

a. NEGLECT

Continued failure by a parent or caregiver to provide a child with the basic things needed for his or her proper growth and development, such as food, clothing, shelter, medical and dental care and adequate supervision (Source: NSW DoCS)

Examples: failure to provide food, clothing, shelter, medical care, attention to hygiene or supervision, inability to respond emotionally to a child or young person, depriving of or withholding physical contact or stimulation for prolonged periods, absence of social support from adults.

INDICATORS/SIGNS IN CHILDREN	INDICATORS/SIGNS IN PARENTS/CAREGIVERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • poor standards of hygiene leading to social isolation or poor health. • inappropriately dressed for weather conditions • extended stays at school, public places, others' homes • extreme longing for adult affection • self-comforting behaviour, eg. rocking, sucking • delays in developmental milestones • low weight for age and/or failure to thrive and develop • untreated physical problems e.g. serious nappy rash • extreme anxiety about being abandoned • child not adequately supervised for their age • scavenging or stealing food and focus on basic survival 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unable or unwilling to provide adequate food, shelter, clothing, medical attention, safe home conditions • leaving the child without appropriate supervision • abandonment of child • withholding physical contact or stimulation for prolonged periods • unable or unwilling to provide psychological nurturing

b. PHYSICAL ABUSE

Non- accidental injury or pattern of injuries to a child caused by a parent, caregiver or any other person (Source: NSW DoCS '*Spot it to help stop it*' brochure).

Examples: beating, shaking, lacerations, burns, fractures, poisoning, attempted suffocation, physical mutilation.

INDICATORS/SIGNS IN CHILDREN	INDICATORS/SIGNS IN PARENTS/CAREGIVERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unexplained bruising to face, head or neck • bruising showing the shape of the object that caused it e.g. belt buckle, lacerations and welts • explanation of injury is not consistent with the injury • abdominal pain caused by ruptured internal organs • fractures of bones • burns and scalds (including cigarette burns) • drowsiness, vomiting, fits or retinal haemorrhages • aggression or withdrawal • inappropriate clothes for weather conditions • discomfort with physical contact, and emotional problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explanation of injury is not consistent with the injury • a parent or caregiver says that they fear injuring their child • family history of violence or their own maltreatment as a child • frequent visits with child/ren to health or other services with unexplained or suspicious injuries

c. EMOTIONAL & PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE

Behaviour by a parent or caregiver that destroys a child's confidence resulting in significant emotional disturbance or trauma (Source: NSW DoCS 'Spot it to help stop it' brochure).

Psychological abuse damages a child's intellectual faculties and processes, including intelligence, memory, recognition, perception and moral development. The harm experienced is assessed to be detrimental in effect and significant in nature on the child's well-being.

INDICATORS/SIGNS IN CHILDREN	INDICATORS/SIGNS IN PARENTS/CAREGIVERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • passive and aggressive behavioural extremes • habit disorders • feelings of worthlessness about life and themselves • inability to value others • lack of trust in people and expectations • lack of interpersonal skills necessary for adequate functioning • extreme attention-seeking behaviour • bullying • disruptiveness • persistent running away from home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • constant criticism • belittling, teasing • ignoring or withholding praise and attention • excessive or unreasonable demands • persistent hostility and severe verbal abuse • rejection and scapegoating • belief that a particular child is bad or evil • using inappropriate physical or social isolation as punishment • domestic violence

d. SEXUAL ABUSE

Definition: Sexual abuse is when an adult or someone who is stronger, bigger or older (includes other children) involves a child in a sexual activity by using their power over a child or taking advantage of a child's trust. Child sexual abuse involves a wide range of sexual activity. Bribes or threats are often used to make them participate in the activity (Source: NSW DoCS 'Spot it to help stop it' brochure).

Examples: sexual touching, sexual intercourse, sexual suggestions to children, including exposure to pornographic material, use of children in the production of pornographic videos or films, exhibitionism, child prostitution.

INDICATORS/SIGNS IN CHILDREN	INDICATORS/SIGNS IN PARENTS/CAREGIVERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • child or child's friend telling you about it, even indirectly • describing sexual acts • excessive seductiveness • going to bed fully clothed • sexual knowledge or behaviour inappropriate for age • regressive behaviour e.g. sudden return to bed-wetting • bruising or bleeding in the genital area • sexually transmitted diseases • bruising to breasts, buttocks, lower abdomen or thighs • self-destructive behaviour • suicide attempts/self-mutilation • child being in contact with a known sex offender • anorexia or over-eating • adolescent pregnancy • unexplained accumulation of money and gifts • persistent running away from home • unusual aversion to physical contact • inappropriate expressions of friendship with an adult 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exposing a child to prostitution or pornography or using a child for pornographic purposes • intentional exposure of a child to sexual behaviour of others • previous conviction or suspicion of child sexual abuse • coercing a child to engage in sexual behaviour with other children • verbal threats of sexual abuse • denial of an adolescent's pregnancy by family • keeping tight control over a child's movements, e.g., not allowing child to develop relationships where they might disclose

e. WITNESSING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

“A child being present (hearing or seeing): a parent or sibling subject to physical abuse, sexual abuse or psychological maltreatment and/or the damage caused to person or property by a family member’s violent behaviour” (adapted from *Australian Institute of Family Studies* www.aif.gov.au).

INDICATORS/SIGNS IN CHILDREN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • displays of aggressive behaviour • development of phobias and insomnia • displays of anxiety • symptoms of depression • diminished self-esteem • poor academic performance and problem-solving skills • reduced social competence skills, including low levels of empathy • displays of emotional distress • physical complaints

There are other types of abusive behaviour which may cause harm to children, that may or may not be reportable to government child protection agencies such as medical, bullying, grooming on the internet, and spiritual abuse. In responding to concerns about children, the church will need to consider its legal, pastoral, risk management and organisational responsibilities (see Section 2.4).

Spiritual abuse

In most cases it is not reportable to a government child protection agency, although in extreme cases can be classed as emotional abuse. This may include any or all of the pre-stated abuse types. It involves the perpetrator inappropriately using their position of authority in the church to satisfy their own needs, or using children for their own benefit. Pressuring people through use of guilt language may result in feelings of guilt, shame, a strong “works” based framework for faith. For example, “If I do this, then God will love me” or “God will be happy with you if you do this for me”.

Bullying behaviours between children

In a church context bullying must not be tolerated. Instead of being laughed at, it should be reported according to church procedure.

In a children’s ministry context, parents of children involved need to be informed, consulted with and included in decisions relating to their child/ren. Targets of bullying need to be loved, valued, respected and restored as appropriate to the situation. Those who demonstrate bullying behaviours must be called to account in a loving way. For further information in relation to bullying behaviours by and towards adults, pages 25 - 26 of this manual.

Electronic sexualised interactions and grooming on the internet

We acknowledge that the use of electronic media for communication is part of everyday life, however, we need to be mindful of the position of trust and power we have been entrusted with as leaders. However, with explosion of electronic communication there has been a sharp increase in the number of internet-based and telecommunications-based allegations of abuse and bullying. This involves the perpetrator using any form of telecommunication, or electronic communication to: sexually groom, bully, suggest an inappropriate relationship be formed, or engage a child in sexual language or behaviours. In some cases these interactions have led to people being charged with online grooming, or procurement of a child for sexual purposes. In NSW the Office of the Children’s Guardian includes “inappropriate personal communication (including emails, telephone calls, text messaging, social media and web forums) that explore sexual feelings or intimate personal feelings with a child” as part of its extended definition of sexual misconduct.

It is recommended that those working with children, young people, and other vulnerable persons are provided with a set of guidelines for the use of electronic communication.