

LYCOMING COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM

CHILD ABUSE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

This policy is adopted to affirm the obligation of public library employees to assist in identifying suspected child abuse and to establish procedures for reporting such in compliance with the **Pennsylvania Child Protective Services Law under Title 23 Pa C.S.A. Chapter 63**

Child Abuse shall mean any of the following:

1. Any recent act or failure to act by a perpetrator which causes non-accidental serious physical injury to a child under 18 years of age.
2. Any act or failure to act by a perpetrator which causes non-accidental serious mental injury to or sexual abuse or sexual exploitation of a child under 18 years of age.
3. Any recent act, failure to act, or series of such acts or failures to act by a perpetrator which creates an imminent risk of serious physical injury to or sexual abuse or sexual exploitation of a child under 18 years of age.
4. Serious physical neglect by a perpetrator constituting prolonged or repeated lack of supervision or the failure to provide the essentials of life, including adequate medical care, which endangers a child's life or development or impairs the child's functioning.

No child shall be deemed to be physically or mentally abused based on injuries that result solely from environmental factors that are beyond the control of the parent or person responsible for the child's welfare, such as inadequate housing, furnishings, income, clothing, and medical care.

Duty to Report

Employees who in the course of their employment, occupation or practice of their profession come into contact with children shall report or cause a report to be made when they have reasonable cause to suspect, on the basis of their professional, or other training and experience, that a child they are aware of in their professional or official capacity is an abused child.

Privileged communication between any professional person required to report and the client of that person shall not apply to situations involving child abuse and shall not constitute grounds for failure to report.

Any person required to report suspected child abuse who, in good faith, reports or causes the report to be made shall have immunity from civil and criminal liability related to those actions.

A person or official required to report a case of suspected child abuse who willfully fails to do so commits a misdemeanor of the third degree for the first violation and a misdemeanor of the second degree for a second or subsequent violation.

Reporting Procedures

Employees who suspect child abuse shall immediately notify the senior staff member.

DO NOT ALERT the suspected abuser or accompanying adult of your intentions to report suspected child abuse to the appropriate agency.

Upon notification, the senior staff member shall assume the responsibility and have the legal obligation to report the suspected child abuse. The senior staff member may not make an independent determination of whether to report.

Oral reports of suspected child abuse shall immediately be made by telephone to ChildLine at (800) 932-0313. Oral reports may also be made to **the Lycoming Children and Youth Services at (570) 326-7895.**

The senior staff member shall notify the employee when the report was made to ChildLine.

Within 48 hours of reporting to ChildLine, the senior staff member shall make a written report on forms provided by the Department of Public Welfare (Report of Suspected Child Abuse [CY-47]) to the Lycoming Children and Youth Services, 200 East Street, Williamsport, PA 17701.

Investigation

Employees shall cooperate with the Department of Public Welfare or the county children and youth agency investigating a report of child abuse.

Internal Reporting

Notification of the oral and a copy of the written child abuse report must be submitted to the Library's Administrative Office.