

D.

Indicators of Abuse

Indications that a young person may be being abused include:

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries.
- Deliberately avoiding social services for fear of the child being received into care.
- An injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent.
- The young person describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him/her.
- Someone else expresses concern about the welfare of another young person.
- Unexplained changes in behaviour.
- Inappropriate sexual awareness
- Engaging in sexually explicit behaviour
- Distrust of adults with whom a close relationship would be expected
- Trouble with making friends
- Displays variations in eating patterns including loss of appetite or overeating
- Becomes increasingly dirty or unkempt.

This is not an exhaustive list. It is important to remember that each circumstance is unique and that the presence of one or more of these indicators is not necessarily proof that abuse is taking place.

Be aware that the signs of abuse and neglect are not always visible. Persistent challenging behaviour can be an indicator that a child is experiencing abuse or neglect. So, if a child is frequently seen as being 'naughty', try to consider what may be causing them to behave in that way and how you can best understand and support the child.

E.

Bullying

Abuse can also take place between peers in the form of bullying. Bullying may be seen as deliberately hurtful behaviour where it is difficult for the people being bullied to defend themselves.

Bullying can include:

- Physical (e.g. hitting, kicking and theft)
- Verbal (e.g. name calling, constant teasing, sarcasm, racist or homophobic taunts, threats, graffiti and gestures)
- Emotional (e.g. tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating and ignoring)
- Sexual (e.g. unwanted physical contact or abusive comments)

Indicators of bullying: