

# Reporting Child Abuse Reporting Policy of the Wilkinsburg Public Library

**Policy number: 109**

Date adopted: June 27, 2023

Replaces: All prior Wilkinsburg Public Library Reporting Abuse Policies

## **PURPOSE:**

To establish guidelines for reporting suspected abuse of children who come to the library

## **STATEMENT OF POLICY:**

Library employees are designated as Mandated Reporters in the State of Pennsylvania. This means that library staff are required by law to report any suspected abuse of children. If library staff (or any other mandated reporter) fails to report any suspected abuse they can be charged and can face legal penalties which can include fines and/or incarceration. As mandated reporters, you are required to report any suspected abuse, not just at your place of work. If any Wilkinsburg Public Library staff fails to report abuse that is obvious (on camera happening in the library or otherwise obvious) the library will recommend disciplinary action up to or including termination of employment.

If you suspect any type of abuse to be happening with any child, which is defined as anyone under the age of 18, you must report it. Child abuse is defined as both an act of harm and a failure to act to prevent harm to a child. You do not need to know the name of the person who abused the child to report it.

Some signs of abuse are unexplained injuries, inconsistent explanations of injuries, multiple bruises in various stages, burns, fear of going home, apprehensiveness, aggression, flinches easily, fear of a parent. Abuse can be emotional and not just physical.

All library staff are required to complete the mandated reporter training within 90 days of being hired. Staff must also complete the 3 hours every 5 years thereafter. We currently are using mandated reporter training available through the University of Pittsburgh Child Welfare Resource Center which can be found at the following web address:

<https://www.reportabusepa.pitt.edu>

When someone suspects abuse and a report is made in good faith, a reporter is immune from civil or criminal liability. The name of the reporter is supposed to be kept confidential.

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Mandated reporters are encouraged to report electronically on the Pennsylvania Child Welfare portal. The reporter will need a keystone ID or need to create a new account. Reports can also be made by calling Childline, which is Pennsylvania's hotline for reporting suspected abuse. The number is: 1-800-932-0313