



Hebron Evangelical Church Aberdeen

Safeguarding Policy

November 2022

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Policy Statement

Hebron Evangelical Church is committed to safeguarding the Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults entrusted to our care. It is the responsibility of the Trustees, Elders, Deacons and every Member to prevent the physical, sexual or emotional abuse of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults.

1. **Purpose**

The main purpose of the Safeguarding Policy is to:

- a. Protect Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults from abuse / harm whilst in the care of the Church
- b. Protect workers from allegations
- c. Identify Children who may be being abused outside the Church

The main purpose of this document is to outline the Church's policies with respect to:

- a. Appointment of Children's / Young People's workers
- b. Training and competence
- c. Supervision of activities
- d. Responding to allegations of abuse or neglect

2. **Job Descriptions**

To ensure the safety, security, physical and spiritual well-being of Children attending Hebron Evangelical Church the following roles have been established within the Church under the direction of the Elders. All Workers shall be responsible for ensuring adherence to this Safeguarding Policy.

Note, in the following job descriptions, a number of terms are used to describe Workers with Children and Young People. These terms shall have the following meanings:

Leader:	A person appointed by the Church who has responsibility for a Children's or Young People's activity.
Helper:	A person appointed by the Church to work in a Children's or Young People's activity under the supervision of a Leader.
Children:	All pre-school and school age people up to the end of primary school (Age 11/12).
Young People:	All people under the age of 18 who are not referred to as Children

Safeguarding Officer and Assistant Safeguarding Officer

These individuals will assist the Trustees in ensuring that Hebron provides a safe environment for Children and Young People. Specific responsibilities include:

- Development and regular review/revision of Safeguarding Policy
- Ensure all workers with Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults undergo appropriate induction procedures. .
- Maintain a register of accredited Workers including any references provided, PVG memberships and training records as appropriate in accordance with this policy.
- Be the points of contact for all concerns raised by Children, Young People, Vulnerable Adults, Parents or Workers.
- Lead the investigation of all incidents or allegations to determine any follow-up actions required.
- Decide whether any incident or allegation should be referred to statutory authorities

Children's or Youth Work Co-ordinator(s)

This person has overall responsibility for the running of a specific area of children's or youth work e.g. Sunday School, Monday Club, etc., including:

- Safe Recruitment and induction of Leaders and Helpers in conjunction with church's safeguarding officers
- Accountable to the Safeguarding Officer and the Safeguarding Trustee for the safeguarding of all participants, and to the Elders for all other aspects of the relevant area of children's or youth work
- Organise the relevant children's or youth work programme
- Oversee the teaching content of the relevant children's or youth work
- Liaise with parents / carers concerning their children and activity arrangements

Children's or Youth Work Leader

This person will be responsible for leading and/or teaching a group of children or young people. Specific responsibilities include:

- Preparation of activities and planning of delivery of lessons/talks
- Ensuring the safety of Children and Young People during activities and their return to parents/carers
- Liaising with other children's and youth work Leaders and Helpers to ensure the smooth operation of programmes
- Attend meetings of the relevant area of children's or youth work

Children's or Youth Work Helper

This is a non-teaching role involving assisting a Children's or Youth Work Leader in the running of an activity. Specific responsibilities may include:

- Preparation of part of an activity (e.g. crafts)
- Ensuring the safety of Children or Young People during activities and their return to parents/carers
- Liaising with other Children's or Youth Work Leaders to ensure the smooth operation of programmes
- Attend meetings of the relevant area of children's or youth work.

Occasional Leader

This person will lead occasional Children's and Youth Work sessions (e.g. open Sunday Schools over the summer months or Holiday Clubs). Specific responsibilities will include:

- Preparation of activities and planning of delivery of lessons/talks
- Ensuring the safety of Children and Young People during classes and their return to parents/carers
- Liaising with other Leaders to ensure the smooth operation of the programme

Crèche Worker

This person will be one of at least two people responsible for the care of Children in crèche during services and other occasional church functions. Specific responsibilities include:

- Ensuring the safety of Children during crèche and their return to parents/carers
- Liaising with other Crèche Leaders and Helpers to ensure the smooth operation of any rotas

3. ***Disclosure***

The PVG scheme

The Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) membership scheme is managed and delivered by Disclosure Scotland. It helps ensure people whose behaviour makes them unsuitable to work with children and protected adults cannot do 'regulated work' with these vulnerable groups.

How the scheme works

When someone applies to join the PVG Scheme, Disclosure Scotland carries out criminal record checks and shares the results with individuals and organisations.

The application process involves gathering criminal record and other relevant information. This can be shared with the employer who is providing regulated work, unless the person applies to have a conviction removed from their PVG Scheme record. If the information shows the applicant might be unsuitable for regulated work, they'll be referred for further investigation as part of the 'consideration process'.

Once someone is a PVG scheme member

Disclosure Scotland keeps checking their suitability to continue working with children or protected adults. If they find new information which means someone might have become unsuitable to work with children or protected adults, they'll tell their employer.

'Harmful behaviour' by PVG scheme members

If the courts, police, regulatory bodies or previous employers provide information to Disclosure Scotland which suggests someone may be unsuitable for regulated work, this will trigger a consideration for listing.

Barred from regulated work

If Disclosure Scotland decides that someone is unsuitable to do regulated work with vulnerable groups, they'll bar them from working with children and/or protected adults and inform their current employers. They'll also remove them from the PVG Scheme and tell any other employers/organisations listed on their record that they have been barred.

How long does it last?

A PVG Scheme member's paper certificate shows the information available on the day it was created. Membership of the scheme lasts forever though, and scheme members are continuously checked, unless they decide to leave the scheme.

What is required?

You will be asked to complete a PVG Scheme Record form, available from the church safeguarding officer. If you have previously completed a Scheme Record you will only need to complete a shorter Scheme Record Update form.

Various types of official identification will be required for completion of the form.

You will be responsible for updating Disclosure Scotland with any changes of address, surname etc using the form at <https://www.mygov.scot/manage-pvg>. You should also inform them if you no longer work/volunteer for an organisation

4. Safer Recruitment, Training, Competence and Pre-requisites

To ensure that all Workers are equipped for the roles they are asked to perform, each worker must have attended appropriate training or have been accepted as having met the necessary pre-requisites according to the following matrix. Records of safeguarding training will be maintained by the Safeguarding Officer.

Each person involved in children's work is encouraged but not required to attend a refresher course every 2 years, unless there has been a material change to policies/procedures.

Key:	
✓	Mandatory
D	Desirable
-	Not Required

	Safeguarding Officer (s)	Ch & YW Co-ordinators	Sunday School Leader	Sunday School Helper	Occasional Leader	Crèche Worker	Youth Leader	Youth Helper
Pre-requisites								
Application/Information Form completed	-	-	✓	D	D	✓	✓	D
Induction and Safeguarding Policy Training	✓	✓	✓	D	✓	✓	✓	✓
Safeguarding training	✓	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
PVG membership	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Procedure for Safer Recruitment to any position:

- Description of the role should be provided.
- Applicants should complete an application/information form and a self-declaration form
- References should be obtained
- Co-ordinators should meet with the applicant, Safeguarding should be discussed at meeting
- A PVG form should be completed
- A suitable induction training programme should be conducted
- The applicant should be given a copy of the organisation's safeguarding policy
- The applicant could be offered a probationary period

5. Induction Checklist

The following checklist should be completed by the person being inducted and a copy signed by both parties returned to the Safeguarding Officer for retention.

Covered	Item
	Walk-around Church
	First Aid boxes – upstairs and downstairs
	Accident book and reporting procedure
	Fire appliances
	Fire escape routes / procedure
	Policy Awareness
	Staffing Ratios
	Handover between Leaders and parents/carers
	Children's / Youth Work registers
	Non-routine activities
	Review Job Descriptions
	Expenses
	Safeguarding Policy best practice reference card
	Safeguarding Policy Booklet
	Photographs/Social Media Policy
	PVG scheme
	Responding to allegations / suspicions of abuse

	Signed	Date
Induction conducted by:		
I agree that the items checked above have been adequately covered during my induction.		

6. Handover of Responsibility between Leaders and Parents/Carers

Unless otherwise communicated to parents / carers, Children and Young People will become the responsibility of the Children's / Youth Work leaders from the point at which they are handed over to them to the point at which they are taken back, under supervision of leaders, to sit with parents / carers or are collected after their activity.

Children's and Youth Work Registers for mid-week and holiday clubs (any event where parents do not stay on the premises during the event) shall gather details on children attending and emergency contact details for parents and carers. (Also to include relevant medical, allergy, dietary info – MADI) These forms will provide information on who is permitted to collect a child, and should indicate if it is different from the named emergency contacts. *Information on these forms is considered personal data and should be stored securely by the church office or on the church website under password.*

A Register of Attendance should be taken at all children's and youth work events to provide a record for safeguarding and fire safety.

It is the responsibility of Leaders to ensure that Children / Young People are returned to their parents / carers. They should not be allowed to leave an activity on their own or with anyone else except by prior arrangement.

7. Staffing Ratios

The following minimum staff to Children ratios must be maintained for all activities within the Church. Non-routine activities may require higher staff to Children ratios. Leaders should assess this before undertaking the activity and advise parents / carers accordingly when requesting their consent (See Section 9). Where activities take place in an enclosed room or out of sight/hearing of any other responsible adult, 2 Leaders are a minimum requirement.

Age Range	Minimum Staff / Child Ratio
Birth to 3 years of age	1 Leader to 3 Children
3 years of age until starting Primary School	1 Leader to 6 Children
School age	1 Leader to 10 Children / Young People

8. Non-routine Activities

Any non-routine activity undertaken with Children or Young People (including taking Children or Young People off the Church premises during a regular activity) on behalf of the Church must have the specific written consent of parents / carers of all Children / Young People involved. A generic form for this purpose is included in Appendix A and is available for parents/carers to complete on the church website (youth page). Residential trips such as weekends away will have a trip specific registration form to be completed by parents / carers.

9. Photograph and Social Media safety

Group and Activity photographs may be taken during sessions but only by those who are designated to take them, as per the policy summary below. The use of photographs can be useful and welcomed in the life of a church, but we recognise that this can pose direct and indirect risks to children if they are shared on social media/websites/print copies or through messaging groups.

Risks to children:

Even if the child's personal identity (full name, address) is kept confidential, other details accompanying the photo can make them identifiable and therefore vulnerable to individuals who may seek to groom children for abuse. There is also a risk that the photo itself will be used inappropriately by others. Photos can easily be copied and adapted, perhaps to create images of child abuse, which can then find their way on to other websites. Photos on phones can be used for bullying amongst children.

Our policy can be viewed in full on the church website. All leaders should be aware of the following:

- Parental Permission to be photographed at church events must be obtained through consent on registration forms. This will include options for use.
- Children should be given the option to not be photographed at any moment.
- Consider the type of images that appropriately represent the activity and think carefully about any images showing children, especially faces.
- Never supply the full name(s) of the child or children along with the image(s)
- Only use images of children in suitable dress and focused on the activity, rather than one particular child
- Children should be discouraged from using phones during activities – where appropriate they should be handed in on arrival and returned for departure.
- Two leaders for each ministry will be designated photographers who will sign acceptable use declarations. Photographs can be sent by them to church office for safe storage and use, and should be deleted from personal devices within 10 days
- Posting images containing children to social media and church website can only be done by church staff or trustees.

10. Procedure for responding to allegations / suspicions of abuse

Recognise, Respond, Record, Report, Reflect.

Allegations / suspicion of abuse may be raised by a child concerning themselves or another child or by an adult concerning a child or another adult. In all cases the person to whom the allegation is reported (the Observer) should adopt the procedure below. If possible a Concern Form, available online at www.hebronaberdeen.org.uk/policy (copy in Appendix A) should be utilised. The Observer's information may contribute to a better understanding of something which has already been raised as a concern. Advice on recognising and responding is in Appendix B.

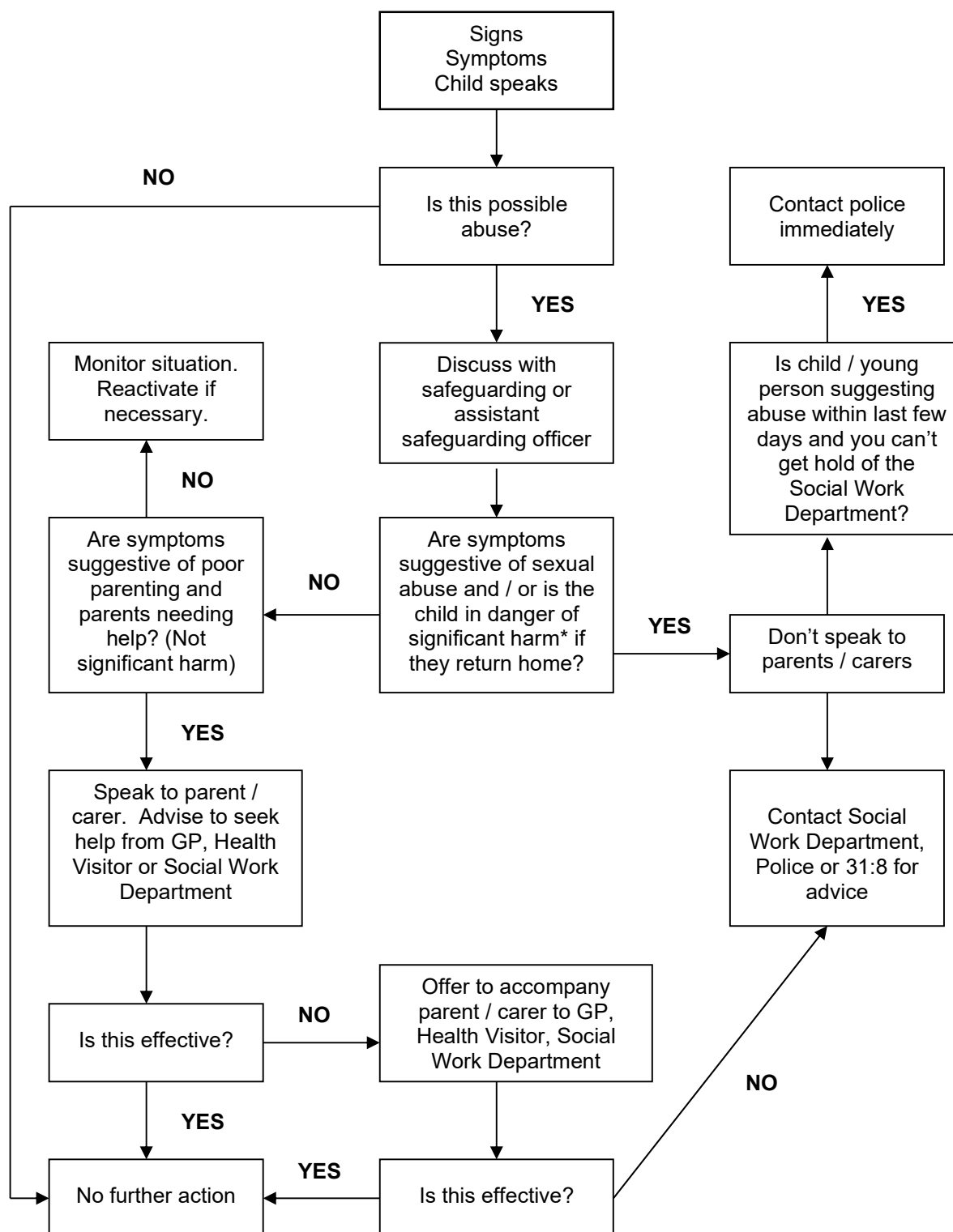
Recognise and Respond:

- The Observer should listen carefully without prompting or using leading questions. The Observer should keep calm, show acceptance of the person and provide reassurance as required.
- The observer should try to establish who was involved, what happened, where and when. Don't try to investigate.

Record and Report:

- As soon as possible after the report, ideally within one hour, the Observer should make notes and submit a Concern Form about what has been seen/heard or discussed. The Observer should ensure that the Safeguarding Officer, Assistant Safeguarding Officer or if neither are available a Church Trustee, has received the Concern Form.
- The Safeguarding Officer, Assistant Safeguarding Officer or Church Trustee will decide what further action is required having reviewed the Safeguarding Policy.

- The following flowchart will be used:



Reflect:

- Seek support for self.

11. *Useful Contact Names and Numbers*

Organisation / Role	Name	Contact Number
Safeguarding Officer	Sally Pirie	
Assistant Safeguarding Officer		
Aberdeen City Council Joint Child Protection Team	Normal working hours	0800 731 5520
Aberdeen City Council Social Work	Emergency Out of Hours	0800 731 5520
NSPCC		0808 800 5000
Crimestoppers		0800 555 111
Police Scotland		101 or 999 in an emergency
31:8 (Normal Working hours)	Safeguarding for Churches helpline	0303 003 1111

• **Acknowledgements**

The material in this document has been adapted from a number of sources. The assistance of the respective organisations is gratefully acknowledged.

- 31:8 (Formerly CCPAS)
- International Baptist Church, Aberdeen
- Holme Evangelical Church, Inverness
- Church of Scotland

Appendix A: Forms

- Non-routine activity form
- Concern Form (Responding to Allegations)

Appendix B – Helpful Information

- Safeguarding Reference Card
- How to Respond to a Child Wanting to Talk
- The Four Categories of Child Abuse and some of their Signs / Symptoms

Non-Routine/Off-Site Activity Form

Name of parent / guardian:

I give permission for _____ to attend _____
on _____.

Does the child have any medical issues relevant to the activity (details)

Emergency Contact name and number for the duration of the activity

Signed _____

*** available online at www.hebronaberdeen.org.uk/youth*

Responding to Abuse – Concern Form

CONFIDENTIAL

Hebron Evangelical Church (name of group /activity): _____

Name of Child/Young Person: _____

Address: _____

Date of Birth: ____ / ____ / ____

Name of Person Reporting Incident: _____

Date: ____ / ____ / ____ Time of incident: _____

Sequence of Events/Actual Words Used/Observations (use skin maps to note any physical symptoms, but do not undress child to investigate):

Action Taken (including person(s) contacted)

Date ____ / ____ / ____ Time _____

Notes: _____

**** available online at www.hebronaberdeen.org.uk/policy**

Appendix B – Helpful Information

- Safeguarding Reference Card
- How to Respond to a Child Wanting to Talk
- The Four Categories of Abuse and some of their Signs / Symptoms

Safeguarding Policy Reference Card

Hebron Evangelical Church, Aberdeen Safeguarding Policy Reference Card	
YOU MUST...	YOU MUST NOT...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treat all children, young people and vulnerable adults with respect • Provide an example of the good conduct you wish others to follow • Ensure that, wherever possible, there is more than one adult present during your activities with children or young people, or at least that you are within sight or hearing of others • Respect a young person's right to personal privacy • Encourage young people and adults to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like • Remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well-intentioned • Be aware that even caring physical contact with a child or young person may be misinterpreted • Recognise that special caution is required in moments when you are discussing sensitive issues with children or young people • Be familiar with and operate within Hebron Evangelical Church's Safeguarding Policy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults • Allow yourself to be drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour • Make suggestive / derogatory remarks or gestures • Jump to conclusions about others without checking facts • Exaggerate or trivialise safeguarding issues • Show favouritism to any individual • Rely on your good name or that of the Church to protect you • Believe "it could never happen to me" • Take a chance when common sense, policy and practice suggest another more prudent approach • Ignore Hebron Evangelical Church's Safeguarding Policy • Leave a safeguarding issue to be addressed by someone else
IF IN DOUBT, ASK THE SAFEGUARDING OFFICER or ASSISTANT SAFEGUARDING OFFICER	

Useful Contact Names and Numbers

Organisation / Role	Name	Contact Number
Safeguarding Officer	Sally Pirie	
Assistant Safeguarding Officer		
Aberdeen City Council Joint Child Protection Team	Normal working hours	0800 731 5520
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Crimestoppers		0800 555 111
Police Scotland		101 or 999 in an emergency
31:8 (Normal Working hours)	Safeguarding for Churches helpline	0303 003 1111

Information the agency you contact would like you to provide:

Why you are concerned?

Is the child in immediate danger?

Are there other children who may be at risk?

Child's name, age, date of birth and address.

Names of any adults who have care of the child.

Who you think has harmed, or might harm, the child and when it may have happened?

How to respond to a child wanting to talk about abuse

GENERAL POINTS

- Above everything else listen, listen, listen
- Show acceptance of what the child says (however unlikely the story may sound)
- Don't ask questions in case you put words into their mouth. Reflect back what they have said to you if you need to clarify something.
- Keep calm
- Look at the child directly
- Be honest
- Tell the child you will need to let someone else know - don't promise confidentiality
- Even when a child has broken a rule, they are not to blame for the abuse
- Be aware that the child may have been threatened or bribed not to tell
- Never push for information. If the child decides not to tell you after all, then accept that and let them know that you are always ready to listen.
- As soon as possible write down what has been shared
- It is not your role to investigate. Hand over your concerns to the Safeguarding Officer.

HELPFUL RESPONSES

- You have done the right thing in telling
- That must have been really hard
- I am glad you have told me
- It's not your fault
- I will help you

DON'T SAY

- Why didn't you tell anyone before?
- I can't believe it!
- Are you sure this is true?
- Why? How? When? Who? Where?
- Never make false promises
- Never make statements such as "I am shocked, don't tell anyone else"

CONCLUDING

Again reassure the child that they were right to tell you and show acceptance

Let the child know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens (you might have to consider referring to the Social Work Department or the Police to prevent a child or young person returning home if you consider them to be seriously at risk of further abuse)

Contact the person in your church/organisation responsible for co-ordinating child protection concerns or contact an agency such as CCPAS for advice or go directly to the Social Work Department/Police.

Consider your own feelings and seek pastoral support if needed

MAKING NOTES

Make notes as soon as possible, preferably within one hour of the child talking to you. Write down exactly what the child said and when s/he said it, what you said in reply and what was happening immediately beforehand (e.g. a description of the activity). Record dates and times of these events and when you made the record. Enter the information you have gathered as a Concern Form on www.hebronaberdeen.org.uk/policy. Keep all hand-written notes, even if subsequently typed. Such records should be kept for an indefinite period in a secure place.

THE FOUR MAIN CATEGORIES OF CHILD ABUSE

Child abuse can be described under the following categories:

Physical Neglect / Failure to Thrive	Physical Injury	Sexual Abuse	Emotional Abuse
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Note that these four plus a further six categories apply to the abuse of vulnerable adults:

Financial	Domestic	Self-Neglect	Organisational	Discriminatory	Modern Slavery
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What is Child Abuse?

“Children may be in need of protection where their basic needs are not being met, in a manner appropriate to their age and stage of development, and they will be at risk through avoidable acts of commission or omission on the part of their parent(s), sibling(s) or other relatives(s), or a carer (i.e. the person(s) while not a parent who has actual custody of the child).” (Protecting Children: A Shared Responsibility, 1998)

Physical Neglect

When a child’s essential needs are not met and this is likely to cause impairment to physical health and development. Such needs include food, clothing, shelter and warmth.

A lack of appropriate care, including deprivation of access to health care, may result in persistent or severe exposure, through negligence, to circumstances, which endanger the child.

Signs of possible physical neglect:

- Constant hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Constant tiredness
- Poor state of clothing
- Emaciation/obesity
- Untreated medical problems
- Destructive tendencies
- Low self-esteem
- Neurotic behaviour
- Poor social relationships
- Running away
- Compulsive stealing or scavenging

Non-organic Failure to Thrive

Children who significantly fail to reach normal growth developmental milestones (i.e. physical, growth, weight, motor, social and intellectual development), where physical and genetic reasons have been medically eliminated and diagnosis of non-organic failure to thrive has been established.

Signs of possible non-organic failure to thrive

- Warning signs can be picked up in early pregnancy
- The first signs or suspicions are likely to be picked up by identifying a lack of parental care.
The child may appear:
 - pale and listless
 - unresponsive
 - developmental delays
 - repetitive behaviour, e.g. rocking backwards and forwards

Physical Injury

Actual or attempted physical injury to a child, including the administration of toxic substances, where there is knowledge, or reasonable suspicion, that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented.

Signs of possible physical injury:

- Unexplained injuries or burns, particularly if they are recurrent
- Improbable excuses given to explain injuries
- Untreated injuries
- Bald patches
- Withdrawal from physical contact – flinching
- Arms and legs kept covered in hot weather
- Fear of returning home
- Fear of medical help
- Self-destruction tendencies
- Aggression towards others
- Running away

Sexual Abuse

When any person(s), by design or neglect, exploits the child, directly or indirectly, in any activity intended to lead to the sexual arousal or other forms of gratification of that person or any other person(s) including organised networks.

Signs of possible sexual abuse

- Few or no friends of own age
- Inappropriate play with dolls and peer groups
- Having more money than normal (bribes)
- Low self-esteem
- Self-mutilation
- Sexually transmitted disease
- Running away
- Fearful of men, adults generally
- Suicide attempts
- Eating disorders

Emotional Abuse

Failure to provide for the child's basic emotional needs such as to have a severe effect on the behaviour and development of the child.

Signs of possible emotional abuse

- Physical, mental and emotional development lags
- Over-reaction to mistakes
- Continual self-deprecation
- Sudden speech disorders
- Fear of new situations
- Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations
- Neurotic behaviour (e.g. rocking, hair-twisting, thumb-sucking)
- Self-mutilation
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Extremes of passivity or aggression
- Drug/solvent abuse
- Running away
- Compulsive stealing/scavenging