

CHILD PROTECTION WHAT TO DO

Academic Year 2017 – 2018



A Practical Guide for all Staff

John Whitgift Academy Safeguarding Team

Miss C Glaves – Designated Child Protection Officer

Mr L Short - Deputy Child Protection Officer

Miss A Oliver – Health & Wellbeing Support Officer

Mrs J Vincent - Education Advisory Board

LISTEN – OBSERVE – RECORD - REPORT

KEY PRINCIPLES

Children's safety must have first priority, their feelings must come first – they are more important than your own, their parents or anyone else's.

To delay reporting a suspicion of abuse could be fatal – never hold back for fear of the consequences of making a mistake.

Always believe what a child tells you but do not ask for further information – interviews should only be conducted by specially trained personnel.

Make notes of any incidents or disclosure at the time they occur.

Many forms of abuse have no physical symptoms.

For any kind of abuse you have a responsibility to report it. In the event of an obvious emergency (e.g. actually witnessing an abduction or an attack) **CALL THE POLICE IMMEDIATELY BY DIALLING 999.**

Child protection is everyone's responsibility – no matter what position you hold it is vital that you report any suspicions or disclosures.

Any case of child abuse must be dealt with in accordance with the Local Safeguarding Children Board Policies and Procedures – **DO NOT TAKE ANY ACTION BEYOND THAT SET OUT IN THEM.**

WHAT IS ABUSE AND NEGLECT?

ABUSE AND NEGLECT are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

(Working Together To Safeguard Children 2015)

DISPELLING SOME OF THE MYTHS

Child abuse is not something new – but we hear more about it these days because it is more widely recognised. However, a lot of people still believe it could not affect the children they know and for whom they care. So before we start looking at the problems itself some important things need to be stated.

Child abuse occurs in all sorts of families – do not think it could not happen to “nice” or “well off” people or people that you know, even other members of staff could be involved.

Women and men are involved in child abuse.

Boys and girls are abused.

A lot of people think that most child abuse (particularly sexual abuse) takes place when children are unprotected – out for a walk or playing in the park etc. – and they are abused by suspicious looking strangers. This is what happens in a very few cases. Most child abuse takes place in the home or other “safe” place and in at least 80% of sexual abuse cases the abuser is well known to the child.

Child abuse is **never** the child’s fault.

A child abuse situation will always get worse unless something is done about it. “Only a small bruise” this week can turn into something much more serious next week.

Child abuse can happen to children at any age, from birth until they are old enough to act independently. It can take many forms; some of which are easily identified but many of which can go unnoticed even by “experts”.

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.

(Working Together To Safeguard Children 2015)

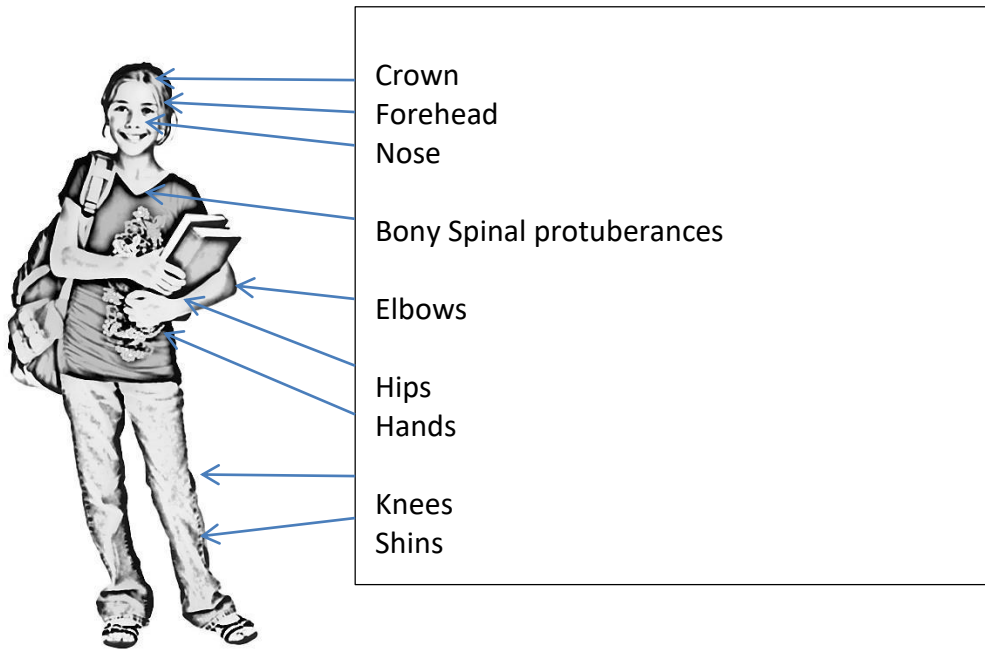
Injury may be caused by an assault which may be sudden and uncontrolled or it may be premeditated and controlled.

Physical injury as a result of Child Abuse may involve:

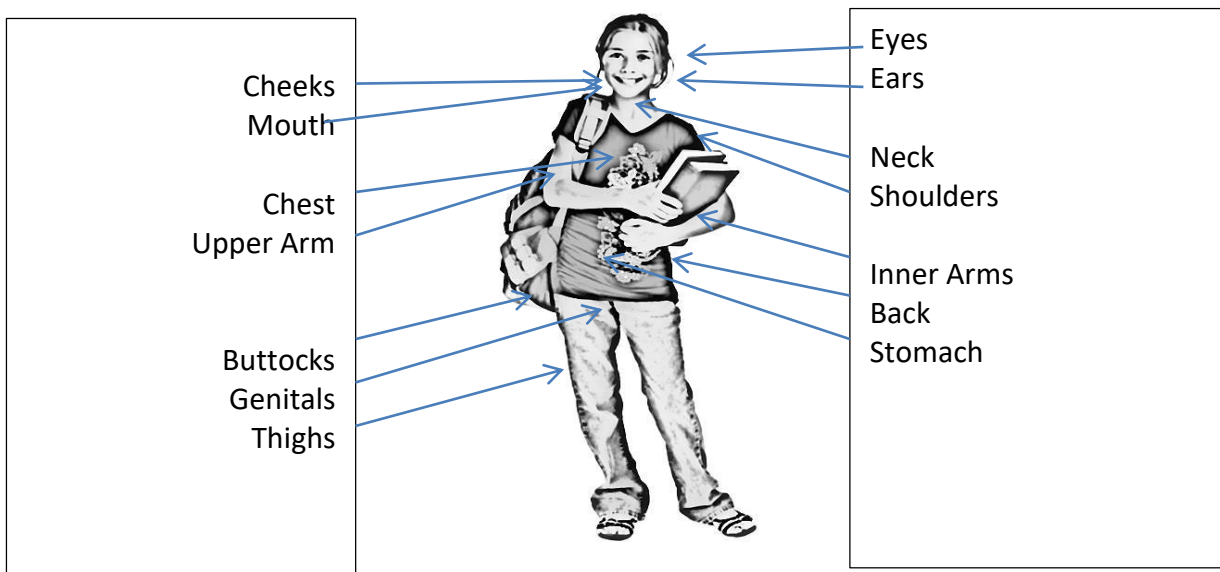
- A delay in presentation, or failure in presentation for medical advice
- Injuries of varying ages and types
- Incompatibility of injury with the given history, or conflicting explanations as to cause

PHYSICAL HARM

Common Sites of Accidental Injury



Common Sites of Non-Accidental Injury



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 abandonment, failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-takers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect or, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

(Working Together To Safeguard Children 2015)

The signs and symptoms for neglect are usually self-evident, for example children are obviously smelly or inappropriately dressed, or appear to be constantly cold or hungry.

A child who appears to be failing to grow and develop could also normally, without a medical reason be suffering from **neglect**.

EMOTIONAL HARM

Emotional Abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment 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 capability, as well as overprotection of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying 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 maltreatment of a child though it may occur alone.

(Working Together 2015)

Emotional Abuse is probably the most difficult type of abuse to recognise. The signs are behavioural rather than physical. An emotionally abused child may show some or all of the following characteristics:

- Low self-esteem and lack of confidence (always thinks their work is "rubbish" and needs constant reassurance)
- The child may be a 'loner'
- The child may be used as a 'scapegoat' by other children
- Withdrawn, introverted and depressed

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 (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts. 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.

(Working Together 2015)

This is a list of some of the indicators of sexual abuse:

- Sudden changes of behavioural or school performance
- Displays of affection in a sexual way inappropriate to age
- Complains of general itching or pain
- Distrust of a familiar adult or anxiety about being left with a particular person, relative, babysitter or lodger
- Apparent secrecy
- Sleep disturbances or nightmares
- Fear of undressing for P.E.
- Phobias or panic attacks
- Self-mutilation or attempted suicide

CHILD PROTECTION – WHAT TO DO

You now hold the information

Do not work alone – Stay calm – Pause – Think

Document, sign and date all information

Consult with Miss Glaves or Mrs Rimmer

If the matter is vague further information may be required

If the matter is serious Children's Assessment and Safeguarding Service are contacted without delay

Possible outcomes:

- Parental contact if safe to do so
- Concerns remain – academy to follow up in writing within 48 hours. Social Worker and Manager acknowledge receipt of referral and decide course of action within one working day
- If concerns about a child's immediate safety – Emergency action taken
- If no further action - Information to be kept on file. May be referred to other services for support

DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE

There may be instances when although there is no suspicion of abuse, a child may disclose what has happened to them. This is often the case with sexual abuse although disclosures of other forms of abuse may also occur. Sexual abuse is a secret world known only to the child and the abuser(s), but children who have been abused will sometimes choose an adult at their school to confide in. If this happens to you it is likely to be a very stressful experience, particularly if the abuse has occurred within a family and you find the allegations difficult to believe. The following guidelines highlight the most important points to remember when dealing with a disclosure of abuse.

1. Always believe the child no matter how difficult you find it. (Research indicates that of all reported cases of sexual abuse only approximately 1% are fantasies or fabrications).
2. Stay calm and be reassuring.
3. Listen carefully and patiently to the child; do not press for information as well intentioned questions at this stage could result in the failure of a criminal prosecution.
4. Tell the child you are glad he/she has told you and explain that you are going to have to report the disclosure.
5. Never promise to keep a secret no matter how insistent the child is.
6. Report the disclosure as soon as possible to a member of the Safeguarding Team, record the details of the disclosure and pass the records on to the person you have reported it to.

There may be instances where a child does not actually confide in you but you come to suspect sexual abuse because of overhearing a conversation with other children or sexually explicit drawings or stories are produced in class. Disclosures may also occur through a third party. Report any such incidents as soon as possible.

