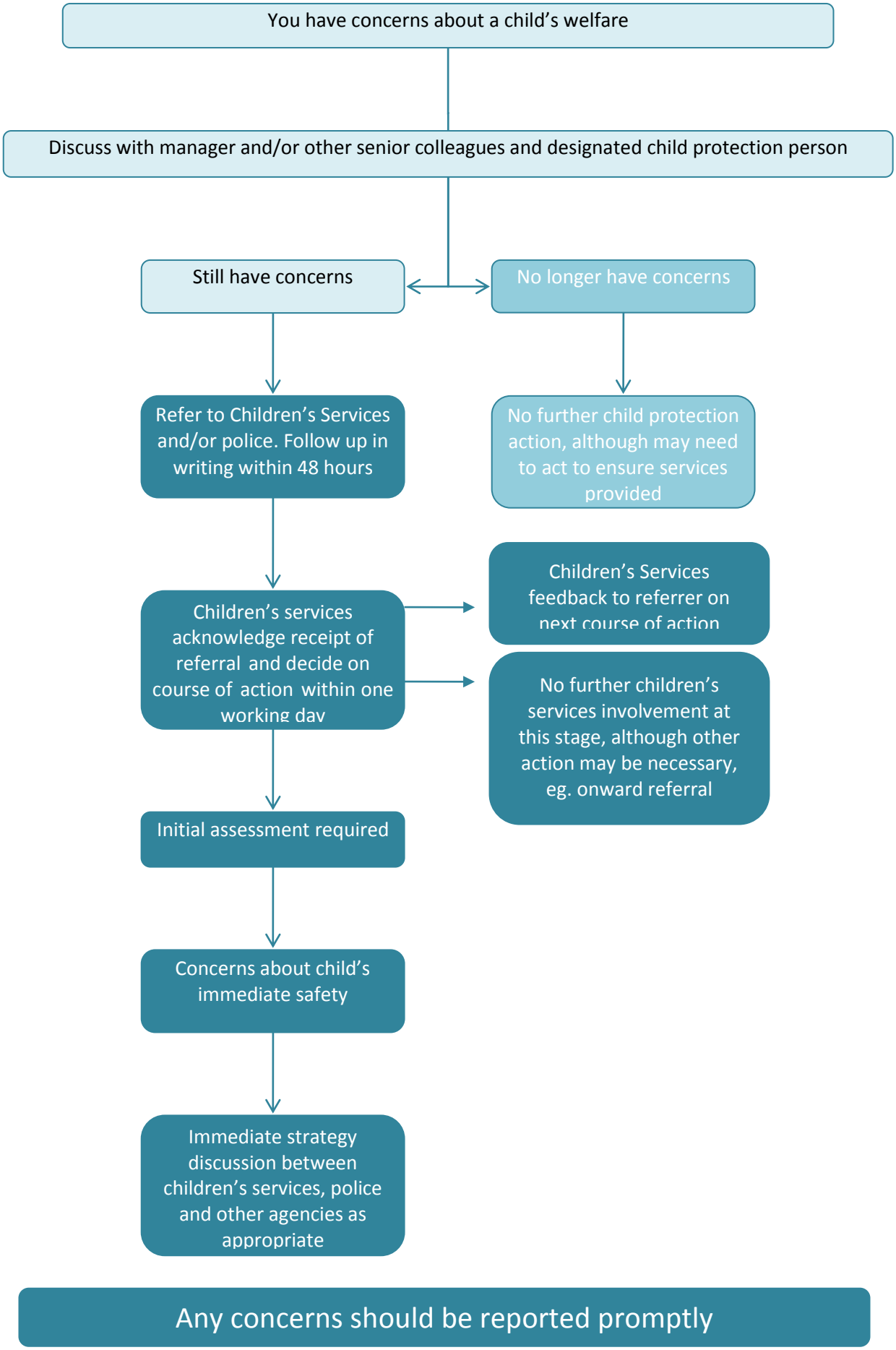
Checklist for reporting suspected abuse

Name of child:	
Age and date of birth:	Ethnicity:
Religion:	First language:
Disability:	Any special factors:
Parent's/carer's name(s): Home address (and phone no. if available)	
Are you reporting your own concerns or passing on those of somebody else? Give details.	
Brief description of what has prompted the concerns: include dates, times etc. of any specific incidents.	
Any physical signs? Behavioural signs? Indirect signs?	
Have you spoken to the child? If so, what was said?	

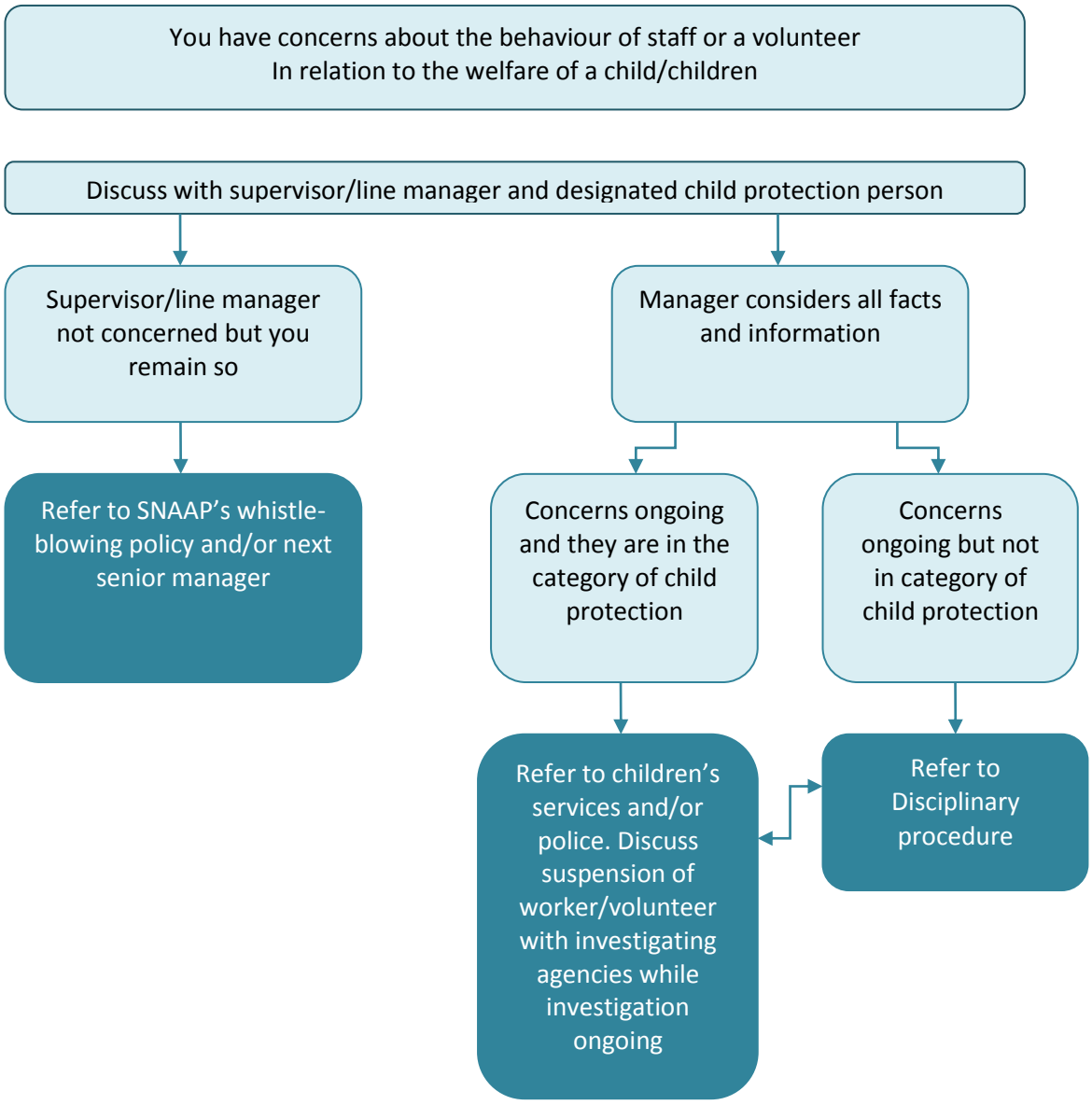
Have you spoken to the parent(s)? If so, what was said?
Has anybody been alleged to be the abuser? If so, give details.
Have you consulted anybody else? Give details.
Your name and position.
To whom reported and date of reporting.

Signature…….. Today's Date…….……

Reporting Child Protection concerns (a)



Reporting child protection concerns (b)



Any concerns should be reported promptly