

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

General Purpose Statement:

The Elyria Public Library System seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for the children who participate in our programs and activities.

Definitions:

For purposes of this policy, the terms “child” or “children” include all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years. The term “worker” includes both paid and volunteer persons who work with children. For purposes of this policy, “child abuse” is any action or lack of action that endangers or harms a child’s physical, psychological or emotional health and development.

Rules for Library Workers:

A criminal background and child abuse check is required for all employees, regardless of position. New staff members are required to submit to fingerprinting to receive state criminal investigation and child abuse clearances. Upon receipt of these clearances, they will be able to work with children in the normal library setting.

The background check authorization form and results will be maintained in confidence on file at the Library.

Two Adult Rule:

It is our goal that a minimum of two (2) workers will be in attendance at all times when children are being supervised during our programs and activities. Some programs may have only one adult in attendance during the session; in these instances, doors to the room should remain open, if possible, or there should be direct visibility at all times via a window, and there should be no fewer than three students with the adult teacher. We do not allow minors to be alone with one unrelated adult worker on our premises or in any sponsored activity.

Responding to Allegations of Child Abuse:

If an incident of abuse or neglect is alleged to have occurred at this Library or during our sponsored programs or activities, the following procedure shall be followed:

1. The parent or guardian of the child will be notified.
2. The worker alleged to be the perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct will immediately be placed on leave from working with children pending an investigation and instructed to remain away from the premises during the investigation.
3. Civil authorities will be notified, and the Library will comply with the state's requirements regarding mandatory reporting of abuse as the law then exists. The Library will fully cooperate with the investigation of the incident by civil authorities.
4. Our insurance company will be notified, and we will complete an incident report. Any documents received relating to the incident and/or allegations will immediately be forwarded to the insurance company.
5. The Library Director/designee will be our spokesperson to the media concerning incidents of abuse or neglect, unless he or she is alleged to be involved. We will seek the advice of legal counsel before responding to media inquiries or releasing information to the public. All other staff members, volunteers and board members should refrain from speaking to the media.
6. Any person who is not found innocent of the alleged abuse or misconduct will be removed from their position working with children or youth.

Medications Policy:

It is the policy of the Elyria Public Library not to administer either prescription or non-prescription medications to the children under our care. Medications should be administered by a parent at home.

Discipline Policy:

It is the policy of the Elyria Public Library System not to administer corporal punishment; workers should not yell, scream or threaten a child verbally or through gestures. Workers should consult with the management if assistance is needed with disciplinary issues.

Staff should never attempt to physically remove a minor from the library building or property. If a minor is behaving in an improper manner and refuses to leave on his or

her own, staff should attempt to contact a parent or guardian. If this is unsuccessful, the police should be called to deal with the situation.

Accidental Injuries to Children:

In the event that a child or youth is injured while under our care, the following steps should be followed:

1. For minor injuries, scrapes, and bruises, workers will provide First Aid (Band-Aids, etc.) as appropriate and will notify the child's parent or guardian of the injury at the time the child is picked up from our care.
2. For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple First Aid, the parent and/or guardian will immediately be summoned in addition to the worker's supervisor. If warranted by circumstances, an ambulance will be called.
3. Once the child has received appropriate medical attention, an incident report will be completed in the case of injuries requiring treatment by a medical professional.

Training:

The Elyria Public Library System will provide training on this child protection policy to all new workers who deal with children, and will strive to provide opportunities for additional training classes or events on an annual basis. All workers are strongly encouraged to attend these training events.

Additional Information:

While library workers are not specifically categorized as Mandatory Reporters of Child Abuse and Neglect in Ohio, any person who suspects that a child has suffered or faces a threat of suffering from abuse or neglect may report.

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services has launched 855-O-H-CHILD (855-642-4453), an automated telephone directory that will link callers directly to a child welfare or law enforcement office in their county.

Reports can be anonymous.

What information do I need to report?

- The name and address of the child you suspect is being abused or neglected
- The age of the child
- The name and address of the parents or caretakers
- The name of the person you suspect is abusing or neglecting the child and the address if available
- The reason you suspect the child is being abused and neglected
- Any other information which may be helpful to the investigation
- You have the option of giving your name or reporting anonymously. Giving your name can help the investigator clarify information. The agency will not give your name to the person suspected of abusing the child.

Please Note: All of the above information is not needed to make a report. If you are not sure you have enough information to report, always err on the safety of the child. Children Services screens all reports to determine if there is enough information to investigate.

What happens when a report is made?

In Ohio, after a report is made,

- A Child Protective Services investigator will interview the child, family members and others as deemed appropriate.
- The investigator determines if the child is being abused or is at risk for abuse.
- The case may be referred to local social service agencies, or to juvenile, family or criminal court.

What is a mandated reporter?

A mandated reporter is someone required by law to report if they suspect or know that child abuse is occurring. A list of mandated reporters for Ohio includes:

- Attorneys
- Audiologists
- Child care workers
- Children Services personnel
- Clergy
- Coroners
- Day care personnel
- Dentists

- Nurses
- Physicians including hospital interns and residents
- Podiatrists
- Psychiatrists
- School authorities, employees and teachers
- Social Workers
- Speech Pathologists
- Animal Control Officers/Agent

Approved by the Board of Trustees on July 11, 2022