



# Abuse & Neglect

**Abuse:** a form 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 others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

All school and college staff should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases multiple issues will overlap with one another.

## Physical abuse:

A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, 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 or young person.

## Emotional Abuse:

This is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child or young person such as to cause severe and adverse effects on their emotional development.

It may involve conveying to a child or young person that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.

It may include not giving them opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.

It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on them, including interactions that are beyond their developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing them from participating in normal social interaction.

It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another, serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children and young people to frequently feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children or young people.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child or young person, although it may occur alone.

## Neglect:

This is the persistent failure to meet a child or young person's basic physical or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of their 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, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- Protect them from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers);
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- It may also include neglect or being unresponsive to their basic emotional needs.

## Sexual Abuse:

This involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not they are aware of what is happening.

The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.

They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children or young people in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

**Taken from:** *'Working Together to Safeguard Children', DFE 2015 (Appendix A, page 92)*