

The following policy has been developed at the Warren Library Association (“WLA”) in order to protect our young people (ages 17 and under) from undue risk of verbal, physical, or sexual abuse or misconduct; and to protect staff and volunteers who work with children and youth from false accusations, and to protect our Library as an institution. This policy must be followed to allow our work with young people to be the best that is possible.

General Definitions

Child—an individual under 18 years of age.

Child abuse—conduct which falls within the categories defined by 23 Pa. C.S. § 6303.

Direct contact with children—the care, supervision, guidance or control of children or routine interaction with children.

Employee—an individual 14 year of age or older who is employed by WLA in a paid position that requires him or her to be responsible for the welfare of a child or has direct contact with children.

Volunteer—an adult individual who is applying for or currently holds an unpaid position with WLA who in the course of his/her duties at WLA may be responsible for the welfare of a child or has direct contact with children on a regular or repeated basis.

General Requirements for Employees

All current and future employees must be provided with a copy of this policy, and any subsequent changes to this policy, and must comply with any and all training that is required pursuant to Pennsylvania law.

All employees must submit to a Pennsylvania Criminal Background Check, Childline Child Abuse Clearance and FBI Criminal Background Check in accordance with the Pennsylvania Department of Health and Human Services requirements at the time of hire.

These clearances for employees must be updated every 5 years.

All checks and clearances will be paid for by the employee. After a period of employment of 6 months following the check and clearances, the employee may seek reimbursement of those costs from WLA.

An employee may not transfer clearances obtained for volunteer services. An employee may transfer clearances obtained through other employment services if they are current and the employee swears or affirms in writing that they have not been disqualified from employment under 23 Pa.C.S. § 6344 or convicted of an offense similar in nature to a crime listed under the same statutory section.

If an employee is arrested for or convicted of an offense that would constitute grounds for denying participation in a program, activity, or service, or is named as a perpetrator in a

founded or indicated report, the employee must provide the administrator or their designee with written notice not later than 72 hours after the arrest, conviction or notification that the person has been listed as a perpetrator in the statewide database.

An employee who willfully fails to disclose the information as required above commits a misdemeanor of the third degree and shall be subject to discipline up to and including termination or denial of employment.

WLA shall maintain copies of the required information, clearances, and checks and require the individual to produce the original documents in accordance with the Pennsylvania Department of Health and Human Services requirements at the time of hire. WLA shall keep these documents strictly confidential and shall not release any information contained therein to other individuals.

General Requirements for Volunteers

All volunteers must obtain clearances.

Volunteers who have been continuous residents of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for 10 years prior to commencement of their position need not undergo the FBI Criminal Background Check if they swear or affirm in writing that they are not disqualified from service based upon a conviction of certain offenses.

All volunteers must complete these clearances every 5 years.

Volunteers who have received the above clearances through their employment or other volunteer services need not obtain new clearances to volunteer at WLA so long as the clearances have been obtained in the previous 60 months. Copies of the volunteer's clearances must be provided to the Volunteer Coordinator prior to commencement of duties.

If a volunteer is arrested for or convicted of an offense that would constitute grounds for denying participation in a program, activity, or service, or is named as a perpetrator in a founded or indicated report, the volunteer must provide the administrator or their designee with written notice not later than 72 hours after the arrest, conviction or notification that the person has been listed as a perpetrator in the statewide database. A volunteer who willfully fails to disclose the information as required above commits a misdemeanor of the third degree and shall be subject to discipline up to and including termination or denial of a volunteer position.

WLA shall maintain copies of the required information, clearances, and checks and require the individual to produce the original documents prior to acceptance to serve as a volunteer. WLA shall keep these documents strictly confidential and shall not release any information contained therein to other individuals.

Mandated Reporting Requirements for Employees and Volunteers

Employees and volunteers of WLA who, on the basis of their role as an integral part of a regularly scheduled program, activity or service, accept responsibility for a child, are mandated reporters and are required to report suspected child abuse if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is a victim of child abuse. In addition, any employee who has direct contact with children in the course of employment is a mandated reporter. Finally, any individual supervised or managed by such a person as described above, who has direct contact with children in the course of their employment is a mandated reporter.

Mandated reporters must make an immediate and direct report of suspected child abuse to ChildLine either electronically at www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis or by calling 1-800-932-0313.

If the report to ChildLine is made via telephone, the mandated reporter must complete a written report of suspected child abuse by using form CY 47 within 48 hours. This report must be forwarded to Warren County Children and Youth Services. This form can be obtained at www.KeepKidsSafe.pa.gov. If the report is made electronically, no additional steps must be taken.

If a situation is occurring at WLA that constitutes abuse, call emergency services for assistance. Mandated reporters must still follow the above procedures to report the suspected abuse. An Unusual Occurrence Report must be filled out and turned in to the Executive Director immediately thereafter.

Mandated reporters must cooperate with any investigation that occurs as the result of a report of suspected child abuse.

This policy is subject to change at any time. If at any time this policy is not in accordance with current Pennsylvania law, said law shall supersede this policy.

Adopted By
Warren Library Association
Board of Directors
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