Mifflin Community Library does not permit or allow neglect, abuse or sexual abuse or molestation 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 and volunteers, we have adopted mandatory procedures that employees and volunteers must follow when they learn of or witness sexual abuse or molestation.

Child abuse is defined as 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.

Child abuse has been defined as any of the following:

- Bodily injury which includes impairment of a physical condition or substantial pain
- Behaviors that result in exposing children to potentially harmful medical evaluations or treatment such as fabricating, feigning or inducing a medical symptom or disease (Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy).
- Serious mental injury which includes causing or substantially contributing to the injury through any act or failure to act or series of such acts or failures to act.
- Child abuse also includes the following acts in which the act itself constitutes abuse without any resulting injury or condition such as:
  - Kicking, biting, throwing, burning, stabbing or cutting a child in a manner that endangers the child;
  - Unreasonably restraining or confining a child;
  - Forcefully shaking, slapping or otherwise striking a child under one year of age;
  - Interfering with the breathing of a child;
- Knowingly leaving a child unsupervised with an individual, other than the child’s parent, who is required to register as a sexual offender, sexually violent predator or sexually violent delinquent. This also includes individuals who the parent reasonably should have known were required to register in one of the categories above.

- Causing the death of a child through any act or failure to act.

- Causing or creating the likelihood of sexual abuse or exploitation of a child through any act or failure to act constitutes sexual abuse.

- Serious physical neglect includes egregious behavior, meaning situations when the behavior might have only occurred one time, but is bizarre or unimaginable and created one of the circumstances that would fall under this category of abuse.

**Definition of Sexual Abuse or Exploitation:** Specifically, 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:
   
   (i) 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.
   
   (ii) 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.
   
   (iii) Actual or simulated sexual activity or nudity for the purpose of sexual stimulation or gratification of any individual.
   
   (iv) Actual or simulated sexual activity for the purpose of producing visual depiction, including photographing, videotaping, computer depicting or filming.

Consensual activities between two children, ages 14-18 are excluded as sexual abuse unless any of the following - which involve the use of force or coercion - were committed: Rape; Statutory sexual assault; Involuntary deviate sexual intercourse; Indecent exposure; Incest; Prostitution; Sexual abuse; Unlawful contact with a minor; or Sexual exploitation.

**Indicators of Sexual abuse**

There are a number of “red flags” that suggest someone is being sexually abused. They take the form of physical or behavioral evidence.

Physical evidence of sexual abuse includes, but are not limited to:

- Sexually transmitted diseases;
- Difficulty walking or ambulating normally;
- Stained, bloody or torn undergarments;
- Genital pain or itching; and
- Physical injuries involving the external genitalia.
Behavioral signals suggestive of sexual abuse include, but are not limited to:

- Fear or reluctance about being left in the care of a particular person;
- Recoiling from being touched;
- Bundling oneself in excessive clothing, especially night clothes;
- Discomfort or apprehension when sex is referred to or discussed; and
- Nightmares or fear of night and/or darkness.

**Reporting Procedure**

**Employees and volunteers who come into contact with children (i.e., mandated reporters)** are *required* to report immediately when they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child under the care, supervision, guidance or training of their agency, institution or organization, is an abused child. To report suspected child abuse, call Childline at 1-800-932-0313, 24 hours a day/7 days a week, or submit their initial report of abuse electronically using the Child Welfare Information Solution portal available on the Pa-pfa.org website.

After calling Childline to report suspect child abuse, mandated reporters must follow-up with an electronic or a written report on the CY-47 form - also available on the pa-fsa.org website - within 48 hours of making the oral report. All mandated reporters must submit their name and contact information when making a report.

*Any person* may make an oral or written report of suspected child abuse, which may be submitted electronically, or cause a report of suspected child abuse to be made to the department, county agency, or law enforcement if that person has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is a victim of child abuse.

All reports of suspected child abuse by mandatory reporters or any other employee or volunteer of the organization must also report to the Library Board President or Library Director.

**Investigation & Follow–Up**

We take allegations of abuse or molestation 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 abuse or molestation has been committed. Our investigation may be undertaken by either an internal team or we may hire an independent third party, or rely on the investigation of the PA Adult Protective Services Agency or similar authority. 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. 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. 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.

If the investigation substantiates the allegation, our policy provides for disciplinary penalties, including but not limited to termination of the actor’s relationship with our organization.
Retaliation Prohibited

We prohibit any retaliation against anyone, including an employee, volunteer, board member, student or individual, who in good faith reports abuse or molestation abuse, alleges that it is being committed or participates in the investigation. Intentionally false or malicious accusations of abuse or molestation are prohibited.

Anyone who improperly retaliates against someone who has made a good faith allegation of abuse or molestation, or intentionally provides false information to that effect, will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT OF ABUSE POLICY

I, ____________________________, acknowledge that I have received and read the neglect, abuse and sexual abuse or molestation policy immediately preceding my signature below. I understand that I am bound to follow the policy and understand the consequences in the event that I fail to do so.

____________________________  ___________________
Print name of Employee/Volunteer  Signature of Employee/Volunteer  Date

Date(s) of Annual Review(s) (employee/volunteer to write date in his/her own handwriting) (Add additional sheets if necessary).

1. ______________  4. ______________  7. ______________
2. ______________  5. ______________  8. ______________
3. ______________  6. ______________  9. ______________

Policy reviewed & approved on February 27, 2019 by the Mifflin Community Library Board of Directors.