



## CATEGORIES OF ABUSE

### CONTENTS

The purpose of this document .....	2
Defining Child Abuse .....	2
Physical Abuse.....	2
Emotional abuse.....	2
Neglect .....	3
Sexual abuse.....	3
Bullying.....	4
Cyber bullying.....	5
Hazing.....	5
Recognising Signs of Abuse .....	5
Handling a Disclosure .....	6
Report Abuse.....	7
Change log.....	8

## THE PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

All those involved in delivering aikido sessions to children have a responsibility to be able to recognise and respond to signs of child abuse.

Remember, it is not your responsibility to determine if abuse has occurred, but it is your responsibility to report and act on any concerns you have.

The Alliance has a separate guidance document on responding to concerns. However, there is a principle of “no delay” when responding to concerns. If you have immediate worries about the safety of a child then always dial 999.

If you are worried about something that is happening in the club then contact your club Welfare Officer. (If you do not wish to contact anyone in your Club then you can contact the Alliance’s Safeguarding Officer.

**PLEASE REMEMBER: If you have immediate concerns about the safety of a child then always dial 999.**

## DEFINING CHILD ABUSE

Any person may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in the family, in an institution, or in a community (including aikido) setting. Abusers are usually known to the child and can be adults or other children. If untreated, the effects of abuse can be extremely damaging and have a lifelong impact on the child. Abused children may feel useless or worthless, go on to become abusers in the future, find it difficult to have a meaningful and trusting relationship, or turn to drugs, prostitution or attempt suicide.

The types of abuse below refer to all settings and are not limited to the aikido setting.

### PHYSICAL ABUSE

This may involve:

- Hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, biting, or other physical harm of a child.

**IN AIKIDO PHYSICAL ABUSE MAY OCCUR WHERE THE LEVEL AND INTENSITY OF TRAINING OR COMPETITION EXCEEDS THE CAPACITY OF THE CHILD’S IMMATURE AND GROWING BODY, OR WHERE DRUGS ARE USED TO ENHANCE A CHILD’S PERFORMANCE.**

### EMOTIONAL ABUSE

This 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 include:

- Constant belittling, shaming or humiliation of a child
- Telling a child he is worthless, no good, bad or useless
- Constantly ignoring a child

- Not giving the child any signs of affection or physical contact (in the home setting)
- Exposing the child to violence or abuse by others
- Not allowing a child to express their views, or making fun of them when they do, or letting others make fun of them
- Imposing unrealistic expectations on them relative to their age or ability or preventing them from participating in normal social or age appropriate activities
- Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another and doing nothing about it
- Serious bullying or cyber bullying

There is a degree of emotional abuse involved in all types of child abuse, though it can occur alone.

**IN AIKIDO EMOTIONAL ABUSE MAY OCCUR IF CHILDREN ARE SUBJECTED TO CONSTANT CRITICISM OR NAME CALLING, SARCASM, BULLYING OR RACISM. COACHES OR OTHER TEAM MEMBERS MAY BE PUTTING UNREALISTIC PRESSURE ON THEM TO CONSISTENTLY PERFORM TO HIGH EXPECTATIONS.**

(Also see the Alliance’s Anti Bullying Policy)

## NEGLECT

This is the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in serious impairment of the child’s health or development. It may involve:

- Failure to provide adequate food, clothing or shelter
- Failure to protect a child from physical or emotional harm or danger
- Failure to adequately supervise children
- Failure to provide the child with adequate medical care or treatment

**WITHIN AIKIDO NEGLECT COULD OCCUR IF COACHES DO NOT RECOGNISE THE NEED FOR A CHILD TO HAVE A REST. IT COULD INCLUDE SUBJECTING THEM TO UNNECESSARY RISK OF INJURY EITHER THROUGH PUSHING THE CHILD TOO HARD OR BEYOND THEIR CAPABILITY.**

## SEXUAL ABUSE

This involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. It may involve:

- Rape or oral sex
- Masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of the clothing
- Enticing a child to watch sexual activities, look at sexual material or participate in sexual discussions

- Involving the child in the production of sexual images including photos, on line or videos
- Encouraging the child to behave in a sexually inappropriate way
- Grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet)

It should be noted that some individuals deliberately target sports activities in order to gain access to, and abuse children. Grooming may occur over several years before an individual makes his or her move. There is evidence within sports that some individuals have deliberately ignored governing body codes of practice and used physical contact within a coaching role to mask their inappropriate touching of children. Some people have used sporting events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photos or videos of children in vulnerable positions.

Boys and girls can be sexually abused. Men, women and children can be the abusers. The shame of sexual abuse often prevents children from coming forward. Unfounded accusations of sexual abuse are not common; if a child confides in you, take him or her seriously.

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## BULLYING (ALSO SEE SEPARATE ANTI-BULLYING POLICY)

This is not officially defined as a form of abuse but there is clear evidence that it is abusive and will include at least one, if not two, three or all four, of the defined categories of abuse above.

Bullying is deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. It can take many forms but the main three types are:

- Physical bullying including hitting, kicking or stealing from
- Verbal including name calling, homophobic or racist comments, threats
- Emotional including isolating them from the activities of their peers, or the rest of the group

The Alliance has a separate policy document called “Anti-Bullying”

The competitive nature of some styles of aikido can make it an ideal environment for bullies to operate in. Bullying may take place by the competitive parent who pushes their child too hard; by the coach who shouts at or humiliates children, or by a child that actively seeks to make sport a difficult or unhappy experience for others. If a child does well, other children are sometimes jealous and may bully the child. If a child does not do well other children may humiliate them or tell them they have let the Club or team down. If repeated over a period of time, this is bullying.

The Alliance and its affiliated clubs will not tolerate bullies at any level.

Alliance affiliated clubs will:

- Take the problem seriously
- Investigate all incidents
- Talk to bully(ies) and victim(s) separately

Then decide on appropriate action, such as:

- Obtain an apology from the bully(ies) to the victim
- Inform the parents of the bully(ies)
- If appropriate, ensure the return of items 'borrowed' or stolen
- If appropriate, ensure the bully(ies) compensate the victim
- Provide support for the coach of the victim if appropriate
- Invoke disciplinary measures if appropriate

Additionally, we will:

- Ensure the Club (and any teams) adopt and are aware of the bullying policy
- Ensure coaches, volunteers and officials are aware of how to deal with bully(ies)
- Ensure children are aware of what to do if they feel they are being bullied

## CYBER BULLYING

This is when a person or group of people use the internet, mobile phone, online games or other kind of digital technology to threaten, tease, upset or humiliate someone else. It is a form of bullying but because it happens online or on mobile phones can happen 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. A child cannot get away from the bully by going home, or going out, and it can feel as though there is no escape. It can be done anonymously by blocking the sender's details or setting up a fake account. Cyber bullying can also involve a lot of people and the child may feel as though everyone is ganging up on them. There is however always a trail, and children should be asked to keep copies of the e-mails, abusive texts and messages and seek help.

## HAZING

Hazing refers to any activity expected of someone on joining a group, or maintaining status in a group, that humiliates, degrades or risks emotional and/or physical harm, regardless of the person's willingness to participate. We know that hazing exists in schools, universities and in sports environments and need to be aware it could exist in aikido. Typical hazing activities include sleep deprivation, personal servitude, binge drinking and drinking games, being forced to wear embarrassing attire, carry out dangerous stunts and sexual assault. Hazing will not be tolerated and should be reported to the club welfare officer.

## RECOGNISING SIGNS OF ABUSE

Recognising child abuse is not easy. Most children will collect cuts and bruises as part of the rough and tumble of everyday life. Injuries should be interpreted in light of the child's medical and social history, developmental stage and the explanation given.

Most accidental injuries occur over bony parts of the body, e.g. elbows, knees, shins, and are usually on the front of the body. With the exception of the physical signs (bruising, bites, scalds etc.) you should primarily be concerned with changes in a child's behaviour. Some children may always have difficulty in interacting with other children.

Below are common indicators of abuse:

- Unexplained bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body
- Multiple bruises, in clusters, often on the upper arm or outside of the thigh
- Cigarette burns
- Human bite marks
- Broken bones
- Scalds with upward splash marks
- Multiple burns with a clearly demarcated edge
- Aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts
- Flinching when approached or touched
- Fear of being left with a specific person or group of people
- Reluctance to get changed
- Depression or withdrawn behaviour
- Saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone
- Sexual knowledge beyond their age or developmental level
- Dirty, smelly or inappropriate clothing for the conditions, or getting clothes torn
- Constant hunger – asking for or stealing food
- Pain or itching in the genital area or discomfort when walking or sitting down
- Sulking, hair twisting, rocking, fear of making mistakes, sudden speech disorders
- Fears of parents being approached for an explanation
- Developmental delay in terms of emotional progress
- Complaining of being tired all the time

If a child is being bullied or abused at the Club, in addition to the above, the following may be observed:

- Reluctance to go to training or events
- An unexplained drop off in performance
- Behavioural changes

This is not a definitive list, but should serve as a guide to assist you. Remember too that many children will exhibit some of these indicators at some time, and the presence of one or two indicators should not be taken as proof that abuse is occurring. There may well be other reasons for changes in behaviour.

Remember, it is not your responsibility to determine if abuse has occurred, but it is your responsibility to report and act on any concerns you have.

## **HANDLING A DISCLOSURE (ALSO SEE SEPARATE DOCUMENT “RESPONDING TO CONCERNS”**

If a child wants to talk to you, give him or her time and space; listen to them carefully – and in private if possible. Don't try and investigate yourself; don't question the child at length, or put words in their mouth. Reassure the child, and tell them that they are not to blame in any way.

Write down exactly what you have seen or heard; use the child's own words. Write down what you said to them as well.

Make it clear to the child that you will only be sharing the information they gave you with someone who can help them: don't promise to keep a secret – that might not be possible.

## REPORT ABUSE

If you see or hear someone being harmed or abused, or someone has told you they are being harmed or abused:

- In an emergency, don't wait – call 999.
- Do get medical help if they have been hurt
- Do call the police if you suspect a crime
- Do listen and reassure the victim
- Do preserve evidence (the police will tell you about this)
- Don't push for information about what happened

## CHANGE LOG

Date	Details