

Vikings Korfbal Club Safeguarding Policy Annex A – Definitions of Abuse and Barriers to Reporting

It is important for coaches and other people in positions of trust in the club to be aware of the varying types of abuse that may happen to a child or vulnerable adult. Below are definitions and possible indicators of abuse, which it is important to be aware of, when coaching and/or supervising children.

What is abuse?

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. A person may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children and young people may be abused in the family, an institution or a community setting, by those known to them or by a stranger.

Types and categories of abuse and neglect:

- **Physical** - deliberately physically hurting a child. This can take a variety of forms, including hitting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating a child. Physical abuse can happen in any family, but children may be more at risk if their parents have problems with drugs, alcohol and mental health or if they live in a home where domestic abuse happens. Babies and children with disabilities also have a higher risk of suffering physical abuse. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. Physical abuse can also occur outside of the family environment.
- **Sexual** - any sexual activity with a child, although children and young people who are victims of sexual abuse do not always recognise themselves as such. A child may not understand what is happening and may not even understand that it is wrong. Sexual abuse 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 clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch 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 commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. Sexual abuse can have a long-term impact on mental health.
- **Emotional** - persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. Although the effects of emotional abuse might take a long time to be detectable, practitioners will be able to observe it, for example in the way that a parent interacts with their child. Emotional abuse may involve deliberately telling a child that they are worthless, or unloved and inadequate. It may include not giving a child opportunity to express their views, deliberately silencing them or making fun of what they say or how they communicate. Emotional abuse may involve serious bullying – including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones – by a child's peers. It is also sometimes called psychological abuse and it can have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development.
- **Neglect** is a pattern of failing to provide for a child's basic needs, whether it be adequate food, clothing, hygiene, supervision or shelter. It is important that practitioners remain alert

and do not miss opportunities to take timely action. However, while there may be concerns about a child, neglect is not always straightforward to identify. Neglect may occur if a parent becomes physically or mentally unable to care for a child. A parent may also have an addiction to alcohol or drugs, which could impair their ability to keep a child safe or result in them prioritising buying drugs or alcohol over food, clothing or warmth for the child. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal drug or alcohol abuse. It is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child's health or development. Children who are neglected often also suffer from other types of abuse.

Indicators of abuse

Any of the following signs might be indicators of abuse or neglect:

- Children whose behaviour changes –they may become aggressive, challenging, disruptive, withdrawn or clingy, or they might have difficulty sleeping or start wetting the bed;
- Children with clothes which are ill-fitting and/or dirty;
- Children with consistently poor hygiene;
- Children who make strong efforts to avoid specific family members or friends without an obvious reason;
- Children who don't want to change clothes in front of others or participate in physical activities;
- Children who are having problems at school, for example a sudden lack of concentration and learning or they appear to be tired and hungry;
- Children who talk about being left home alone, with inappropriate carers or with strangers;
- Children who reach developmental milestones, such as learning to speak or walk, late, with no medical reason;
- Children who are regularly missing from school or education;
- Children who are reluctant to go home after school;
- Children with poor school attendance and punctuality, or who are consistently late being picked up;
- Parents who are dismissive and non-responsive to practitioners' concerns;
- Parents who collect their children from school when drunk, or under the influence of drugs;
- Children who drink alcohol regularly from an early age;
- Children who are concerned for younger siblings without explaining why;
- Children who talk about running away;
- Children who shy away from being touched or flinch at sudden movements.

Factors which prevent children from reporting abuse

There are many factors which can inhibit a child's willingness and ability to report abuse. These can include fear, loyalty, shame, being scared of the perpetrator/ consequences, cultural differences/norms, unaware of what abuse is, not having the words to describe it, mixed feelings

as they may love the perpetrator, fear of being taken into care, having told someone before and seen nothing happen.

Key qualities that children and young people want in professionals:

Research has shown that children want their workers to be informed, knowledgeable, experienced, dedicated, open, honest, trustworthy and approachable. Vikings coaches are always expected to display these qualities.

Specific Safeguarding Issues:

- Children with special educational needs and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. We need to recognise that additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. These can include assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviours, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration
- Missing Children - we need to be aware that children going repeatedly missing can be a sign of a range of safeguarding concerns
- Child Sexual Exploitation is a form of Child sexual abuse. It occurs when an individual or a group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or a young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity in exchange of something. CSE can take place online
- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) County Lines—This is a geographically widespread criminal exploitation of children where drug networks or gangs groom and exploit children to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban and rural areas.
- Domestic abuse. Exposure to domestic abuse and or violence can have a serious long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. Domestic abuse affecting young people can also occur within their personal relationships as well as in their context of their home life.
- Honour based violence (HBV) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and or the community including female genital mutilation, forced marriage and practices such as breast ironing.
- Peer on Peer abuse—Incidences of this type will be managed in the same way as child protection concerns. Peer on peer abuse can manifest itself in many ways, bullying, physical abuse, sexual abuse, sexting.
- Sexting—is defined as the production and or sharing of sexual photos/videos/messages. The images must never be downloaded, shared or viewed as this is illegal. Images should not be deleted, and any incident of this nature must be reported immediately.