

# Signs and Indicators of Child Abuse

The following signs and indicators are intended as examples and are not exhaustive. Equally, just because a pupil is demonstrating one or more of the signs indicated, it does not necessarily mean that they are being abused. If you have any questions, concerns or doubts about a child's safety or wellbeing, **speak to your DSL immediately.**



## Physical Abuse

- unexplained marks or bruising
- multiple bruises
- explanation of injuries that aren't consistent with the injury
- burns or scalds
- bite marks
- broken skin
- flinching from physical contact or touch
- not wanting to get changed

## Neglect

- being unclean or 'smelly'
- being hungry frequently
- losing weight or being underweight
- wearing inappropriate clothing
- reports of a child being left alone or unsupervised for a period of time that is unsuitable for their age or stage of development
- untreated injuries, medical conditions or dental issues
- poor language, communication or social skills
- not having many friends
- regularly complaining of tiredness
- not asking for medical help, e.g. when they have fallen over on the playground

## Emotional Abuse

- rocking
- sulking
- hair twisting or pulling
- being unable to play
- experiencing sudden speech disorders
- being fearful of making a mistake
- being withdrawn, anxious or depressed
- self-harm
- being fearful of a parent being spoken to about their changes in behaviour

## Radicalisation and Extremism

- being unwilling to listen to different points of view or expressing unusual views
- changes in appearance, clothing or hobbies
- converting to a new religion
- being secretive
- spending a lot of time online or on the phone
- changing friends or becoming isolated
- showing an interest in extremist organisations or accessing extremist content online
- making discriminatory comments
- becoming unwilling to engage with people from different groups, religions, etc.

## Sexual Abuse

- pain, itching, bruising, bleeding or infection in the genital area
- stomach pains
- discomfort sitting down or walking
- having inappropriate sexual knowledge for their age
- sexual drawings or language
- bed-wetting
- having secrets which they say they cannot tell anyone

## Exploitation

- not attending school or declining school performance
- going missing or travelling for unexplained reasons
- using drugs or alcohol
- in a relationship with a power or age imbalance
- having unexpected gifts or money that they will not explain the source of
- being involved with gang activity or exhibiting signs of this
- becoming isolated from family and friendship groups
- declining emotional wellbeing