

The Windhorse Trust

Child Protection Policy

Windhorse Trust

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Introduction

The Windhorse Trust is a UK grant giving and loan making charity run by members of the Triratna Buddhist Order, making grants and loans to organisations and projects run by members of the Triratna Buddhist Order and Triratna Buddhist Community worldwide.

Triratna is a worldwide network of friends in the Buddhist life. This is for many of us a source of great richness, support and strength. However, it also carries a risk that we may fail to notice, question or act on behaviours of concern, out of naivety, loyalty to friends or lack of awareness, or an assumption that “it couldn’t happen here” or “they would never do a thing like that.”

This Windhorse Trust policy is an expression of the first ethical precept taught by the Buddha: to protect living beings from harm. It is based on law and good practice in England and Wales, where the charity is registered.

The purpose of this policy

Throughout this policy the term 'partner', 'partner project' or 'partner organisation' refers to any individual, group, project or organisation with whom the Windhorse Trust has a financial relationship.

This Windhorse Trust policy is for Friends, Mitras and members of the Triratna Buddhist Order working for the Windhorse Trust as trustees, employees or volunteers.

It sets out the Windhorse Trust's Safeguarding values in relation to the protection of children from harm, in its own activities and those of the partner organisations it funds.

It sets out:

- practices and procedures contributing to the prevention of abuse of children.
- what to do if abuse is suspected.

Our values

The trustees of the Windhorse Trust recognise their responsibility to Safeguard all those aged under 18 visiting or involved in the activities of the Windhorse Trust and its partners, as set out by the Charity Commission in its latest guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-duties-for-charity-trustees>.

The Windhorse Trust's own activities do not directly involve those under 18 in any way, and at present Windhorse Trust does not fund any partner projects or activities specifically intended for those under 18.

However, we recognise that Windhorse Trust staff members and volunteers may have the care of those under 18, and that those under 18 may happen to visit or be present from time to time during the activities of the Windhorse Trust. They may also be present on the premises of, or during the activities of, the Windhorse Trust's partner organisations; for example, as family of sangha members. Partner projects may hold activities specifically intended for those under 18. Also those under 18 may from time to time attend partners' activities intended for the general public of all ages.

John Linney(Prasannavira) is the Windhorse Trust's Safeguarding Officer. He is responsible for coordinating the protection of children and adults who may be at risk at in the activities of any organisation or project funded by the Windhorse Trust. (See also Windhorse Trust's '*Adult Protection Policy 2023*'.)

Michael Silver(Keturaja) is the Windhorse Trust's Safeguarding Trustee. He is responsible for making sure that Windhorse Trust trustees maintain awareness of their Safeguarding and comply with their Safeguarding obligations as required by the Charity Commission.

The Windhorse Trust's trustees recognise that in UK law:

- the welfare of the child is paramount;
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender, ethnicity, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from harm;

- partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

These values apply in the work of the Windhorse Trust and to anyone working in any capacity for a partner organisation funded by the Windhorse Trust.

The Windhorse Trust will require its partner organisations to Safeguard children and young people by:

- valuing them, listening to and respecting them;
- adopting a child protection policy and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers as necessary;
- recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring checks are made where necessary;
- sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers;
- sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately;
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.

Safeguarding as a condition of Windhorse Trust funding

As a condition of funding the Windhorse Trust will require its partners to indicate commitment to Safeguarding in the course of partners' own activities. This may be done in either of two ways:

1. The partner may adopt Triratna's Model Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct
2. The partner may use its own child protection policy and code of conduct if they are of a similar or higher standard than Windhorse Trust's model documents.

Once accepted by the Windhorse Trust the partner's documents must be translated into local language/s so that they are easily accessible and useable by all those to whom it applies.

Who is a "child"?

For the purposes of this policy a child is a person who is not yet 18, regardless of the age of majority any particular jurisdiction.

What is child abuse?

Please see appendix.

Recognising signs of abuse

Please see appendix.

Engaging safely with children in person

Outside personal and family relationships, nobody at the Windhorse Trust or involved with a partner organisation may arrange to meet any child under 15 individually anywhere if the child is unaccompanied by a parent/guardian.

Before meeting those aged 15-17 it is good Safeguarding practice to make contact with their parent/guardian. Care will be taken to meet in public spaces where others are present, such as a Buddhist Centre reception area or a room with the door open.

Where it is agreed that (in connection with the activities of the Windhorse Trust or a partner organisation) an employee, trustee or volunteer may give a lift to a person under 18 (with or without anyone else in the car):

- The Windhorse Trust's or the partner organisation's Safeguarding Officer must ensure that the driver is well known to them, has read the partner organisation's Child Protection Policy/Policies and signed to confirm they will abide by them;
- the Safeguarding Officer must have the written agreement of the child's parent/carer for the child to travel in the car of this named driver;
- the driver must be over 18, have a full driving licence, adequate insurance and a vehicle which is roadworthy;
- The child must sit in the back seat;
- If the Windhorse Trust/the partner organisation does not feel able to implement these criteria they must require that no employee or volunteer offers lifts to those under 18 in connection with the partner organisation's activities.

See also the guidance document

https://thebuddhistcentre.com/system/files/groups/files/caring_for_teenagers_in_triratna_2023.pdf.

Engaging with under-18s using email and social media

We are aware that individual contact with people of any age using email or social media carries the risk of accusations of “grooming”; relationships established with a view to sexual contact.

Employees, trustees and volunteers of the Windhorse Trust and its partner organisations will not engage by email, text or social media with anyone under 15, except where they are seeking information about Buddhism as part of school work or personal study, when they may engage, by email only, from the charity’s email account only. Having answered their questions, we will not engage in further personal correspondence.

We will engage with those 15-17 only with the written permission of a parent/guardian, by email or letter, which will be stored by the Windhorse Trust’s/the partner organisation’s Safeguarding Officer.

See also the guidance document

https://thebuddhistcentre.com/system/files/groups/files/caring_for_teenagers_in_triratna_2023.pdf.

DBS checks/Background security checks

This section is written with reference to the Windhorse Trust and partner organisations in England and Wales. Partner organisations in other jurisdictions must rewrite this section to fit local requirements and conduct locally equivalent background security checks.

The Windhorse Trust and partner organisations must ensure that their staff, trustees and volunteers have obtained any DBS checks applicable to their role in the partner organisation.

If in any doubt about the requirements for DBS checks for Windhorse Trust staff our Safeguarding Officer will check with external safeguarding experts such as Thirtyone:eight (<https://thirtyoneeight.org/>) to ensure that anyone required to have a DBS check has been checked, and to the correct level. Thirtyone:eight also provides an online DBS checking service.

We understand that

- A) the Charity Commission states that wherever there is a legal entitlement to obtain a DBS check in respect of a trustee, employee or volunteer, a DBS check should be carried out. In detail, this means that
- B) anyone working or volunteering for the Windhorse Trust or a partner organisation in any capacity is eligible for a **Basic DBS check**. We and they are free to request these of any such person, but if we/they have a great many volunteers and staff we/they may focus on obtaining Basic checks for those with particularly significant responsibility: eg Chair, trustees and those working with the charity’s money and finances; also our Safeguarding Officer, Safeguarding Trustee and anyone working with under 18s (eg leading school visits) who does not qualify for an Enhanced DBS check. (See C.)
- C) those running *non-residential* activities or events specifically intended for, or including, those under 18 can and must obtain an **Enhanced DBS check with check of the Children’s Barred List**, *but only* if they work with children, for the Windhorse Trust or a UK partner organisation, on *more than 3 days in a 30-day period*.

- D) if a staff member or volunteer is working with children in *non-residential* activities on *more than 3 days in a 30-day period*, as described in C) all the trustees of the relevant charity can and must have an **Enhanced DBS check (*without* check of the Children’s Barred List)**. This applies even if a trustee has no personal involvement in the activities including children.
- E) Where a person who is a trustee is also running *non-residential* activities involving children on *more than 3 days in a 30-day period*, or managing someone who is running activities involving children on *more than 3 days in a 30-day period*, it may be that that trustee can and therefore must obtain, an **Enhanced DBS check *with* a check of the Children’s Barred List**.
- F) Where under-18s stay overnight in the course of *residential* activities, without their parents or guardians present, any volunteer or employee who cares for, supervises, teaches, leads or advises those children (other than their own) with the opportunity for face to face contact – *even if only on one occasion* – can and must have an **Enhanced DBS check *with* a check of the Children’s Barred List** and
- G) It is regarded as good practice that any DBS certificate should be less than three years old.

No DBS checks are required in relation to irregular or one-off non-residential activities involving those under 18, or to general non-residential activities which someone under 18 may happen to attend. This is because children are most at risk where it is known in advance that children are likely to be attending; those who wish to gain access to children look for opportunities to become a familiar and trusted figure to children, for example seeking to join the team running regular children’s activities.

Welcoming school visits safely

Where school groups and other youth groups visit a UK partner organisation (e.g. a Triratna Buddhist Centre) that organisation must require every group to bring at least two adults capable of supervising all members of the group at all times. They must make clear that none of their staff or volunteers is to be left alone with the pupils.

Those leading school group visits to a UK partner organisation (e.g. a Triratna Buddhist Centre) can and therefore must have **Enhanced DBS checks *without* check of the Children’s Barred List**. (This does not apply to a person leading a one-off visit.)

See also the guidance document

https://thebuddhistcentre.com/system/files/groups/files/caring_for_teenagers_in_triratna_2023.pdf.

Safer recruitment more generally

DBS/security checks are only one aspect of safer recruitment.

- The Windhorse Trust’s partner organisations will seek references for anyone, volunteer or employee, seeking to work with those under 18 in the course of their activities, including short-term volunteers, even if they have been DBS checked or will be supervised by people who have been DBS checked;

- Any volunteer or employee, seeking to work with those under 18 in the course of the activities of an Windhorse Trust partner organisation must read and sign the organisation's Child Protection Policy and Code of conduct, even if only helping on a one-off occasion.

Where parents are not present

Where under 18s attend a activities of a partner organisation, if parents are not present at all, or are elsewhere on the premises, the partner organisation's Safeguarding Officer must make contact with their parent/guardian to ensure they know this is happening, and to record in writing that contact has been made, along with contact details and any medical conditions they need to know about.

Managing those who pose a risk to children

In the course of their own activities partner organisations must not allow anyone who is likely to pose a risk to children to have contact with anyone under 18 (for example, a person who is known to have a previous criminal conviction for sexual or other violent offences, someone who is under investigation for possible sexual or other violent offences or someone who has disclosed a sexual interest in children).

Such a person must be asked by the partner organisation's Safeguarding Officer to agree a behaviour contract setting out the terms of their continued participation in the activities of that partner organisation within agreed boundaries and based on a risk assessment carried out by an Order member with professional experience in risk assessment. If the partner organisation's Safeguarding Officer is not professionally qualified to do this, they will ask for help from the *Triratna ECA Safeguarding Team* or another professionally qualified Order member. (See the document https://thebuddhistcentre.com/system/files/groups/files/managing_those_who_pose_a_risk_in_triratna_2023.pdf)

Where it is felt that the organisation does not have the resources to manage this relationship safely, they should ask the person not to attend their activities.

See also the guidance document

https://thebuddhistcentre.com/system/files/groups/files/caring_for_teenagers_in_triratna_2023.pdf.

Lettings/Hireouts

In some cases a partner organisation may rent or lend premises for activities which are not activities of that organisation, even if led/run by a staff member, volunteer or trustee (Order member, Mitra or Friend) or attended by that organisation's users or beneficiaries (including members of the Triratna Buddhist Order, Mitras or Friends) e.g. yoga classes, massage, 12-step groups, retreat centre hire-outs.

In such a case there is joint responsibility on the partner organisation and those renting/using its premises for the Safeguarding in such activities, but the partner organisation's trustees bear ultimate responsibility for the Safeguarding in all activities on its premises.

Therefore, a partner organisation must ask any organisation or individual using its premises to sign a letting agreement which says they have read the partner organisation's Safeguarding policies and agree to abide by them, or that they have shown the partner organisation their own Safeguarding policy, in which case their policies should be compatible with the partner organisation's policy/policies and should be written to an equal or higher standard.

Where a therapist is treating a child on a partner organisation's premises

It will be necessary for the therapist to work with the child in private with the door closed. Therefore the partner organisation must ask to see written proof that the therapist is properly qualified and insured to work with under-18s. The partner organisation will ask to see their DBS certificate or evidence of another locally applicable security check, which must be less than three years old.

Reporting concerns or allegations

All reports or suspicions of abuse in the course of Windhorse Trust activities or those of a partner organisation must be treated seriously. They may include:

- something we or those in a partner organisation have seen;
- something we something we or those in a partner organisation have been told by someone else;
- rumours about a person's previous behaviour;
- behaviour something we or those in a partner organisation have observed in a child; and,
- disclosure from a child directly.

How to respond if a person under 18 alleges abuse

The person receiving the allegation from the child:

- needs to be aware the child may have been threatened and may be very afraid;
- needs to look directly at the child;
- needs to keep calm and reassure the child that they are doing the right thing and are not to blame, even if they have broken some rules;
- needs to accept what the child says without judgment, never suggesting that they may be wrong or mistaken. Their responsibility is to take the child seriously and take action, not to decide whether what they are saying is true;
- needs to avoid pushing for information or question the child but let them say as much as they are ready to say;
- needs to make it clear they cannot promise total confidentiality, and that we will need to tell another trusted adult if we believe the child is at immediate risk of harm;
- needs to tell the child they need to get help for them but that they will *try* to agree with the child what will happen next. This means they *will* need to share with others what the child says - on a need-to-know basis only;

What happens next

- The first concern must be the safety and wellbeing of the child. We and those in a partner organisation must not be distracted from this by loyalty to the person accused or a desire to maintain the good name of Triratna, the Windhorse Trust or the partner organisation;
- If the person receiving the disclosure is not our Safeguarding Officer (John Linney), they must tell the Safeguarding officer only, who will co-ordinate the handling of the matter on behalf of the Windhorse Trust trustees. However, if the Safeguarding Officer is not immediately available the matter should be communicated to the Chair of The Windhorse Trust (Mike Silver) or The Windhorse Trust Safeguarding Trustee (Michael Silver). If the person may be in immediate danger the Safeguarding Officer, Chair, Safeguarding Trustee or person receiving the disclosure will phone social services or police straight away. A telephone referral will be confirmed in writing within 24 hours. If necessary, our Safeguarding Officer will contact Triratna's ECA Safeguarding Team for advice: safeguarding@triratna.community
- We understand that every person has a legal right to privacy under the International Convention on Human Rights and data protection legislation; therefore, having taken any urgent actions necessary, if possible we should get the consent of the child's parent or guardian to share the information they have disclosed;
- However, it may be necessary, and therefore legally 'reasonable', to report without parental consent, if we believe that the child is suffering, or at risk of, significant harm and that informing parents/guardians would not be in the child's interest;
- Meanwhile, the person receiving the disclosure will make detailed factual notes about the conversation/concern/incident as soon as possible, including time, date and location, and pass them to the charity's Safeguarding Officer. (See '*Secure, confidential record-keeping*' below.) As far as possible what a child has said should be recorded in their own words, as these could be used in court;
- We understand that no sangha member should attempt to investigate a criminal allegation, that this is the job of the police and that to attempt this could prejudice a court case and put the parties in danger;

Finally, in England and Wales we understand that we may need to make a Serious Incident Report to the Charity Commission: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-report-a-serious-incident-in-your-charity>. We will consult the ECA Safeguarding team for guidance on this: safeguarding@triratna.community

Who else needs to know?

The Windhorse Trust's trustees, employees and volunteers understand that confidentiality, sharing information only on a need-to-know basis, is very important. Under data protection legislation nobody has a right to know about a Safeguarding matter – except, for Safeguarding purposes, those in a position to prevent further harm, and the Chair of the Windhorse Trust or the partner organisation, who holds ultimate responsibility for the governance of the organisation. For example, where there is a criminal allegation against a Mitra it could be justifiable for the Safeguarding Officer, Safeguarding Trustee, Chair and Mitra Convenor to know about it.

This is not a matter of concealment but is intended to protect all concerned from further harm. It will also protect our sangha from fear, rumour and disharmony which will make it much harder to deal with the matter effectively without causing further harm.

Where a person is believed/has been found to pose a risk to children it is often thought that parents have a right to know. However, this is not the case. Proper implementation of our Safeguarding policy and procedures will ensure that children are as safe from such a person as they are from any others who pose a risk but have not been identified as such.

What to do if a sangha member discloses a criminal act against a child

We understand that the law does not protect confidentiality where criminal acts are confessed. If a Friend, Mitra or Order member discloses to any other sangha member (whether or not in a formal confession) that they have physically or sexually abused a child, or have viewed indecent images of children online, the person receiving this disclosure or confession must inform the Safeguarding Officer immediately, who must report to local police immediately. This applies whether the behaviour disclosed is recent or historic.

If a child may be in immediate danger the Safeguarding Officer, Chair, Safeguarding Trustee or person receiving the disclosure will phone the police and Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) at local social services straight away. A telephone referral will be confirmed in writing within 24 hours.

If necessary, the Windhorse Trust Safeguarding Officer will contact Triratna's ECA Safeguarding team for advice: safeguarding@triratna.community.

Secure, confidential record-keeping

We understand our responsibility for secure and careful record-keeping. The Windhorse Trust's Safeguarding Officer will keep a detailed log of all Safeguarding-related incidents as well as conversations, actions and the reasoning behind them. These can be stored on the charity's computer, only if in a password-protected section accessible only to the Safeguarding Officer and one or two others approved by the Windhorse Trust's trustees.

If this is not practicable, we will keep them on an external hard drive or memory stick. To guard against loss in case the files, hard drive or memory stick become corrupted these will be backed up to another hard drive or memory stick and/or printed off. Any such memory sticks, hard drives or paper copies will be stored in a locked cabinet, box or drawer accessible only to the Safeguarding Officer and one or two others approved by the Windhorse Trust's trustees. We understand that such records must not be stored on individuals' own private computers.

We also understand that under data protection law we need to word our records in a form we would be happy for the subjects to read if they ask to, as is their legal right. This means notes should be factual and respectful, free of interpretations and value-judgements.

Keeping confidential records

We understand that because many abuse cases come to light 30 or more years later our insurers may require us to keep our logs for up to 50 years. (This is a requirement of the UK's Buddhist Insurance Scheme.)

If the Windhorse Trust closes down, we will give our records to another Triratna charity to keep with their own confidential Safeguarding logs.

Reviewing our policies annually

This document was adopted by the trustees of The Windhorse Trust Fund on 11th April 2024 and will be reviewed and updated by the Safeguarding Officer and trustees on or before 11th April 2025.

The Windhorse Trust

Chair's name and email address

Mike Silver (Keturaja), keturaja@windhorsetrust.org.uk

Chair's signature



Safeguarding Officer's name and email address

John Linney (Prasannavira), safeguarding@windhorsetrustsecure.org

Safeguarding Officer's signature



Date

11th APRIL 2024

This Windhorse Trust Child Protection Policy 2023 is to be read in conjunction with the

- The Windhorse Trust Complaints policy ([https://www.windhorsetrust.org.uk/onewebmedia/Windhorse Trust Complaints Policy.pdf](https://www.windhorsetrust.org.uk/onewebmedia/Windhorse%20Trust%20Complaints%20Policy.pdf))
- The Windhorse Trust Adult Safeguarding policy ([https://www.windhorsetrust.org.uk/onewebmedia/Windhorse Trust Adult Protection Policy.pdf](https://www.windhorsetrust.org.uk/onewebmedia/Windhorse%20Trust%20Adult%20Protection%20Policy.pdf))
- Triratna guidance document 'Caring for teenagers in Triratna 2021' ([https://thebuddhistcenter.com/system/files/groups/files/caring for teenagers in triratna 2021.pdf](https://thebuddhistcenter.com/system/files/groups/files/caring_for_teenagers_in_triratna_2021.pdf)) and,

- Triratna guidance document 'Managing those who pose a risk 2023'
(https://thebuddhistcentre.com/system/files/groups/files/managing_those_who_pose_a_risk_in_triratna_2023.pdf)
- Triratna guidance document 'Triratna Model Ethical Guidelines 2021'
(https://thebuddhistcenter.com/system/files/groups/files/triratna_model_ethical_guidelines_2021.pdf)

Appendices

1. What is child abuse?

The World Health Organisation defines "child abuse" as "all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power."

2. Defining child abuse

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. A person may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm.

Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

Child protection legislation throughout the UK is based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Each nation within the UK has incorporated the convention within its legislation and guidance.

The four definitions (and a few additional categories) of abuse below operate in England, based on the government guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)'.

Definitions of abuse and neglect

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger for example, via the internet. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These

may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities 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 of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching 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 also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology

Extremism goes beyond terrorism and includes people who target the vulnerable – including the young – by seeking to sow division between communities on the basis of race, faith or denomination; justify discrimination towards women and girls; persuade others that minorities are inferior; or argue against the primacy of democracy and the rule of law in our society.

3. Signs of abuse in children

The following signs could be indicators that abuse has taken place but should be considered in the context of the child's whole life.

Physical

- Injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them;
- Injuries that occur in places not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc.;
- Injuries that have not received medical attention;
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming;

- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains;
- Bruises on babies, bites, burns, fractures etc which do not have an accidental explanation*;
- Cuts/scratches/substance abuse*.

Sexual

- Any allegations made concerning sexual abuse;
- Excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour;
- Age-inappropriate sexual activity through words, play or drawing;
- Behaving in a sexually provocative or seductive manner with adults;
- Inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home;
- Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations;
- Eating disorders - anorexia, bulimia*.

Emotional

- Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clinging;
- Depression, aggression, extreme anxiety;
- Nervousness, frozen watchfulness;
- Obsessions or phobias;
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration;
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults;
- Attention-seeking behaviour;
- Persistent tiredness;
- Running away/stealing/lying.

Neglect

- Under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, untreated illnesses, inadequate care, etc.

* These indicate the possibility that a child or young person is self-harming. Approximately 20,000 children are treated for self-harm in accident and emergency departments in the UK each year.

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