

SAFE TO GROW

DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

The Church and all its appointed children and youth workers are committed to the protection of children from physical, sexual or emotional abuse.

Definition of Child Abuse

An abused child is a boy or girl under the age of 18 years who has suffered from or is believed to be at significant risk of neglect, physical injury, emotional abuse or sexual abuse.

An adult who has a position of trust or authority with respect to a child may perpetrate Child abuse. These adults may be the parents or carers of the child or any other person known to the child or family who may have contact with the child. A child may also be the victim of abuse where the abuser is another child.

Child abuse may be the result of direct acts towards the child by any of those mentioned above, or by the failure of those who have responsibility for the child to provide reasonable care, or both.

Categories of Child Abuse:

Physical the actual or Likely Physical injury to a child, or failure to prevent physical injury (or suffering) to a child, including deliberate poisoning, suffocation, or Munchausen's syndrome by proxy.

Emotional the actual or likely severe adverse effect on the emotional behavioural development of a child caused by persistent or severe and emotional ill treatment or rejection. All abuse involves some emotional ill treatment. This category should be used when it is the main or sole form of abuse.

Sexual the actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child or adolescent. The child may be dependent and/or developmentally immature.

Neglect the persistent or severe neglect of a child, or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold and starvation, or extreme failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the child's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive.

Organised Abuse

Organised or multiple abuse may be defined as abuse involving one or more abusers and a number of related or non-related children and young people. The abusers concerned may be acting in networks to abuse children, sometimes acting in isolation, or maybe using an institutional framework or position of authority to recruit children for abuse. They may use children themselves to recruit other children.

Organised abuse can be in a quasi-religious or ritualised form.

Spiritual where an adult with spiritual authority uses that authority to coerce, control or exploit a follower causing spiritual wounds

Although there is no statutory definition of 'significant' the word 'harm' is defined in The Children Act 1989 in Section 31 (9) as "ill-treatment or the impairment of health or development".

'Development' is defined as "physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development". 'Health' means "physical or mental health" and "ill-treatment" includes "sexual abuse and forms of ill-treatment which are not physical". For example, with a case of neglect it will be necessary to consider whether it involves actual or likely significant harm and whether it involves ill-treatment or impairment of health or development, in each case, as defined by the Children Act 1989.