

Definitions of Abuse

Child abuse includes physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, as well as neglect, which is the direct consequence of a deliberate act or omission by an adult, and which has the potential or effect of serious harm to the child. (Oranga Tamariki Act)

SchoolDocs appreciates the review of these definitions and associated child protection procedures by **Safeguarding Children**.

Type of abuse	Definition	Examples
Physical abuse	<p>Any acts that may result in the physical harm of a child or young person.</p> <p>Physical abuse covers harm that is deliberate, as well as unintentional harm that results from a deliberate action towards a child.</p>	<p>Physical abuse can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bruising, cutting, hitting, beating, biting, burning, strangling, suffocating, drowning, and poisoning.• Physical abuse may also include a parent/caregiver exaggerating or deliberately causing symptoms of illness in a child, making a child think they are ill.
Sexual abuse	<p>Any acts that involve forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not they are aware of what is happening.</p> <p>Sexual abuse may be categorised as contact and non-contact abuse:</p> <p>Contact abuse is defined as activity involving physical contact (e.g. unwanted touching).</p> <p>Non-contact abuse does not involve physical activity (e.g. exhibitionism, verbal harassment).</p>	<p>Sexual abuse can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contact abuse: Touching breasts, genital/anal fondling, masturbation, oral sex, penetrative or non-penetrative contact with the anus or genitals, encouraging the child to perform such acts on the perpetrator or another, involvement of the child in activities for the purposes of pornography or prostitution.• Non-contact abuse: Exhibitionism, voyeurism, exposure to pornographic or sexual imagery, inappropriate photography, or depictions of sexual or suggestive behaviours or comments. <p>A precursor of sexual abuse may be grooming, which covers actions deliberately undertaken by an adult, adolescent, or child to befriend and influence a child (and in some circumstances members of the child's family) with the intention of achieving the criminal objective of sexual activity with children.</p> <p>Grooming behaviours can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sharing secrets with a child.• Engaging inappropriately with a child on social media.• Non-sexual touching, e.g. tickling, hugging, or rough play.• Allowing the child to break rules.• Spending time with the child away from protective adults.• Favouritism through giving gifts or money.
Emotional abuse	<p>Any act or omission that results in adverse or impaired social, psychological, intellectual and/or emotional functioning/development.</p> <p>Emotional abuse may also be described as psychological abuse.</p>	<p>Emotional abuse can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Patterns of isolation, degradation, constant criticism, or negative comparison to others. Isolating, corrupting, exploiting, or terrorising a child.• Being threatened with harm, called derogatory names, being humiliated, witnessing others being abused (including pets or other animals).• Exposure to family violence or intimate partner violence.

Definitions of Abuse (continued)

Type of abuse	Definition	Examples
Neglect	<p>Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, leading to adverse or impaired physical or emotional functioning/development.</p> <p>Neglect is the most common form of abuse.</p>	<p>Neglect can be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical (not providing the necessities of life, like a warm house, food, and clothing). • Emotional (not providing comfort, attention, and love). • Neglectful supervision (leaving children without someone safe looking after them). • Medical neglect (not taking care of health needs). • Educational neglect (allowing chronic truancy, failure to enrol in education, or inattention to educational needs).
Family violence	<p>Family violence is abuse against any person whom that person is, or has been, in a domestic relationship with (i.e. someone who is part of the same household).</p> <p>Family violence covers a wide range of controlling behaviours, commonly of a physical, sexual and/or psychological nature.</p> <p>Family violence typically involves fear, intimidation, or emotional deprivation.</p>	<p>Family violence can occur within a variety of close interpersonal relationships, such as between partners, parents and children, siblings, and in other relationships where significant others are not part of the physical household but are part of the family and/or are fulfilling the function of family.</p> <p>It can include child against adult, adult against child, adult against adult, and violence by someone against their other partner (see below).</p> <p>Common forms of family violence include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spouse/Partner abuse (violence among adult partners). • Child abuse/neglect (abuse/neglect of a child by an adult). • Elder abuse/neglect (abuse/neglect of older people aged approximately 65 years and over, by a person with whom they have a relationship of trust). • Parental abuse (violence by a child against their parent) • Sibling abuse (violence among siblings).
Intimate partner violence	<p>Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a type of family violence.</p> <p>IPV refers to any behaviour within an intimate relationship that causes physical, psychological, or sexual harm to those in the relationship.</p>	<p>IPV includes physical violence, sexual violence, psychological/emotional abuse, economic abuse, intimidation, harassment, damage to property, and threats of physical or sexual abuse towards an intimate partner.</p> <p>IPV is particularly harmful for children as the parent/carer may be diminished in their ability to meet their child's needs. IPV is strongly linked to serious neglect and other direct abuse towards children, such as physical and sexual abuse.</p>

Sources

Safeguarding Children

Oranga Tamariki | Ministry for Children: Definitions of abuse, neglect and harm

Ministry of Social Development | Te Manatu Whakahiato Ora: NZ Family Violence Prevention Strategy

Safer Organisations Safer Children: Guidelines for child protection policies to build safer organisations

NZ Family Violence Clearinghouse