

### What to do:

Where there is a sibling in the same school, teachers should discuss their concerns with each other to see if children of different ages in the same family are presenting similar symptoms. If they are, it is likely that more than one child in the family is affected. There are also circumstances under which a child will demonstrate his or her anxiety or insecurity by presenting symptoms of an illness that will allow them to stay at home. This may occur as a response to family problems, for example, as a reaction to a parent who is ill, who has been in hospital or, after a divorce or separation.

The school should consider if bullying could be responsible for the child's desire to miss certain lessons or school in general. Genuine illness is much more common than FII.

### Key Terms:

MUS (Medically Unexplained Symptoms) and PP (Perplexing Presentations) - A more common presentation than true FII is that of "Perplexing Presentations" or "Medically Unexplained Symptoms" that **primarily involves verbal accounts and descriptions by carer that are not aimed at deliberate deception**, or the carer may simply exaggerate genuine symptoms and signs.

Our DSLs are: Ann-Marie Kedzior (Lead), Carla Lawes (Lead), Krupa Nanda, Samuel Gregory, Emma Colley, Wayne Holder, Holli Elverstone and Kirsty Johnson.

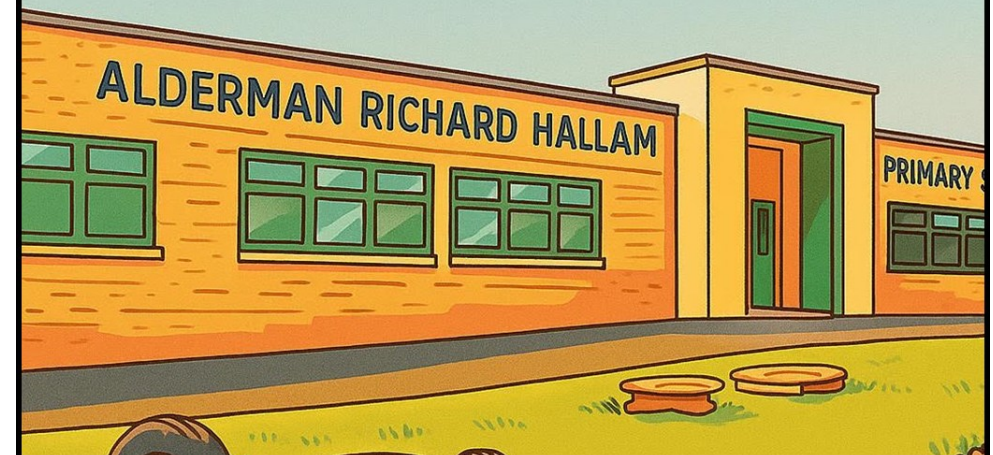
### For further information:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/fabricated-or-induced-illness/>



# FABRICATED OR INDUCED ILLNESSES (FII)

*Alderman Richard Hallam Primary School*



## What is FII?

**Fabricated or induced illness (FII) is a rare form of child abuse. It occurs when a parent or carer, usually the child's biological mother, exaggerates or deliberately causes symptoms of illness in the child.**

FII is also known as Munchausen's syndrome by proxy. Munchausen's syndrome, also known as factitious disorder, is a condition where a person pretends to be ill or causes illness or injury to themselves.

However, healthcare professionals in the UK prefer to use the term fabricated or induced illness, or factitious disorder imposed on another. This is because the term Munchausen's syndrome by proxy places the emphasis on the person carrying out the abuse, rather than the victim.

The term Munchausen's syndrome by proxy is still widely used in other countries.

## Behaviours in FII

The term FII covers a wide range of cases and behaviours involving parents seeking healthcare for a child. This ranges from extreme neglect (failing to seek medical care) to induced illness. Behaviours in FII include:

- a parent or carer who convinces their child they are ill when they are perfectly healthy
- a parent or carer who exaggerates or lies about their child's symptoms
- a parent or carer who manipulates test results to suggest the presence of illness – for example, by putting glucose in urine samples to suggest the child has diabetes
- a mother or other carer who deliberately induces symptoms of illness – for example, by poisoning her child with unnecessary medication or other substances

In over 90% of reported cases of FII, the child's mother is responsible for the abuse. However, cases have been reported in which the father, foster parent, grandparent, guardian, or a healthcare or childcare professional was responsible.

## Signs of FII:

The types of presentation include:

- Frequent and unexplained absences from school
- Regular absences to keep a doctor's or a hospital appointment;
- Repeated claims by parent(s) that a child is frequently unwell and that they require medical attention for symptoms which, when described, are vague in nature, difficult to diagnose and which teachers have not themselves noticed eg headaches, tummy aches, dizzy spells, frequent contact with opticians and/or dentists or referrals for second opinions
- The child's daily activities are being limited far beyond what you would usually expect as a result of having a certain condition – for example, they never go to school, can't join in with P.E., or have to wear leg braces even though they can walk properly
- One parent (commonly the father) has little or no involvement in the care of the child
- The child assumes a sick role (e.g. with the use of unnecessary aids, such as wheelchairs)
- Reported symptoms and signs found on examination are not explained by any medical condition from which the child may be suffering
- There is an inexplicably poor response to prescribed medication and other treatment
- New symptoms are reported on resolution of previous ones

The child may disclose some form of ill-treatment or might complain about multiple visits to the doctor. Either the child or their parent(s) may relate conflicting or patently untrue stories about illnesses, accidents or deaths in the family.