

MBM TDC`s Guidelines on Reporting Child Abuse

I. Recognizing signs of abuse

It can be difficult to recognize signs of abuse and this is no simple checklist to help with this. You may become aware of potential warning signs but these should be observed and assessed carefully. Don't automatically assume that abuse is occurring.

Possible signs of concern regarding adult behavior:

- ✚ A person in whose presence a child becomes unusually distressed or agitated can be a cause for concern.
- ✚ A member of staff, volunteer or parent who asks a child to lie about anything –especially if it is about meeting that child – is a cause for concern.
- ✚ Any member of staff, volunteer or parent who asks you to lie about a situation involving a child – particularly if that child looks distressed – is a cause for concern.
- ✚ Any person who persistently fails to follow our organisation's Code of Conduct and behavioral protocols (detailed in the Child Protection Policy) is a cause for concern, particularly if their reasons are evasive.
- ✚ Private (i.e. outside of work) meetings between a child and a member of staff or volunteer are a cause for concern.

When you actually talk to the child concerned, you may find the situation is, in fact, quite innocent. However, do not dismiss significant changes in behavior, or any fears, worries or physical signs a child may be exhibiting. It is not your role to be an investigator – instead, report any concerns you may have to MBM TDC's designated child protection contact.

The chart on next may help to recognize when abuse is occurring.

<p>Possible signs of physical abuse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Bruises, burns, sprains, dislocations, bites, cuts <input type="checkbox"/> Improbable excuses given to explain injuries <input type="checkbox"/> Refusal to discuss injuries <input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawal from physical contact <input type="checkbox"/> Arms and legs kept covered in hot weather <input type="checkbox"/> Fear of returning home or of parents being contacted <input type="checkbox"/> Showing wariness or distrust of adults <input type="checkbox"/> Self-destructive tendencies <input type="checkbox"/> Being aggressive towards others <input type="checkbox"/> Being very passive and compliant <input type="checkbox"/> Chronic running away 	<p>Possible signs of neglect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Frequent hunger <input type="checkbox"/> Poor personal hygiene <input type="checkbox"/> Constant tiredness <input type="checkbox"/> Inappropriate clothing, e.g. summer clothes in winter <input type="checkbox"/> Frequent lateness or non-attendance at school <input type="checkbox"/> Untreated medical problems <input type="checkbox"/> Low self-esteem <input type="checkbox"/> Poor social relationships <input type="checkbox"/> Compulsive stealing <input type="checkbox"/> Drug or alcohol abuse <p>Please be aware that signs of neglect can be the norm when working with children in developing countries.</p>
<p>Possible signs of emotional abuse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Physical, mental and emotional development is delayed <input type="checkbox"/> Highly anxious <input type="checkbox"/> Showing delayed speech or sudden speech disorder <input type="checkbox"/> Fear of new situations <input type="checkbox"/> Low self-esteem <input type="checkbox"/> Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations <input type="checkbox"/> Extremes of passivity or aggression <input type="checkbox"/> Drug or alcohol abuse <input type="checkbox"/> Chronic running away <input type="checkbox"/> Compulsive stealing 	<p>Possible signs of sexual abuse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Age inappropriate sexualised behaviour <input type="checkbox"/> Physical indicators (general and in genital and anal areas) <input type="checkbox"/> Behavioural indicators (general and sexual) which must be interpreted with regard to the individual child's level of functioning and development stage

Sample report form for suspected abuse

If you become aware that a child's safety might be in danger, please complete this form to the best of your knowledge. Please note that child protection concerns must be reported directly to the designated contact person immediately (preferably within the same working day). You may wish to complete this form before contacting the designated person in your organisation's reporting process or you may wish to complete the report after contacting the designated person.

1. About You

Your name: _____

Your job title: _____

Workplace: _____

Your relationship to the child: _____

Contact details: _____

2. About the Child

Child's name: _____

Child's gender: _____

Child's age: _____

Child's address: _____

Child's guardians: _____

3. About your Concern

Was the abuse observed or suspected? _____

Is this concern based on first hand information or information divulged to you by someone else?

(If so, who) _____

Did the child disclose abuse to you? _____

Date of the alleged incident: _____

Time of the alleged incident: _____

Location of the alleged incident: _____

Name of alleged perpetrator: _____

Job title: _____

Nature of the allegation: _____

Your personal observations (*visible injuries, child's emotional state, etc.*)

[N.B. Make a clear distinction between what is fact and what is opinion or hearsay]

Exactly what the child or other source said to you [if relevant] and how you responded to him or her: [Do not lead the child. Record actual details]

Any other information not previously covered:

Were there any other children/people involved in the alleged incident?

Action Taken:

Signed: _____

Date: _____

This report is to be used as a tool to develop the most un-biased information-based report possible. For confidentiality reasons, the report should be written and signed solely by you. It should only be sent to the designated contact person. It will be held in a safe and secure place and treated in the strictest confidence.