

# What is **CHILD ABUSE?**

Children from all types  
of families and  
backgrounds may be  
abused.

The law defines  
someone as a child  
until they are 18 years  
old and children of all  
ages can be abused.

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## There are four main types of abuse:

- **PHYSICAL ABUSE-**  
this is when adults injure or hurt a child or knowingly do not prevent them being injured.
- **EMOTIONAL ABUSE-**  
this is when children are persistently denied love and affection. Children suffer when they are constantly shouted at, threatened, ridiculed or taunted. The child may lose confidence and self-esteem, and become nervous or withdrawn.
- **NEGLECT-**  
Occurs when adults fail to meet children's basic needs, such as adequate food, clothing warmth and medical care. Leaving children on their own who are too young to look after themselves is another example of neglect.
- **SEXUAL ABUSE-**  
this is when children are used by adults to meet the adult's sexual needs. It includes showing pornographic material, such as videos or adult magazines.

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## What should we do if we suspect that a child is being abused?

It is not always easy to recognise or accept that abuse is happening-or know how to handle it.

**As a PARENT**, you may see something which makes you wonder whether a child you know is being abused-or a friend of your own child may tell you or your child that they are being abused. If this happens, you should contact the Social Services Department, Police or NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children), to tell them of your concerns.

### **Don't be afraid to voice your concerns, as the child may need urgent protection and help.**

All these agencies are trained to investigate concerns in a skilled and careful way.

**As a SCHOOL**, we are particularly well-placed to recognise signs that a child may be being abused, because we have regular contact with pupils and get to know them well.

A child may tell someone at school that they are being abused or their behaviour may change in a way that could mean they are being abused. Sometimes, someone else tells a member of our staff that they believe a child is being abused. This must always be taken seriously.

**If this happens, we have a legal duty to tell the Social Services department of any concerns we have about possible child abuse.**

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In some cases, we will be able to discuss concerns about a pupil with his/her parents and to tell the parents that we are going to talk to the Social Services Department about their child.

Sometimes it is not possible to tell parents this beforehand. This is because it may put the child at risk.

If we talk to Social Services about your child before telling you, you will be told about our concerns as soon as possible afterwards. This will usually be by the Social Services Department. This may be the first time you hear about our worries for your child and it may make you angry. You may feel that we have broken your trust.

In fact, we have no choice in the action we have to take. This leaflet aims to help parents understand why this is necessary. If there is any suggestion that a child is at risk, then we must involve the proper investigating agencies.

We will want to continue to work with you as we have done before and will do everything possible to achieve this.

Every school has a senior teacher who is responsible for dealing with concerns about child abuse. If you have any questions after reading this leaflet, please ask

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who is the teacher at our school with this responsibility.

Name of school:

# CHILD ABUSE

## WHAT EVERY PARENT NEEDS TO KNOW

This leaflet is about the action that parents and schools must take if they suspect that a child is at risk of abuse