

# PHYSICAL ABUSE

## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE



### What is physical abuse?

A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

*HM Government, Working Together to Safeguard Children, London, Stationery Office, 2023)*

### Examples of physical abuse:

- children being hit
- babies being shaken
- children being bitten
- deliberate burning with a cigarette end
- dunking a child in very hot water

### Possible indicators of physical abuse:



- **Bruising** - in unusual places, e.g. around the mouth or in unusual patterns, e.g. symmetrical bruises indicating a child has been gripped, or in particular shapes, e.g. fingertip bruising; belt marks
- **Burns/scalds**, especially in significant shapes such as an iron or cigarette end
- Adult human **bite marks**
- **Serious injury** when there is a lack of, or an inconsistent, explanation
- Untreated **injuries**
- Unusual **fracture**



*Indicators are given here as examples only. They may be present in different types of abuse. They do not tell you that abuse is occurring and can have other, non-abusive explanations. However they may alert you to the need to be aware of the possibility of abuse, to be observant and to record any concerns.*

### Children may be:

- unusually fearful with adults
- unnaturally compliant with their parents/carers
- wearing clothes that cover up their arms and legs
- reluctant to talk about or refuse to discuss any injuries, or fearful of medical help
- aggressive towards others

Your Parish Safeguarding Officer is: