

Irish Table Tennis Association Ltd

ULSTER BRANCH



Recognising Concerns Relating to Child Abuse

Co-operating to Safeguard Children 2003 and Children First Guidance 2011 formally recognise four types of abuse:

1. **Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse is the deliberate physical injury to a child, or the wilful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering. This may include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, confinement to a room or cot, or inappropriately giving drugs to control behaviour.

2. **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone. Domestic violence, adult mental health problems and parental substance misuse may expose children to emotional abuse.

3. **Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at or the production of pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

4. Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's physical, emotional and/or psychological needs, likely to result in significant harm. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate foods, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment, lack of stimulation or lack of supervision. It may also include non-organic failure to thrive (faltering growth).

In addition to these *Table Tennis Ulster* recognises that we have a responsibility to:

“protect children from bullying and to have policies and procedures in places to do so” *Co-operating to Safeguard Children DHSSPS, 2003*

Bullying

Coaches should challenge bullying in any form i.e. physical or emotional. Physical bullying can take the form of attacks, such as hitting, kicking, taking or damaging belongings.

Emotional bullying may be a verbal assault, including name-calling, insults, repeat teasing, sectarian/racist assaults, or it may take more indirect forms, such as spreading malicious gossip, rumours or excluding someone from a social group. Bullying is not an acceptable behaviour towards anyone at *Table Tennis Ulster* be they child, coach, volunteer or parent. Anyone found to be bullying others will be dealt with seriously both in regards to the behaviour exhibited and the reasons for the behaviour. This organisation has an anti-bullying policy in place.

Indicators of Abuse

The following is a list of some indicators of abuse, but it is not exhaustive;

PHYSICAL INDICATORS

Unexplained bruising in soft tissue areas

Repeated injuries

Black eyes

Injuries to the mouth

Torn or bloodstained clothing

Burns or scalds

Bites

Fractures

Marks from implements

Inconsistent stories/excuses relating to injuries

BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS

Unexplained changes in behaviour – becoming withdrawn or aggressive

Difficulty in making friends

Distrustful of adults or excessive attachment to adults

Sudden drop in performance

Changes in attendance pattern

Inappropriate sexual awareness, behaviour or language

Reluctance to remove clothing

It is not the responsibility of coaches, staff or volunteers to decide that abuse is taking place, but it is their responsibility to act on any concerns. They should report these concerns to the Child Protection Officer, following the procedures laid out in the Table Tennis Ulster Code of Ethics.