

# WHAT DOES ABUSE IN EQUESTRIAN LOOK LIKE?

for adults/officials

Abuse can feel and look different for each individual. Abuse can be shown in many different forms, in different environments and impact different people.

## Abuse can occur

- During a competition, in the warm up ring, at a squad training, as you walk the course or with your coaches at an event
- Training with your coach at home or at their facility
- During training weekends
- From an official or judge at an event

## It can occur between two or more people including:

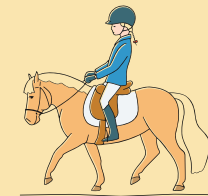
- Child to child
- Young person to child
- Young person to young person
- Adult to child
- Adult to young person.

A child might also experience abuse elsewhere, but feel comfortable telling someone they trust in the form of a coach, or someone from their squad.



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## DEFINITIONS



**Child:** someone who is involved in equestrian sport who is 12 years or younger – this is usually a rider but it could be a sibling or the child of an adult who is riding.



**Young Person:** someone who is involved in equestrian sport between the ages of 13 and 18 years old – this is usually a rider but could also be a sibling or the child of an adult who is riding.



**Adult:** someone involved in equestrian sport who is over the age of 18 – this may be a rider, official, coach, judge, staff, event organiser, volunteer and/or a parent.

# DIFFERENT TYPES OF ABUSE

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**Keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility**

1

## Physical Abuse

Any action that uses physical force that hurts a child or young person. This includes hitting, beating, kicking, shaking, scalding, strangling, poisoning, suffocating and biting.

2

## Sexual Abuse

Any behaviour that is of a sexual nature, and that makes a child or young person feel uncomfortable, threatened or scared, or is illegal. This includes physical touch and talking about sexual and private things in person or online, or showing someone videos or photos that are sexual or private, or asking someone to send private or sexual videos to someone else.

3

## Grooming

A type of sexual abuse, this can include:

- acting in a way that singles out a child or young person
- having one on one time with a child or young person
- looking for ways to be alone with a child or young person away from other adults.

It may occur between an adult and a child or young person or from peer to peer. It can feel like it is normal behaviour, but it doesn't happen to others.

4

## Emotional Abuse

The use of words or acts that can make a child or young person feel bad, sad, embarrassed, left out, worried, confused, shamed, anxious or threatened.

5

## Neglect

When an adult doesn't provide a child or young person with basic needs such as food, water, shelter, appropriate clothing, supervision, access to education and health services.

6

## Bullying

Bullying involves the inappropriate use of power by one or more persons over another less powerful person and is generally an act that is repeated over time. Bullying may include:

- verbal (name calling, put downs, threats)
- physical (hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting)
- social (ignoring, excluding, left out); and/or
- psychological (spreading rumours, stalking, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions).



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# WHAT MIGHT ABUSE LOOK LIKE?

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**We believe children and all competitors should feel safe, included, encouraged and supported**

## EXAMPLES IN EQUESTRIAN SPORTS

- 1** An official yells in an aggressive manner at a young person in the warm up as they are running late for their class.
- 2** A parent tells their child that their results are 'not good enough' and continues to yell at them for their performance.
- 3** A coach who touches a student's legs more than necessary when showing the correct leg position.
- 4** A parent continually singles out a young rider on their daughter's interschools team, commenting on how they are not good enough to be in the team and are letting everybody down.
- 5** A coach sends a personal text message to their student from squad late at night.

## BEHAVIOURS IN YOUR FRIENDS THAT MAY WORRY YOU

- 1** Unusually quiet or absent
- 2** Aggressive or violent
- 3** Not wanting to ride at squad or compete anymore
- 4** Bruising or other injuries
- 5** Not wanting to be alone with a coach anymore.

## THESE BEHAVIOURS MIGHT TELL YOU WHY

- 1** Experiencing neglect or abuse from a member of Equestrian Victoria
- 2** Experiencing bullying or harassment online
- 3** Experiencing abuse or neglect at home or in another place, such as school
- 4** In need of mental health assistance
- 5** Finding it difficult to participate due to feeling culturally unsafe, lack of inclusiveness, a learning difficulty or disability.

## BEHAVIOURS IN ADULTS IN EQUESTRIAN SPORTS THAT MIGHT CONCERN YOU

- 1** Being secretive and asking you or your friend to keep secrets
- 2** Favouring a certain rider in a group lesson
- 3** A coach is offering more one on one time alone, offering to take a young person to events without their parents
- 4** Officials, judges or coaches texting you about things not related to equestrian
- 5** Becoming friends with your parents and finding ways to spend time alone with you
- 6** Telling sexual jokes, asking about relationships or showing or asking for private images
- 7** Creating scenarios where physical touch is related, outside of normal sport related contact.



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# HOW YOU MIGHT FIND OUT ABOUT SAFETY CONCERNS

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## Disclosures

When a child or young person tells you about an incident that happened to them or that they were involved in. They are raising a concern with you.



## Allegations

When a child or young person tells you about an incident that happened to someone else. They are raising a concern with you.



## Suspicious

When you have a reason to suspect an incident of abuse against a child or young person, based on your observations, an instinct or gut feeling, their behaviours and indicators. You are forming a concern.



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# WHAT THESE CONCERNS MAY SOUND LIKE

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## **Somebody says:**

"I have done something I shouldn't have"

"That happened to me aswell"

"Can I tell you about something that happened to me?"

"I didn't like this thing somebody did to me"



## **Somebody says:**

"My friend told me something that I am worried about, can I tell you?"

"I saw that person do something to a friend of mine"

"A group of people have been doing something that makes me uncomfortable"

"A group of mums don't want me to be here"



## **You are saying to yourself:**

"I have done something I shouldn't have"

"That happened to me aswell"

"Can I tell you about something that happened to me?"

"I didn't like this thing somebody did to me"



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# SAY SOMETHING

If you have concerns about your safety or the safety of another child or young person, or have seen or heard something that just doesn't feel right, it is important you say something:



Speak to a parent, carer, family member or trusted adult like a coach, team manager, umpire, official or club representative.



Write down your concerns and send them onto your club or association via email or letter.



Email [mpo@equestrianvictoria.com.au](mailto:mpo@equestrianvictoria.com.au) to raise a concern.



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Keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility. We are committed to child safety. We believe children and all competitors feel safe, included, encouraged and supported.



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For any safeguarding queries email [ceo@equestrianvictoria.com.au](mailto:ceo@equestrianvictoria.com.au)  
Contact Kids helpline on 1800 55 1800 (it's free) or [www.kidshelpline.com.au](http://www.kidshelpline.com.au)