



# Peters Township Youth Protection Policy

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Resolution: 04.01.19

Date of Adoption: April 22, 2019

## A. Statement of Purpose

Peters Township Council has adopted this policy for the purpose of protecting youth from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior as well as to protect volunteers and employees from false accusations of child abuse.

## B. Introduction

Peters Township desires to protect the youth in our community by providing them a safe and secure environment. Peters Township has a zero-tolerance for incidents of child abuse.

This document provides guidelines and establishes procedures for individuals who are responsible for a child's welfare or has direct contact with children as a result of their involvement with Peters Township. This includes, but is not limited to, employees, board members, volunteers, and contractors involved in youth programming on behalf of Peters Township.

## C. Background Checks

To be in compliance with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania laws and regulations, the following background screenings may be required:

1. Child Abuse History Clearance
2. Criminal History Clearance
3. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Fingerprinting

Individuals, age 14 and over, receiving financial compensation for their services shall complete all three background screenings including the FBI fingerprint screening.

Individuals ages 18 and over, wishing to volunteer, shall complete and pass the following background screenings:

1. The Pennsylvania State Police Criminal History Check
2. The Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance
3. Volunteers who have lived in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for less than 10 years shall have the FBI fingerprint screening

OR

Volunteers who have lived in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for 10 or more years the required affidavit shall be completed.

Required clearances and documents shall be submitted to the Township prior to any routine involvement with children. Clearances and documents shall be resubmitted every three (3) years.

All background checks resulting in a positive finding of child abuse, sexual abuse or molestation, shall result in that individual being permanently banned from working or volunteering for Peters Township or a Township sponsored youth program.

#### **D. Mandated Reporters**

Under Pennsylvania state law, all individuals who play an integral role in the delivery of a regularly scheduled children's program, activity, or service, are Mandated Reporters of child abuse. This statute applies to both employees and volunteers.

Mandated Reporters are required to make a report of suspected child abuse if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is a victim of child abuse. Mandated reporters shall make an immediate and direct report of suspected child abuse to ChildLine either electronically at [www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis](http://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis) or by calling 1-800-932-0313.

Employees that are Mandated Reporters shall also immediately report suspected child abuse to their Department Head or the Township Manager.

If an employee observes an incident of child abuse at a Township sponsored program or event, the employee shall immediately take the following actions:

1. Contact the Peters Township Police Department and file a report;
2. Contact ChildLine either electronically at [www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis](http://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis) or by calling 1-800-932-0313 and file a report
3. Notify the child's parent or guardian unless the parent or guardian is suspected as being the abuser
4. Notify their Department Head and/or Township Manager.

Details of the obligations of Mandated Reporters are available at <http://keepkidssafe.pa.gov/>

#### **E. Mandated Reporter Training**

Prior to the start of employment, all new employees who because of their duties of their job are designated as Mandated Reporters shall complete a Mandated Reporter training course certified by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services. Upon completion of the course, the prospective employee shall submit a certificate of completion. Employees shall be required to complete the certification course once every five (5) years.

Employees shall also certify that they have received, read, and comprehend this Youth Protection Policy.

Volunteers shall certify that they have received, read, and comprehend this Youth Protection Policy as well as information provided by the Township as to their obligation as a Mandated Reporter

#### **F. Supervision**

Supervision of youth, programs, facilities and individuals are designed to protect youth and staff at all times. Mandated procedures and practices to ensure a safe and caring environment include:

- a. Two deep adult leadership shall be maintained at all times. A minimum of two adults shall be present at all times. In addition to an employee or program volunteer, one adult may be a parent of a participant or another adult program participant.
- b. Adult employees or volunteers shall ~~will~~ never be alone with an individual youth where they are not observable by others.
- c. Program and departmental supervisors shall endeavor to make unannounced visits to youth programs to ensure strict adherence to this policy.

- d. Classroom doors should remain open unless there is a window in the door or a side window. Doors should never be locked while persons are inside the room. All storage, maintenance and utility doors shall be secured when not in use.
- e. Individuals shall utilize constructive methods for maintaining group control and managing youth behavior. Discipline should be constructive. Corporal punishment is never permitted. Disciplinary activities involving isolation, humiliation, or ridicule are prohibited.
- f. All adults shall respect the privacy of youth in situations such as changing clothes and taking showers. Adults shall protect their own privacy in similar situations

**G. Communication**

- a. There should be no one-on-one online or digital activities (games, social media, etc.) or electronic communications. Leaders should include or copy a parent or another adult program leader in all online communications, ensuring no one-on-one contact exists in text, social media, or other forms of online or digital communication. All communication (emails, social media, texting, etc.) with youth under the age of 18 shall be done in group communication.
- b. Adult employees and volunteers are not permitted to “friend” or “follow” any participant under the age of 18 using their personal social media accounts.
- c. While it is preferable to contact parents by phone, phone calls to youth are permitted to convey program or work-related information.

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have received, read, and agree to abide by the Peters Township Youth Protection Policy.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_