Despite the fact that bruising in active children is very common, it also is the most common injury to a child that has been physically abused. The younger the child, the greater the risk that bruising is non- accidental. .Bruises on children is a sign of physical abuse and this can lead to serious, and often long-lasting, harm – and in severe cases, death.

2. Why it matters

Bruises on Children

Live and Learn Sports

Safeguarding Children

Partnership 2020

Bruising occurs after a bump or injury which damages underlying capillaries and causes leaking and collection of blood in the soft tissue under the skin.

 Bruises in active children are common and often are considered "normal" childhood injuries. However, bruises may also be the result of physical abuse or some serious medical conditions.

1. Background

• The shins and the knees are the most likely places where children who are walking, or starting to walk, get bruised.

• Most accidental bruises are seen over bony parts of the body – such as the knees and elbows – and are often seen on the front of the body.

• Infants who are just starting to walk unsupported may bump and bruise their heads – usually the forehead, nose, centre of their chin and back of the head.

3. Information – Accidental Bruising



If a child has been seriously harmed you must treat this as an emergency and call 999. Any concern about bruising on a child should be referred to your schools / organisations DSL. In the absence of this person you may make a referral to the **Children's** Multi-Agency **Safeguarding** Hub (MASH) you should telephone **01709 336080.** **(Rotherham) This number can be contacted 24 hours a day**

7. What to do =

There are some patterns of bruising that may mean physical abuse has taken place.

 • Abusive bruises often occur on soft parts of the body – such as the abdomen, back and buttocks. • The head is by far the commonest site of bruising in child abuse. Other common sites include the ear and the neck.

• As a result of defending themselves, abused children may have bruising on the forearm, upper arm, back of the leg, hands or feet.

5. Information

Bruises in very young infants such as babies aged up to 9 months are very uncommon. This is because these infants are not yet mobile. As children begin to walk, bruises are seen more frequently. After 9 months of age, bruises commonly are seen on the shins & knees. Any bruises/injuries not in these common areas may be a sign of physical abuse. Remember to be aware of children who may have a diagnosed medical condition.

4. Information

RSCB

Rotherham Safeguarding Children Board –

 7-minute Briefing

• Have parents/carers been asked for an explanation & when was bruising first noticed?

• Is the explanation compatible with the bruising, case history and the child’s stage of development?

•Is the bruising in an unusual place?

6. Questions