

# CHRISTIAN ROCK & MOUNTAIN CLUB

## Child Protection & Vulnerable Adults Policy and Guidelines



**REVISION: First Issue**

**ISSUE DATE: January 2007**

# CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
1. Introduction	3
2. Principles	3
3. Youth Officer	3
4. Good Practice	4
5. Poor Practice	5

## APPENDICES

Appendix A	6
A1: Raising awareness	6
A2: Forms of abuse	6
A3: Bullying	7
A4: Signs of abuse	7
Appendix B	9
B1: Responding to a disclosure by a child	9
B2: What to do in the event of a suspicion or allegation	10
B2.1: Within a CRMC setting	10
B2.2: Outside a CRMC setting	10
B3: What to do if you are accused of an abusive action	11
Appendix C: Photography on events	12
Appendix D: Useful websites and contacts	12

## FIGURES

Figure 1: Dealing with abuse within a CRMC setting	13
Figure 2: Dealing with abuse outside a CRMC setting	14

## FORMS

Child protection incident form	15
--------------------------------	----

## 1. Introduction

Awareness of the potential problems that can arise from young people being in contact with those who would try to harm them has increased greatly over the past 30 years. This has resulted in organisations that take responsibility for young people, both on a voluntary and professional basis, having to review their operating procedures.

All responsible organisations involved with young people need a Child Protection Policy (CPP). It is designed both to protect young people (and vulnerable adults) and support those who look after them. This document gives guidance on the identification of, and procedures for dealing with, both potential and actual child abuse. It should also act as a guide in helping members both create a safe environment for young people and protect themselves against allegations of improper behaviour.

As a Christian club espousing Christian principles, a document of this nature may seem superfluous. Unfortunately, forms of abuse can occur anywhere where there are children or vulnerable adults, whether intentional or not. Even if no such abuse does take place, there is always the possibility of a child making an allegation of abuse – in which case a formal investigation will almost inevitably be required. Any costs associated with legal defence against such allegations will be covered under the terms of club members' 3<sup>rd</sup> party insurance provided through the BMC – but only on the condition that the club has a Child Protection Policy in place: it is against this backdrop that this document has been produced. The document itself has drawn heavily from the BMC's own CPP – a full version of which can be found on their website at [thebmc.co.uk](http://thebmc.co.uk). Other useful contacts are included in Appendix D.

For the purposes of this document when we refer to young people we are referring to both children and vulnerable young adults.

## 2. Principles

The following principles underpin the CRMC Child Protection Policy:

- The club will seek to provide children, young people and vulnerable adults with appropriate safety and protection whilst on an event organised by the CRMC;
- The club will assist club members to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues;
- All suspicions of child abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately;
- A child is defined as an individual under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989);
- All children, regardless of ethnic origin or disability, have the right to live in a safe environment;
- The welfare of the child is paramount and will underpin all guidance;
- Failure to comply with the provisions of this guidance will be regarded as a serious breach of club policy and may result in membership being suspended or revoked, if deemed appropriate by the committee. Any suspected case of abuse will be reported to an appropriate official body (ie, Social Services or Police).

Appendix A summarises various forms of abuse that children may be subjected to and includes typical signs of abuse that members might encounter.

## 3. Youth Officer

The club committee will appoint a Youth Officer to assume responsibility for ensuring this policy is maintained and updated as may become necessary as a result of changes to legislation or on advice from the BMC. The role of Youth Officer will not normally be a formal committee post,

although the role may be fulfilled by a committee member. Once appointed, the Youth Officer will normally serve for a two year period, extendable as mutually agreed with the serving committee.

It is preferred that the Youth Officer should have been CRB checked within the last two years and should have a valid certificate confirming the outcome of the check. In view of the very limited involvement club members will normally have with children, other than their own, on club events, it is not considered necessary that the CRB check should have been completed specifically for the role of club Youth Officer. Valid CRB checks completed for some other involvement with children will be acceptable – eg, for teachers, carers, doctors, social workers, church volunteers, toddler group assistants.

The Youth Officer should ensure that the he / she is familiar with current BMC guidance on child protection and is responsible for ensuring that all club members are aware of the procedures and guidelines for good practice set out in this policy. The Youth Officer will also have various responsibilities in the event of an allegation of abuse or poor practice being made in relation to a CRMC event. These responsibilities are identified in this document.

#### **4. Good Practice**

All adults who work with young people are in a position of trust which has been invested in them by the parents and the young person. This relationship can be described as one in which the adult is in a position of power and influence by virtue of their role. In climbing most adults recognise that there are certain boundaries which must not be crossed: the relationship is similar to that of school teacher and pupil.

Close physical contact will frequently be required when engaging in scrambling or climbing activities with children. Members should ensure that such contact is kept to the safe minimum, done openly, in response to the child's needs, and is with the knowledge and consent of the child and their parent. There may, in extreme circumstances, be situations where reasonable force may be used as a restraint, eg, preventing risk or injury to a child or other member, damage to property or possibly even self-defence. Please record any such incident and report it to the club's Youth Officer or a member of the club's committee.

The guidelines, ideas and suggestions below should help to create a safe environment for children, as well as help to ensure that a child does not misinterpret the behaviour of adults.

- Members should respect the rights, dignity and worth of all. They should also treat everyone with equality;
- Parents and carers should be aware of the type of activities their children might be completing when on a club event and should be assured that the activities are being run according to accepted good practice;
- It is important when supervising young people to avoid situations where an adult and an individual child are completely unobserved, eg, when climbing at a crag on a youth meet.
- If physical support is required e.g. spotting or support when bouldering, ensure the individual is aware of what is happening and has consented to this physical help. Some parents /carers are becoming increasingly sensitive about this type of help and their views should be respected at all times;
- When supervising young people in a changing area, adults should ideally work in pairs. Always check before entering a changing area that everyone is decent. Ideally parents/carers should take responsibility for their own child in these situations;

- Encourage an open environment, always explain why you are doing something and try to facilitate, as far as is practical, an open and inclusive approach to activities. People often respond better if they feel they are part of the process;
- Guidelines on the use of photography contained in Appendix C should be adhered to;
- The following should only be sanctioned in an emergency situation, unless the adult has the prior consent of the young person's parents (or guardian) or is acting *in loco parentis*
  - Taking young people alone on car journeys;
  - Spending time alone with a young person who is not a direct relation or guardian.
- The following should never be sanctioned:
  - Taking young people alone to your home;
  - Sharing a room alone with a young person or young people;
  - Allowing young people to engage in the use of inappropriate language;
  - Making sexually suggestive comments to a young person even in fun;
  - Doing things of a personal nature for a young person they can do themselves;
  - Allowing allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, not acted upon or not recorded;
  - Allowing young people to consume alcohol or take illegal recreational drugs;
  - Allowing any physically rough or sexually provocative, contact or games.
- In the event of an incident on a CRMC event, members should follow the procedures set out in the appendices to this policy.

## 5. Poor Practice

Poor practice constitutes anything that is contradictory to this Child Protection Policy document. Poor practice may also be a failure to follow event guidelines, either contained in the current Club Policy document or in specific details circulated prior to a particular event, so putting children in danger.

Appendix B provides guidance to members on what to do if a member has concerns regarding poor practice on a CRMC event. Figure 1 at the end of this document provides a flowchart of actions that should be taken, including details of who should be contacted.

If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice by a parent, carer, or club member, the club's Youth Officer or a member of the committee, as appropriate, will deal with it as a misconduct issue.

If the allegation is about poor practice by the Youth Officer, it should be reported to a member of the club's committee, who will discuss it with the remaining committee members. A decision will then be made on what further action should be taken.

## APPENDIX A

### A1 Raising awareness

It is understandable that people who are well motivated, caring individuals who enjoy climbing and mountaineering and related activities, are reluctant to believe that children may be suffering harm in a climbing environment or at home.

It may be difficult to accept that children could be at risk because of the way an organisation or its events are run. Levels of awareness need to be raised without creating an atmosphere of anxiety or suspicion. However a basic principle should be:

**If you become aware of anything which causes you to feel uncomfortable, you should speak to either the club's Youth Officer or a committee member.**

Certain modes of behaviour may be excused by comments such as:

- "He/She is always like that", or
- "We have just come to expect that from him/her but what can you do?"

If the behaviour gives rise to concern or is directly contrary to accepted good practice then some type of action must be taken. Adults should also seek to help and support each other in avoiding situations of bad practice. If a young person behaves in a way that gives rise to concern then this may be an indicator of a problem. There may well be a perfectly acceptable explanation for this behaviour. It is however important to act on a concern and ascertain that this is the case. If it is still felt there may be a problem it is important to seek further help.

### A2 Forms of abuse

'Child abuse' is a term used to describe ways in which children are harmed. Abuse may result from action or inaction by a volunteer or paid helper, family member or another young person. The Children Act (1989) states that there are four main types of abuse: Physical, Emotional, Sexual and Neglect. These are outlined below.

**Physical Abuse** Where adults physically hurt or injure children. In a climbing / mountaineering situation this might occur if the child is forced to climb beyond his or her capabilities. It may also occur if the climbing disregards the capacities of the child's immature and growing body. In more extreme cases this can take the form of physical attack i.e. hitting, shaking, burning or biting them.

**Emotional Abuse** Occurs when a child is not given love, help and encouragement and is constantly derided or ridiculed. It can occur, conversely, if a child is over protected preventing them from socializing. In a sporting/climbing context this may be present in the unrealistic expectations of what a child can achieve by parents or fellow climbers. This can also occur in the undermining of a young person through ridicule. This abuse often manifests itself in the form of bullying (see below).

**Sexual Abuse** Occurs when a child knowingly or unknowingly takes part in an activity which meets the sexual needs of the adult person or persons involved. It could range from sexually suggestive comments to physical sexual activities. Exposing young people to pornography is also a form of sexual abuse. In a sporting context this may take the form of photography or videoing for the sexual gratification of the viewer. Coaches and volunteers

are often placed in a position of great trust and it is when this trust is abused that sexual abuse can occur.

**Neglect** This includes situations in which adults fail to meet a child's basic physical needs (e.g. food, warm clothing). This may involve the lack of medical attention or consistently leaving children alone and unsupervised or monitored. Neglect can also occur if a supervisor fails to ensure children are safe or exposes them to undue cold or risk of injury. This has obvious implications for those taking young people into potentially hostile mountain environments.

Abuse in all its forms can affect a child at any age. The effects can be so damaging that if not treated they may follow an individual into adulthood. For example an adult who has been abused may find it difficult to maintain a stable and trusting relationship.

**The CRMC committee will support anyone who in good faith reports his or her concerns that a child is at risk.**

### **A3 Bullying**

Bullying is one of the most common forms of abuse. Most people have been a victim of bullying in some form at one time or another but for some children bullying can be taken to the extreme and can make their lives intolerable. There is sufficient evidence to show that the consequences of bullying can be devastating both to the victim and their family. It is not acceptable for adults to dismiss bullying as a simple part of growing up.

There are three main types of bullying:

- Physical, e.g. hitting, kicking or theft;
- Verbal, e.g. racist or homophobic remarks;
- Emotional, e.g. persistent negative feedback

Members should strive to

- Provide positive feedback to children;
- Avoid all forms of sarcasm relating to children on events;
- Avoid persistent teasing of children;
- Avoid tormenting, ridiculing or humiliating
- Avoid unwanted physical contact with children
- Avoid abusive or offensive comments of a sexual nature
- Avoid pushing children too hard on walks, scrambles or climbs
- Prevent other children intimidating their peers, applying pressure on others to do routes that are too hard or dangerous

### **A4 Signs of Abuse**

Even for those experienced in working with child abuse, it is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or has already occurred. Club members are unlikely to experts at such recognition and for this reason the committee expects them to discuss any concern they may have with regards to the welfare of a child immediately with the club's Youth Officer, a committee member or the Event Contact (see Appendix B). If this is not practical and the situation is deemed to be too serious to delay then advice can be sought from Social Services or the Police.

Below are listed some of the characteristics which may be evidence of abuse. These are by no means exhaustive and are only indicators of potential abuse, **not** confirmation.

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to injury;
- An injury of which the explanation seems inconsistent;
- A description by the child of what appears to be an abusive act involving them;
- Unexplained behaviour changes e.g. becoming very quiet, withdrawn, or displaying sudden outbursts of temper;
- Inappropriate sexual awareness;
- Distrust of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected;
- Difficulty making friends;
- Prevention of a child from socialising with other children;
- Variation in eating patterns including overeating or loss of appetite;
- Increasingly unkempt or dirty appearance.

It must be recognised that the presence of one or more of these indicators is not proof that actual abuse is taking place.

**It is not** the responsibility of those involved in CRMC activities to decide whether child abuse is occurring **but it is their responsibility to act upon any concerns** (see Appendix B and Figures 1 & 2).

## **APPENDIX B**

### **B1 Responding to a disclosure by a child**

***If there is a concern about a child's welfare, the one thing not to do, is do nothing***

A child in your care may indicate to you that they are being abused in some way or information may come to you of possible abuse. Allegations of abuse may be made a long time after the event (e.g. by an adult who was abused as a child or by someone who is still currently working with children).

On receiving this information you should;

- React calmly - do not rush into inappropriate action. What you are told may be very shocking but it is important you give the child some stability;
- Reassure the child that they are not to blame and that they did the right thing to tell someone, i.e. you, about the incident;
- Take the child seriously and listen carefully to them. Recognise how difficult it was for them to tell you;
- Only ask questions which help to clarify the situation. Do not question any more than is strictly necessary. The law is very strict when it suspects a child has been led or ideas have been suggested;
- If possible allow only one adult to talk to the child to begin with. It is possible that discrepancies in the account of what has happened can, in the event of the allegation being referred, lead to legal complications later;
- Try not to make the child repeat their account unnecessarily;
- Do not make promises you cannot keep. Explain that you may have to tell other people in order to stop what is happening but that you will endeavour to keep the incident as confidential as possible;
- Make a full record of what has been said, heard or seen as soon as possible, using the CRMC's Child Protection Incident Form included at the end of this document;
- Follow the procedure set out in the relevant flow chart at the end of this document (Figure 1 or 2, as appropriate).

When appropriate, Social Services or the police will be informed. This is important as children may still be at risk from the accused individual should the allegation be proved to be correct.

You should not:

- Take sole responsibility for further action;
- Approach or try to contact the alleged abuser;
- Ignore what has happened;
- Make promises you cannot keep

## **B2 What to do in the event of suspicion or allegation**

### **B2.1 Concerns about poor practice and possible abuse within a CRMC setting**

This relates to concerns about poor practice or possible abuse you observe taking place on a CRMC event. Figure 1 summarises the actions you should take.

Concerns and allegations about child abuse require very careful handling and should be treated with the strictest confidence. Any form of abuse can ultimately result in a criminal conviction. It is important to keep an open mind and that all allegations are kept in the strictest practical confidence. It is important you act on your concerns.

All concerns or allegations should be reported to the club's Youth Officer who may in turn refer it to Social Services or the Police. Concerns over members of the public may be referred directly to Social Services. If the allegation is against the Youth Officer, then the report should be given to a committee member.

Following advice from Social Services the parents or carers of the child will be informed by the club chairman. Where there is concern for the safety of the child, Social Services or the Police will contact the child's parents or carers. Where there is an allegation against a parent or carer, the police or Social Services will contact the family. The member will then be notified that an allegation has been made and where appropriate suspended from his/her club duties.

**If you are in any doubt or do not feel confident in sharing your concerns with the Youth Officer or a committee member, then you should seek advice from the Police or Social Services. Alternatively you can contact the NSPCC 24hr help line on 0800 800 500.**

### **B2.2 Concerns about abuse outside the CRMC setting**

If you notice a child on a CRMC event who presents symptoms of abuse that may be occurring outside the CRMC setting, you should ensure the safety of the young person. If he or she requires immediate attention call an ambulance, inform a doctor of your concerns and ensure they are aware that this is a child protection issue.

CRMC procedures should then be followed (see Figure 2). If practical, you should refer your concerns to the club's Youth Officer. In cases where this is not practical or may result in an unacceptable delay, you should advise the Police or Social Services of your concerns.

If a formal referral is made to either the Police or to Social Services, make it clear that it is a child protection issue. All police forces have a specialised Child Protection Unit which deals with allegations of abuse within the family and by people in positions of trust. In a real emergency, or if completely unsure as to what to do, phone 999.

Parents/carers should only be contacted **after** advice from Social Services.

In all cases it is important to remember that the welfare of the child is paramount and that it can be especially difficult for children from an ethnic minority or who are disabled to disclose abuse to others. Adults should be especially vigilant with these groups and be aware that their own prejudices may interfere with their response to a reported incident. It is important to give thought as to how adults respond in these situations.

**It is very important that every effort is made to maintain confidentiality.**

### **B3 What to do if YOU are accused of an abusive action**

In the event of an accusation relating to your conduct on a CRMC event:

- Make notes of all your actions/contacts with the child in question as soon as possible;
- Advise the club's Youth Officer of the allegation – he/she will seek advice from the BMC. Every current Full and Associate member of the club is covered against any legal costs resulting from an invalid accusation as part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> party insurance cover they receive with membership;
- Seek access to professional and legal advice;
- Ensure that you are no longer working with the child/children making the allegation;
- Follow the procedures laid out in this and supporting documents;
- Accept that other members may not be in a position to discuss the matter with you while the investigation is underway;

Such events are difficult for all concerned. The main concern with any incident is the child's welfare. For an individual against whom an allegation has been made this will be a difficult time. There are no easy ways to deal with such a situation, it is important that you seek help and support.

## APPENDIX C: Photography on events

It is not the intention of this document to prevent the use of video or photography equipment on club events: family photographs of young people are part and parcel of many family lives. Unfortunately, however there is evidence that some people have used sporting events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young and disabled sports people in vulnerable positions. The few simple guidelines below will ensure members always follow best practice:

- 1) Ensure all individuals involved are aware of what is appropriate in terms of content and behaviour;
- 2) As part of the event information sheet all participants and parents should be informed if there is to be a photographer present. Parents should also be given the opportunity to object if they do not wish images of their child to be used.
- 3) Ensure parents consent to both the taking of photographs and their subsequent use, for example, on the club web-site or publicity brochures;
- 4) Ask for the child's permission to use his or her image. This ensures that they are aware of the way the image is to be used;
- 5) Avoid the use of names in any published photographs. This reduces the risk of inappropriate, unsolicited attention from people outside the club. An easy rule to remember is:
  - if the climber is named, avoid using their photograph;
  - if the photograph is used, avoid naming the climber. In situations where it is necessary for climbers to be named ensure there is permission from both the climber and parents;
  - it is important that contact details for the young person with a name or photograph are NOT given.

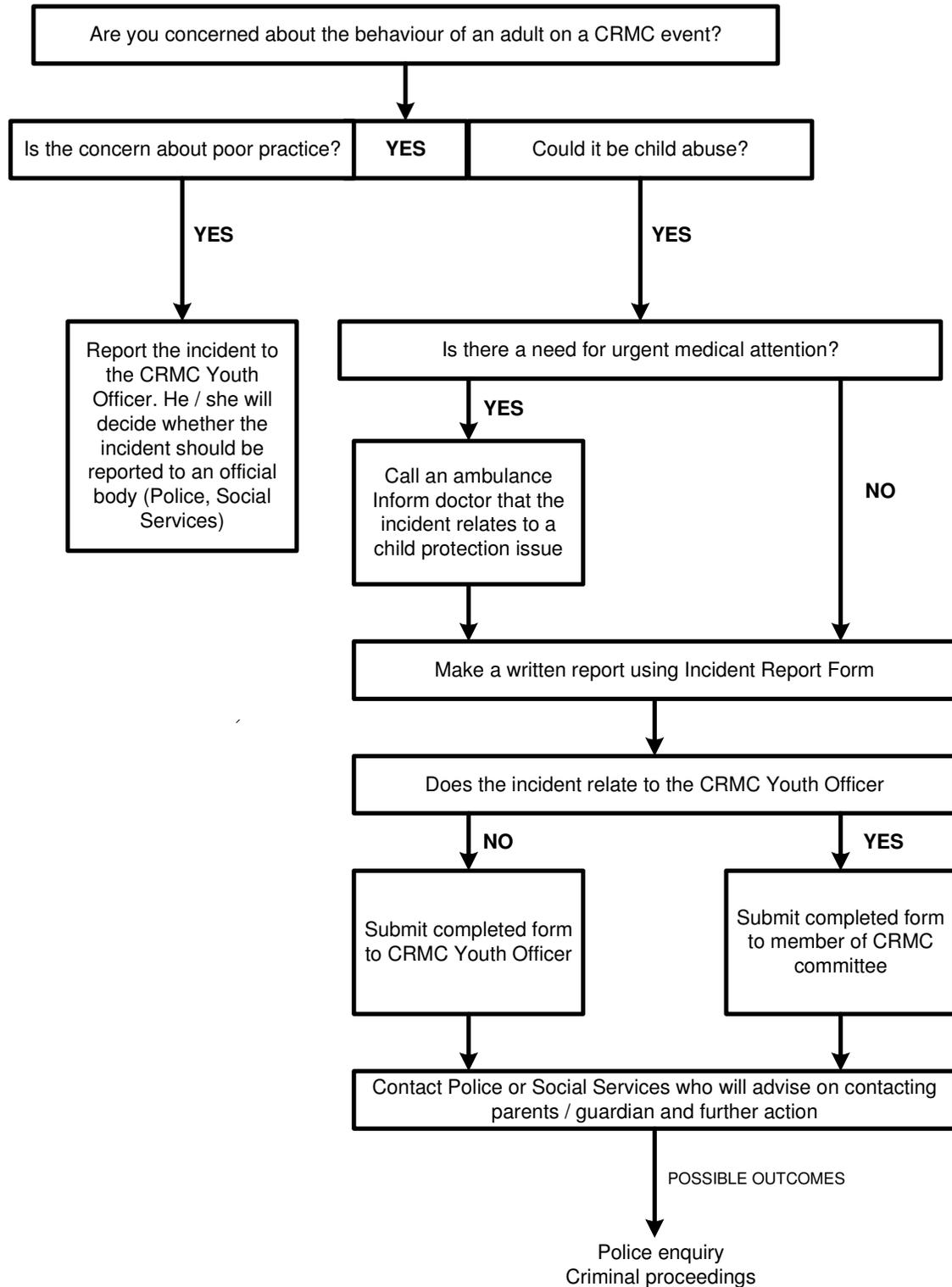
## APPENDIX D: Useful contacts

[www.thebmc.co.uk](http://www.thebmc.co.uk)

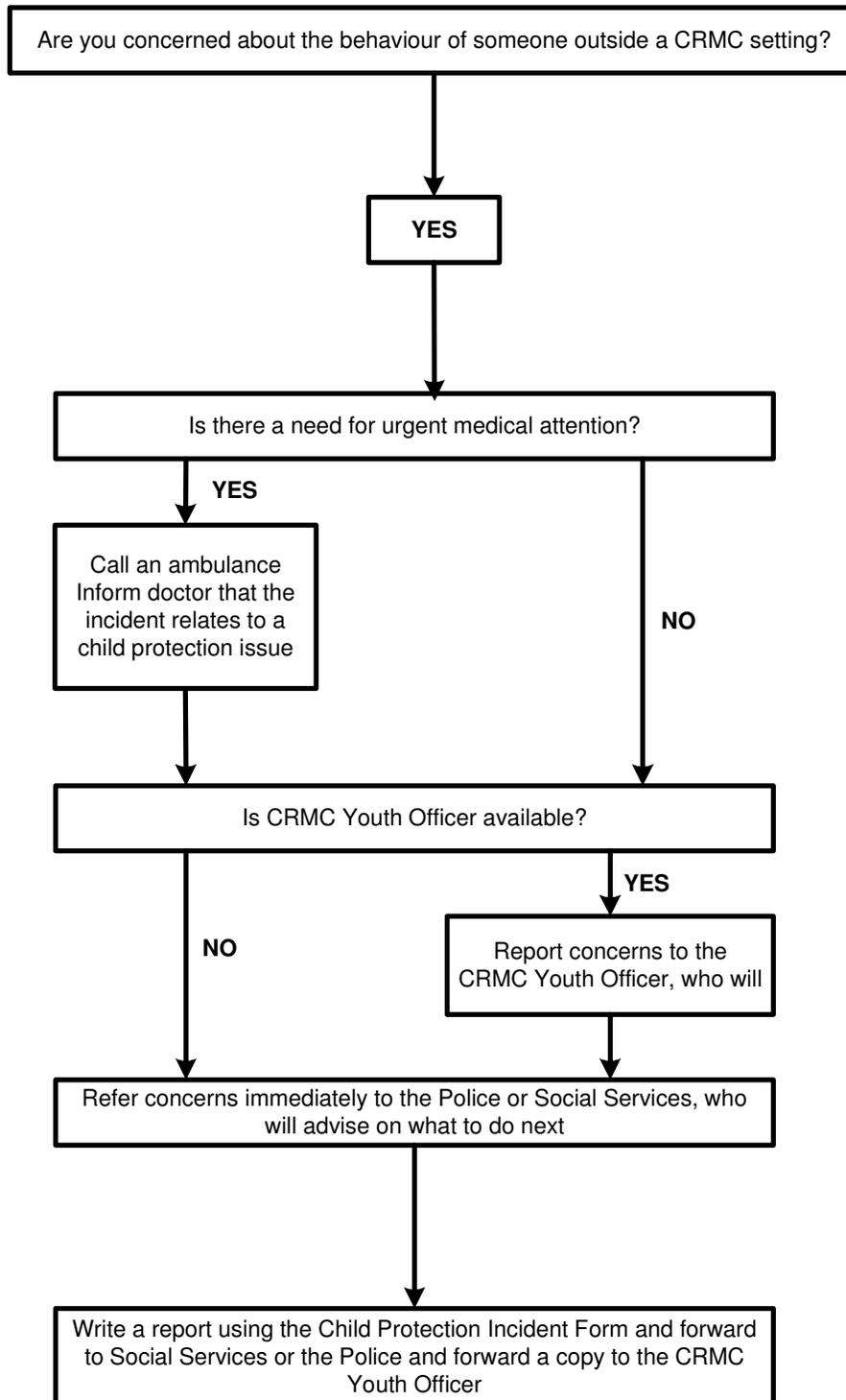
[www.disclosure.gov.uk](http://www.disclosure.gov.uk)

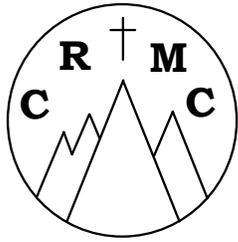
The BMC Chief Executive:	Dave Turnbull	0870 0104878
Child Protection in Sport Unit:	0116 234 7278	<a href="http://www.thecpsu.org.uk">www.thecpsu.org.uk</a>
NSPCC help line:	0808 800 5000	<a href="http://www.nspcc.org.uk">www.nspcc.org.uk</a>
Asian Helpline:	0800 096 7719	
Welsh Helpline:	0800 100 2524	
The BMC Officer responsible for Youth:		0870 0104878

**FIGURE 1: DEALING WITH POSSIBLE ABUSE IN A CRMC SETTING**



**FIGURE 2: DEALING WITH POSSIBLE ABUSE OUTSIDE A CRMC SETTING  
(Based on evidence observed on CRMC event)**





**CHRISTIAN ROCK &  
MOUNTAIN CLUB**

**CHILD PROTECTION INCIDENT FORM**

<b>EVENT DETAILS</b>	
Name of event	
Date of event	
Co-ordinator	
<b>YOUR DETAILS</b>	
Name	
Your position	
Contact tel	
<b>CHILD'S DETAILS</b>	
Name	
Address (inc. post code)	
Tel	
Date of Birth	
<b>PARENTAL/GUARDIAN DETAILS</b>	
Name(s)	
Address (inc. post code)	
Tel (if different to above)	
<b>WITNESS DETAILS</b>	
Name (1)	
Address (inc. post code)	
Tel	
Name (2)	
Address (inc. post code)	
Tel	

<b>INCIDENT DETAILS</b>	
Date and time of incident	
Your observations (i.e. what is the nature of the allegation (including dates, times and any special factors or other relevant information (make clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay). Describe any visible bruising or other injuries, behavioural signs or indirect signs. Use additional sheets as necessary.	
The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred (Remember, do not lead the child – record actual details). Use additional sheets as necessary.	
Actions taken so far (including whether anyone else has been contacted and if so who?)	
Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser?	Yes / No (Delete as applicable)
If yes give name:	
<b>OTHER PROFESSIONALS CONTACTED</b>	
Have any external agencies been contacted (i.e. police, Social Services, NSPCC, BMC). If yes, please provide details below.	Yes / No (Delete as applicable)
<b>Police?</b>	Yes / No (Delete as applicable)
If yes, please provide name and contact number:	
Details of advice received:	
<b>Social Services?</b>	Yes / No (Delete as applicable)
If yes, please provide name and contact number:	
Details of advice received:	
<b>Other (e.g. NSPCC)?</b>	Yes / No (Delete as applicable)
If yes, please provide name and contact number:	
Details of advice received	

**FURTHER INFORMATION**

--

**YOUR SIGNATURE**

Signed	
Print name	
Date	

**REMEMBER to maintain confidentiality on a *need to know* basis – only if it will protect the child. Do not discuss this incident with anyone other than those who need to know.**

**A copy of this form should be sent to the CRMC's Youth Officer.**