

Definitions

Abuse

Child abuse refers to an act committed by a parent, caregiver or person in a position of trust (even though he/she may not care for the child on a daily basis) which is not accidental and which harms or threatens to harm a child's physical or mental health, or a child's welfare."¹

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is any deliberate physical force or action that results, or could result, in injury to a child. ²

- No punching
- No slapping
- No beating
- No shaking
- No burning
- No biting
- No throwing a child.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used for the sexual gratification of an adult or an older child. It can take many forms. Coercion (physical, psychological or emotional) is intrinsic to sexual abuse. It is against the law to touch a child for a sexual purpose, to encourage or force a child to touch another person in a sexual way or to tell a child to touch him or herself for an adult's or older child's sexual purpose. ³

This means no sexual intercourse, no exposing a child's private areas, no indecent phone calls or internet contact, no fondling for sexual pleasure or not allowing a child to look at or perform pornographic pictures or videos.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional Abuse is a pattern of behavior that attacks a child's emotional development and sense of self-worth. It includes excessive, aggressive or unreasonable demands that place expectations on a child beyond his or her capacity.⁴ This would include teasing, belittling, insulting, rejecting, ignoring, isolating and constant criticism.

Neglect

Neglect is the failure to meet a child's basic need for food, clothing, shelter, sleep, medical attention, education and protection from harm. This can occur when parents do not know about the appropriate care for children, when they cannot adequately supervise their children or when they are unable to plan ahead.⁵

¹ Faith Trust Institute 2008

² The Children's Aid Society of London and Middlesex, 2008

³ The Children's Aid Society of London and Middlesex, 2008

⁴ The Children's Aid Society of London and Middlesex, 2008

⁵ The Children's Aid Society of London and Middlesex, 2006

