

Schuylkill Valley Community Library Reporting of Abuse Policy

Schuylkill Valley Community Library does not permit or allow abuse to occur in the workplace or at any activity sponsored by or related to it. In order to make this “zero-tolerance” policy clear to all employees, volunteers and staff members, we have adopted mandatory procedures that employees, volunteers, and board members must follow when they learn of or witness abuse.

- I. Sexual abuse takes the form of inappropriate sexual contact or interaction for the gratification of the individual who is functioning as caregiver and is responsible for the patients or child’s care. Sexual abuse includes sexual assault, exploitation, molestation, or injury. It does not include sexual harassment, which is another form of behavior that is prohibited by the Schuylkill Valley Community Library.
- II. Child abuse is when an individual acts or fails to prevent something that causes serious harm to an individual under the age of 18. This harm can take many forms such as serious physical injury, serious mental injury, neglect, or sexual abuse or exploitation.

According to the Child Protective Services Law (CPSL), child abuse requires acts or failures to act be committed **intentionally, knowingly** or **recklessly**.

For a current definition and indicators of abuse, please visit

<https://www.pa.gov/en/agencies/dhs/resources/keep-kids-safe/about-keep-kids-safe/signs-of-abuse.html>

Know the Signs

Physical Abuse

Physical Indicators

- Unexplained injuries
- Unbelievable or inconsistent explanations of injuries
- Multiple bruises in various stages of healing
- Bruises located on faces, ears, necks, buttocks, backs, chests, thighs, back of legs, and genitalia
- Bruises that resemble objects such as a hand, fist, belt buckle, or rope
- Injuries that are inconsistent with a child's age/developmental level
- Burns

Sexual Abuse

Physical Indicators

- Sleep disturbances
- Bedwetting
- Pain or irritation in genital/anal area Difficulty walking or sitting
- Difficulty urinating
- Pregnancy
- Positive testing for sexually transmitted disease or HIV
- Excessive or injurious masturbation

Behavioral Indicators

- Sexually promiscuous
- Developmental age-inappropriate sexual play and/or drawings
- Cruelty to others
- Cruelty to animals
- Fire setting
- Anxious

Mental Abuse

Physical Indicators

- Frequent psychosomatic complaints (nausea, stomachache, headache, etc.)
- Bed-wetting
- Self-harm
- Speech disorders

Behavioral Indicators

- Expressing feelings of inadequacy
- Fearful of trying new things
- Overly compliant
- Poor peer relationships
- Excessive dependence on adults
- Habit disorders (sucking, rocking, etc.)
- Eating disorders

Neglect

Physical Indicators

- Lack of adequate medical and dental care
- Often hungry

- Lack of shelter
- Child's weight is significantly lower than what is normal for his/her age and gender
- Developmental delays
- Persistent (untreated) conditions (e.g. head lice, diaper rash)
- Exposure to hazards (e.g., illegal drugs, rodent/insect infestation, mold)
- Clothing that is dirty, inappropriate for the weather, too small or too large

Behavioral Indicators

- Not registered in school
- Inadequate or inappropriate supervision
- Poor impulse control
- Frequently fatigued
- "Parentified" behaviors

Definitions

"Child abuse" shall mean intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly doing any of the following:

1. Causing bodily injury to a child through any recent act or failure to act.
2. Fabricating, feigning or intentionally exaggerating or inducing a medical symptom or disease which results in a potentially harmful medical evaluation or treatment to the child through any recent act.
3. Causing or substantially contributing to serious mental injury to a child through any act or failure to act or a series of such acts or failures to act.
4. Causing sexual abuse or exploitation of a child through any act or failure to act.
5. Creating a reasonable likelihood of bodily injury to a child through any recent act or failure to act.
6. Creating a likelihood of sexual abuse or exploitation of a child through any recent act or failure to act.
7. Causing serious physical neglect of a child.
8. Engaging in any of the following acts: manner that endangers the child.
 - Kicking, biting, throwing, burning, stabbing or cutting a child in a manner that endangers the child.
 - Unreasonably restraining or confining a child, based on consideration of the method, location or the duration of the restraint or confinement.
 - Forcefully shaking a child under one year of age.
 - Forcefully slapping or otherwise striking a child under one year of
 - age.

- Interfering with the breathing of a child.
 - Causing a child to be present at a location while a violation of 18 Pa.C.S. § 7508.2 (relating to operation of methamphetamine laboratory) is occurring, provided that the violation is being investigated by law enforcement.
 - Leaving a child unsupervised with an individual, other than the child's parent, who the actor knows or reasonably should have known:
 - Has been determined to be a sexually violent delinquent child as defined in 42 Pa.C.S. § 9799.12 (relating to definitions).
 - Has been determined to be a sexually violent predator under 42 Pa.C.S. § 9799.24 (relating to assessments) or any of its predecessors.
 - Is required to register as a Tier II or Tier III sexual offender under 42 Pa.C.S. Ch. 97 Subch. H (relating to registration of sexual offenders), where the victim of the sexual offense was under 18 years of age when the crime was committed.
9. Causing the death of the child through any act or failure to act.
10. Engaging a child in a severe form of trafficking in persons or sex trafficking, as those terms are defined under section 103 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (114 Stat. 1466, 22 U.S.C §7102).

"Sexual abuse or exploitation." Any of the following:

1. The employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement or coercion of a child to engage in or assist another individual to engage in sexually explicit conduct, which includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 1. Looking at the sexual or other intimate parts of a child or another individual for the purpose of arousing or gratifying sexual desire in any individual.
 2. Participating in sexually explicit conversation either in person, by telephone, by computer or by a computer-aided device for the purpose of sexual stimulation or gratification of any individual.
 3. Actual or simulated sexual activity or nudity for the purpose of sexual stimulation or gratification of any individual.
 4. Actual or simulated sexual activity for the purpose of producing visual depiction, including photographing, videotaping, computer depicting or filming. This paragraph does not include consensual activities between a child who is 14 years of age or older and another person who is 14 years of age or older and whose age is within four years of the child's age.
2. Any of the following offenses committed against a child:
 1. Rape as defined in 18 Pa.C.S. § 3121 (relating to rape).
 2. Statutory sexual assault as defined in 18 Pa.C.S. § 3122.1 (relating to statutory sexual assault).
 3. Involuntary deviate sexual intercourse as defined in 18 Pa.C.S. § 3123 (relating to involuntary deviate sexual intercourse).

4. Sexual assault as defined in 18 Pa.C.S. § 3124.1 (relating to sexual assault).
5. Institutional sexual assault as defined in 18 Pa.C.S. § 3124.2 (relating to institutional sexual assault).
6. Aggravated indecent assault as defined in 18 Pa.C.S. § 3125 (relating to aggravated indecent assault).
7. Indecent assault as defined in 18 Pa.C.S. § 3126 (relating to indecent assault).
8. Indecent exposure as defined in 18 Pa.C.S. § 3127 (relating to indecent exposure).
9. Incest as defined in 18 Pa.C.S. § 4302 (relating to incest).
10. Prostitution as defined in 18 Pa.C.S. § 5902 (relating to prostitution and related offenses).
11. Sexual abuse as defined in 18 Pa.C.S. § 6312 (relating to sexual abuse of children).
12. Unlawful contact with a minor as defined in 18 Pa.C.S. § 6318 (relating to unlawful contact with minor).
13. Sexual exploitation as defined in 18 Pa.C.S. § 6320 (relating to sexual exploitation of children).

"Bodily injury:" Impairment of physical condition or substantial pain

"Serious mental injury:" A psychological condition, as diagnosed by a physician or licensed psychologist, including the refusal of appropriate treatment, that:

1. Renders a child chronically and severely anxious, agitated, depressed, socially withdrawn, psychotic or in reasonable fear that the child's life or safety is threatened; or
2. Seriously interferes with a child's ability to accomplish age-appropriate developmental and social tasks.

"Serious physical neglect:" Any of the following when committed by a perpetrator that endangers a child's life or health, threatens a child's well-being, causes bodily injury or impairs a child's health, development or functioning:

1. A repeated, prolonged or egregious failure to supervise a child in a manner that is appropriate considering the child's developmental age and abilities.
2. The failure to provide a child with adequate essentials of life, including food, shelter or medical care.

Links verified on 8/28/24

III. Reporting Procedure -Staff reporting

- A. All staff members who learn of sexual abuse being committed must immediately report it to the library director, unless the director is the suspect, in which case the incident should be reported to the board president.
- B. If the victim is an adult, the abuse will be reported by this designee to the local or state Adult Protective Services (APS) Agency.
- C. If the victim is a child, the designee must report it to ChildLine at 1-800-932-0313. ChildLine is available 24 hours/7 days a week.
- D. As a mandated reporter, you must provide your name and contact information when making the call. After making the call, mandated reporters must follow up with an electronic report or a written report completed on the CY-47 form within 48 hours of making the oral report.
- E. As required by law, a mandated reporter who willfully fails to report a case of suspected child abuse is subject to criminal prosecution. In addition, if the mandated reporter is a member of library staff, the individual is subject to disciplinary action.

IV. Reporting Procedure - Patron

- A. All patrons who learn of sexual abuse being committed must immediately report it to the library director, unless the director is the suspect, in which case the incident should be reported to the board president.
- B. If the victim is an adult, the abuse will be reported by this designee to the local or state Adult Protective Services (APS) Agency.
- C. If the victim is a child, the designee must report it to ChildLine at 1-800-932-0313. ChildLine is available 24 hours/7 days a week.
- D. As a mandated reporter, you must provide your name and contact information when making the call. After making the call, mandated reporters must follow up with an electronic report or a written report completed on the CY-47 form within 48 hours of making the oral report.
- E. As required by law, a mandated reporter who willfully fails to report a case of suspected child abuse is subject to criminal prosecution.

V. Investigation & Follow-Up

- A. We take allegations of abuse seriously. Once the allegation is reported, we will promptly, thoroughly and impartially initiate an investigation to determine whether there is a reasonable basis to believe that sexual abuse has been committed.
- B. Our investigation may be undertaken by an internal team or we may hire an independent third party. We will cooperate fully with any investigation conducted by law enforcement or regulatory agencies and we may refer the complaint and the result of our investigation to those agencies.

- C. If the suspect is on staff, we reserve the right to place the subject of the investigation on an involuntary leave of absence or reassign that person to responsibilities that do not involve personal contact with individuals or students.
 - D. To the fullest extent possible, but consistent with our legal obligation to report suspected abuse to appropriate authorities, we will endeavor to keep the identities of the alleged victims and investigation subject confidential.
 - E. If the investigation substantiates the allegation, our policy provides for disciplinary penalties, including but not limited to termination of the individual's relationship with our organization.
- VI. Retaliation Prohibited
- A. We prohibit any retaliation against anyone, including an employee, volunteer, board member, student or individual, who in good faith reports sexual abuse, alleges that it is being committed or participates in the investigation. Intentionally false or malicious accusations of sexual abuse are prohibited.
 - B. Anyone who improperly retaliates against someone who has made a good faith allegation of sexual abuse, or intentionally provides false information to that effect, will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination.

Revised and approved September 2024