



**BRITISH KENDO
ASSOCIATION**

Child Protection Guidance

March 2018

IF A CHILD WANTS TO CONFIDE IN YOU

DO:

- Be accessible and receptive
- Listen carefully
- Take it seriously
- Reassure children they are right to tell
- Negotiate getting help
- Find help quickly
- Make a careful record of what was said – immediately. The Incident Report form can be used for this purpose.

DON'T:

- Jump to conclusions
- Try to get the child to 'disclose'
- Speculate or accuse anybody
- Make promises you cannot keep
- Ask leading questions

UNDERSTANDING AND IDENTIFYING SIGNS OF CHILD ABUSE

Child abuse can take many forms, but can be broadly separated into five main categories:

1. Neglect
2. Physical abuse
3. Sexual abuse
4. Emotional abuse
5. Bullying and harassment

The main effects of abuse on children can be generally summarised as follows:

- Children may die
- Pain and distress
- Behavioural difficulties, such as becoming angry and aggressive
- School-related problems
- Developmental delay – physically, emotionally and mentally
- Low self-esteem
- Depression, self-harm – sometimes leading to suicide
- Difficulty in forming relationships as adults
- Sometimes, if untreated, abusive relationships with own (or other) children
- Temporary or even permanent injury

DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

Bear in mind that one indicator present may not signify abuse, but a persistent or collection of indicators may do so.

Neglect

A persistent lack of attention to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs to an extent that is likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development. For example: failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing; failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger; failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

Refusal to give children love, affection and attention can also be a form of neglect, as is exposing them to unnecessary risk of injury.

Some identifying signs of neglect might include:

- Being left alone or unsupervised on a regular basis
- Having few friends
- Being tired all the time
- Constantly hungry or stealing food from others
- Constantly unkempt (dirty or smelly)
- Unexplained weight loss or constantly underweight
- Constantly inappropriately dressed
- Constantly failing to attend training, school or hospital/medical appointments etc

Physical Abuse

Physical injury or suffering to a child, or a failure to prevent physical injury or suffering (where there is a definite knowledge or reasonable suspicion that the injury has been inflicted by another person). This includes injury by deliberate hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, biting, suffocation or drowning. Giving children inappropriate drugs or alcohol also constitutes physical abuse.

Physical abuse in a sport situation may be deemed to occur if the nature and intensity of training and competition exceeds the child's physical capacity.

Some identifying signs of physical abuse might include:

- Unexplained or untreated/inadequately treated injuries
- Injuries on parts of the body where accidental injury is unlikely
- Bruises that reflect hand marks or fingertips (from slapping, grabbing or pinching)
- Cigarette burns
- Bite marks
- Broken bones
- Scalds

Since children often contract minor injuries, physical abuse may not always be apparent from bruises, fractures or other physical signs. Behavioural indicators, particularly when there are changes in behaviour, can also indicate that abuse is happening. This might be evident in the following behaviour:

- Aggressive or severe temper outbursts
- Running away
- Fear of going home
- Flinching when approached or touched
- Reluctance to get changed for sport
- Covering arms and legs even when hot
- Depression
- Withdrawn behaviour
- Fear of parents being contacted

Sexual Abuse

When adults (male or female) use children to meet their own sexual needs. This includes all sexual activity and inappropriate touching. Showing children pornographic books, videos or pictures and talking to them in a sexually explicit manner are also forms of sexual abuse.

Although a child may engage in sexual activity at the age of 16, it is an offence if an adult abuses his/her position of authority to obtain consent for sexual liaison with a child, and this also constitutes sexual abuse.

Some identifying signs of sexual abuse might include:

- Inappropriate sexual play
- Bruising to genital regions
- Sexual knowledge which is beyond the child's age or developmental level
- Suddenly having unexplained sources of money
- Substance or drug abuse and suicide attempts
- Sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour such as becoming withdrawn or aggressive
- Appetite disorders
- Running away
- Poor trust and secretiveness
- Unusually frequent visits to the toilet
- Being sexually coercive to other children

Emotional Abuse

The persistent emotional ill treatment of a child, likely to cause severe and lasting adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve communicating to a child that they are worthless or inadequate. It may feature expectations of children that are not appropriate to their age or development. It may also involve causing children to feel frightened or in danger by being constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted. Ill treatment of children, whatever form it takes, will always feature a degree of emotional abuse.

Some identifying signs of emotional abuse might include:

- Delayed social development
- Poor language and speech
- Specific habit disorders
- Excessive fear of making mistakes
- Self-harm or mutilation
- Being unable to play or unwilling to take part
- Abnormally passive or attention-seeking behaviour

Bullying and Harassment

Deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time. It can be verbal, written or physical and can include actions such as physical assaults, name-calling, sarcasm, racist taunts, threats, gestures, unwanted physical contact, graffiti, stealing or hiding personal items. Being deliberately embarrassed and humiliated or constantly ignored is also a form of bullying.

Some identifying signs of bullying and harassment might include:

- A drop in performance in sport or school
- A reluctance to attend training or school
- Becoming clingy
- Being emotional or tearful
- Reduced concentration
- Frequent loss of possessions
- Eating disorders
- Substance abuse
- Frequent stomach-aches or headaches
- Bruising
- Damaged clothing