

RESOLUTION NO. 1 OF 2025
CONYNGHAM BOROUGH, LUZERNE COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING A NEW ABUSE AND MOLESTATION POLICY

Be it resolved by Conyngham Borough Council that the following Abuse and Molestation Policy is hereby adopted and replaces the one previously adopted on January 17, 2017 by Resolution No. 1 of 2017:

POLICY PROHIBITING THE ABUSE OR MISTREATMENT OF CHILDREN

- 1. APPLICATION OF POLICY.** This Policy shall apply to all Conyngham Borough (“Borough”) employees and volunteers. This Policy shall be referenced in all contracts with employees and volunteers that have contact with children.
- 2. PURPOSE OF POLICY.** The Borough has zero tolerance for abuse and will not tolerate the mistreatment or abuse of children in its programs. Any mistreatment or abuse by an employee, contractor, or volunteer will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or volunteer service. Further, the Borough will fully cooperate with law enforcement and child protective services throughout the investigation and resolution of mistreatment or abuse incidents.

3. DEFINITIONS. For purposes of this Policy:

“Abuse”- means endangerment of a child’s physical or mental health due to injury by act or omission, including the following:

(a) “Neglect” includes failure, refusal, or inability on the part of a caregiver, for reasons other than poverty, to provide necessary care, food, water, clothing, medical or dental care or shelter to seriously endanger the physical health of the child.

(b) “Physical Abuse” includes physical injury inflicted on a child by other than accidental means. Physical injury includes, but is not limited to, lacerations, fractured bones, burns, internal injuries, severe or frequent bruising, or great bodily harm. Conduct qualifying as Physical Abuse may include, but is not limited to, hitting, spanking, shaking, slapping, unnecessary restraints, pushing, or other forceful physical contact. In appropriate physical interactions include Full-frontal hugs • Kisses • Showing affection in isolated areas or while one-on-one • Lap sitting • Wrestling • Piggyback rides • Tickling • Giving gifts or money • Allowing a child to cling to an employee’s or volunteer’s leg • Allowing children, older than kindergarten, to sit on an employee or volunteer’s lap • Any type of massage given by or to a child outside of accepted and documented medical treatment • Any form of affection that is unwanted by the child or the employee or volunteer • Touching bottom, chest, or genital areas that is outside authorized and documented personal care assistance.

(c) “Verbal Abuse” includes language that is degrading or threatening, and includes verbal interactions such as name calling, insults, cursing, derogatory remarks, belittling, and shaming. Inappropriate verbal interactions include Name-calling • Discussing sexual encounters or showing sexual materials • Involving children in the personal problems or issues of employees and volunteers • Flirting • Secrets • Cursing • Off-color or sexual jokes • Shaming, belittling • Oversharing personal history • Derogatory or discriminatory remarks • Harsh language that may frighten, threaten or humiliate children • Derogatory remarks about the child or their family • Compliments relating to physique or body development.

(d) “Sexual Abuse” includes a wide spectrum of interactions with children including rape, certain physical assault, sexual battery, physical sexual contact, sexually explicit or offensive verbal communication, verbal sexual harassment, voyeurism, sexually oriented conversations, sexual intercourse or sexual touching of a child, sexual exploitation, exposing of genitalia, viewing of sexual activity, or permitting, allowing or encouraging a child to engage in prostitution.

(e) “Emotional Abuse” includes conduct that reasonably causes harm to a child’s psychological or intellectual functioning, which is exhibited by emotional damage such as severe anxiety, depression, withdrawal, or aggression. Emotional damage may be demonstrated by substantial and observable changes in behavior, emotional response, or learning, which are incompatible with the child’s age or stage of development. Emotional Abuse includes the following conduct: shaming, humiliation, and cruelty.”

"Child" or “Children”-means an individual or individuals under 18 years of age.

“Crisis” –means any occurrence that harms a child, threatens the public reputation or immediate financial integrity of the Borough, or that may create a situation of legal liability to the Borough or its directors or officers. Examples include allegations or incidents of suspected abuse including adult-to-children abuse, children sexualized behaviors, arrest of current or former employee or volunteer for child pornography, etc.

4. POLICIES.

(a) One-on-one interactions with children should only occur during programming under authorized circumstances. The purpose of this policy is to ensure the Borough clearly communicates expectations for employees and volunteers and gives examples of appropriate behavior when authorized one-on-one interactions occur. In those situations where one-on-one interactions are authorized employees and volunteers should observe the following guidelines to limit the risk of abuse or false allegations of abuse:

- Meet children in a public place where you are in full view of others.
- Avoid physical interactions and/or affection during one-on-one interactions at all costs. If physical interactions occur, ensure appropriate physical and verbal interactions align with this Borough’s established policies and are limited to the task at

hand. Immediately share the nature and extent of physical interactions that occurred during the one-on-one interaction with your supervisor after the interaction has ended.

- If meeting in a room or office, leave the door open or move to an area that can be easily observed by others passing by.

- Inform other employees, volunteers, and/or parents/guardians that you are alone with a child and encourage them to randomly drop in or pass by the interaction.

- To the extent possible, ensure one-on-one interactions occurring behind closed doors are scheduled in advance, take place in a room with windows or glass in the door, and/or are communicated to your supervisor.

- Ensure one-on-one interactions are documented, especially if behind closed doors. Keep documentation of these meetings (such as in shared calendar, case notes, etc.) and share with your supervisor.

- Document and immediately report any unusual incidents, including physical interactions, disclosures of abuse or maltreatment, behavior problems and how they were handled, injuries, or any interactions that might be misinterpreted or that made you uncomfortable.

- Information for Children: • Ensure that all children receive age- and cognitive level-appropriate information about boundaries. • Ensure all children know how to report any concerns. • Ensure all children know which staff they can talk to about safety concerns or reports of abuse. • Ensure all children are aware of one-on-one interactions policy and understand appropriate and inappropriate forms of physical and verbal interactions from employees and volunteers.

- Information for Parents or Guardians: • Provide parents or guardians with a Code of Conduct that includes policies regarding appropriate and inappropriate employee and volunteer interactions with children, behavioral expectations for children, and ways to report concerns or Code of Conduct violations.

(b) Borough supervisors and administrators use scheduled and random observations of all programs, program locations and buildings; engage in spontaneous and scheduled conversations with employees, volunteers, and children; conduct group and individual supervision and training meetings; and review program documentation, to ensure that safety standards are always in place.

Keep a record. Document your supervision visits. Include information like your arrival and departure times, which children and parents/guardians were present, and a summary of the information collected. Provide employees and volunteers with feedback about visits. The Sample Program Quick Check can be used for this documentation. Sample Program Quick Check Offenders need three things to abuse: access to children, privacy with children, and control over children. This quick check is designed to help

reduce an offender's opportunity to gain access, privacy, and control in our program. It can also be used to identify situations where one child could be alone with another child.

Access Employees and volunteers interacting with children are easily identifiable (ex. uniforms, badges, lanyards, etc.). Yes _____ No _____
Notes: _____

Employees and volunteers are actively engaged with children and appropriately supervising them (ex. children remain in line of sight; employees are not on cell phones, etc.). Yes _____ No _____
Notes: _____

Where applicable, children remain within designated program areas.
Yes _____ No _____
Notes: _____

Privacy Employees, volunteers, and children interact in open and observable environments (ex. one-on-one situations are limited; windows are not covered; unused rooms are locked; etc.). Yes _____ No _____
Notes: _____

Control Employees and volunteers maintain appropriate boundaries with children. (ex. Employees and volunteers give side hugs, use appropriate language, etc.). This applies to employees and volunteers interacting with children as well as children interacting with other children. Yes _____ No _____
Notes: _____

Please provide any other observations (such as policy violations that concerned you).
Notes: _____

Please provide constructive feedback for this program.
Notes: _____

Vary your observation times. Do not develop a predictable pattern of observation.

Drop in at different times each day. Occasionally leave and come back immediately. Arrive before employees and volunteers. Check punctuality and the routine that employees and volunteers follow to prepare for the children to arrive.

Survey the physical environment. Is this a suitable location for the activity (e.g., size of area for number of children, ability to supervise all areas used by children, landscaping that may inhibit supervision)?

Watch activities. Are they planned and organized? Are the employees and volunteers actively involved? Ask to see the schedule of activities and compare

with what is happening at a given time. Observe bathroom and locker room activities. Observe bathroom and locker room activities to ensure that the employees and volunteers are complying with the established policies and procedures.

Observe employees and volunteers' interaction with children.

- Do employees and volunteers use appropriate voice tones (polite, kind, calm, firm - if necessary) with children? Alternatively, do employees use inappropriate voice tones or seem overly agitated or stressed?
- Do employees and volunteers give positive reinforcement to children? Are punishments used or is the discipline method used in accordance with Borough's policies?
- Do employees and volunteers follow the guidelines for appropriate and inappropriate physical and verbal contact with children?
- Do employees and volunteers know the children by first and last name?
- Do employees and volunteers sound enthusiastic? Do employees seem apathetic or unable to engage with children?
- Do employees and volunteers set appropriate limits and boundaries with children?
- Do employees and volunteers interact with all children?
- Do employees and volunteers pay undue attention to any children?
- Do employees and volunteers listen to the children when they make reports or express concerns and then share those concerns with leadership?
- Are employees or volunteers preoccupied with their device or phone (including earbuds)? Observe employees and volunteers' interactions with each other.
- Do employees and volunteers pay more attention to the children than to each other?
- Are employees and volunteers spread out and monitoring the entire facility?
- Do employees and volunteers know who is supervising which children?
- Do employees and volunteers communicate to each other when one must leave the area?
- Do employees and volunteers use polite voice tones with one another?
- Do employees and volunteers share responsibilities around the program?

Observe employees and volunteers' interactions with parents/guardians.

- Do employees and volunteers greet the parents/guardians?
- Do employees and volunteers know the parents/guardians by name?
- Do employees and volunteers provide adequate information to the parents/guardians?
- Do employees and volunteers ask parents/guardians if they have any questions?
- Do employees and volunteers spend too much time with any specific parent/guardian?

Ask parents/guardians questions, such as:

- Are you satisfied with the care your child is receiving here?
- What can we do to make it better?

- Does your child ever say anything about his or her (title of employees and volunteers)?
- Have employees and volunteers ever contacted you or your child about anything other than the program?
- Do you ever have a chance to observe your child at the program?
- What does your child say about the time he/she spends here?

Ask employees and volunteers how they would respond to “what if” situations that you describe, such as:

- A child is not picked up by a parent/guardian at the end of the program
- Another employee or volunteer shakes a child for hitting another child
- A parent/guardian confides in you that he/she thinks one of the employees or volunteers does not have appropriate boundaries with child.

(c) The Borough requires that employees and high-access volunteers are trained on the following foundational abuse prevention topics prior to having access to children:

- The Borough’s policies related to preventing and responding to abuse;
- How to maintain appropriate boundaries with children;
- Definitions of abuse;
- Facts about sexual abuse;
- How abuse happens in Boroughs;
- Information about sexual grooming;
- How to manage high-risk activities (i.e., bathroom and locker room activities, diapering and toileting, transportation, camps, etc.);
- How to prevent false allegations;
- How to recognize and respond to suspicious or inappropriate behaviors and policy violations; and
- How to recognize and respond to suspicions or allegations of abuse

All employees and high-access volunteers will receive this training upon hire and prior to having access to children. The Borough keeps documentation of training records for all employees and high-access volunteers.

(d) Responding to Suspicious or Inappropriate Behaviors. Creating a safe environment and responding to suspicious or inappropriate behaviors is an Borough’s first line of defense against abuse. Suspicious or inappropriate behaviors can include policy violations, boundary violations, and red flag behaviors that mimic the way an offender typically interacts with children. Training should include information on how to respond to suspicious or inappropriate behaviors within an Borough, including:

- Definitions of appropriate and inappropriate boundaries;
- How to recognize red flags and boundary violations;
- High-risk circumstances for boundary violations;
- Steps for how employees and volunteers should respond to boundary violations, suspicious or inappropriate interactions, or policy violations;

- How to prevent false allegations; and
- Recognition of how children display trauma, distress, or signs of abuse.

Responding to Allegations or Incidents of Abuse Training should include information on how to respond to allegations or incidents of abuse within an Borough, including:

- Why reporting suspected abuse or neglect is critical.
- Who is a mandated reporter of suspected abuse and neglect.
- What types of conduct must be reported.
- The responsibilities of a mandated reporter.
- How to respond if a child discloses abuse or neglect.
- Concepts of abuse as trauma and how trauma is displayed in children.

(e) Generally, children under the age of 12 should not be alone in the facility without a parent/guardian present. After the age of 12, most children have participated in activities without immediate parental/guardian supervision. However, each program is responsible for all children in the facility, including vulnerable adults. Specific needs for each population vary (youth, adolescents, teens, and vulnerable adults). For example, although vulnerable adults may not need constant supervision, employees and volunteers should have awareness and guidance as to where they are and what activities they are engaged in. The following practices help maintain appropriate monitoring and supervision for children of all ages and abilities:

1. Require a children or parent/guardian to complete forms as required by the Borough which includes identifying information, any special medical or behavioral circumstances, any legal indemnifications, any applicable plan of support for the children, the children's date of birth, who the children can be released to if not the parent/guardian and emergency contact information. In addition, require all children to sign-in AND sign-out of the facilities so that the program has a record of the children who are in the facility.

2. Require children to sign a Code of Conduct that outlines the program's behavioral expectations and policies regarding appropriate and inappropriate interactions. This Code of Conduct should also include a progressive discipline policy which explains that children will be suspended or dismissed from the program for policy violations. Require parents/guardians to sign this Code of Conduct as well, so that they are aware of the program's polices and progressive discipline policy. If the children are a guest of a program member, the visiting children must sign the Code of Conduct.

3. Encourage parents/guardians to attend an information session with a designated employee to review program expectations and requirements, any applicable plan of support the children may need to have in place; and establish a working relationship between employees/volunteers and parents/guardians. This can be helpful if any problems arise in the future.

4. While in the facilities or off-site for program activities, children can be supervised directly, indirectly, or with a combination of the two techniques where age and developmentally appropriate.

- o For direct supervision, the program may offer structured, scheduled activities like basketball tournaments, swimming activities, arts, and crafts, etc. These activities should have one or more employees assigned to lead and supervise.

- o For indirect supervision, the program must designate certain building areas as authorized areas for children (such as a gymnasium, a game area, or a classroom for doing homework).

- o Authorized areas must be easily visible and routinely and randomly checked by employees and volunteers. Children should know that they will always be supervised, and all employees and volunteers should know which areas are authorized and which are not.

5. Develop supervision best practices for the authorized areas. For example:

- o Determine how frequently authorized areas should be monitored including random checks.

- o Assign employee and volunteer-specific supervision responsibilities over authorized areas.

- o Require employees to record when they monitor authorized areas and document and report any unusual or concerning findings.

6. All program employees and volunteers should wear nametags or identifying clothing so that the children can easily recognize them as employees and volunteers.

7. Train all employees and volunteers to:

- o Greet children that enter the facility; direct them to the structured activities or authorized areas; and redirect children not in an authorized area or not participating in a structured activity.

- o Be aware that free and unstructured activities can include transitional times, such as waiting for transportation.

- o Be aware of the risks involved with mixing age groups and developmental levels and how to monitor activities and conversations involving mixed levels – including increasing supervision when necessary.
- o Routinely monitor high risk areas (such as bathrooms, locker rooms, and unused rooms).

Designate specific employees to supervise these areas (i.e., Managers on Duty) and document the scheduled and random sweeps of high risk locations.

Ultimately, children must always be supervised, regardless of age or developmental level. The key is to remember that children can be supervised directly in structured activities and indirectly when they are in authorized areas.

(f) One-on-one Interactions. Most abuse occurs when an adult is alone with a child, or when a child is alone with another children. Our Borough aims to eliminate or reduce these situations and prohibits private one-on-one interactions unless approved in advance by the Borough administration. If you observe one-on-one interactions between employees and children, you should report this to your supervisor, the Borough Manager, or a member of Borough Council. Below is a sample requiring the Rule of Three on any electronic communication with children. All communication between employees/volunteers and children must be approved by a children's parents/guardians and must be in an open electronic environment. The "Rule of Three" must be observed in all electronic communications between children and employees/volunteers. For example, there should be two employees/volunteers included on text messages and emails with children. Direct, private messaging between children and employees/volunteers is not allowed. Children will comply with the Borough's policies governing the use of cell phones. Children are not permitted to access or share cell phones with other children while in programming.

(g) Bullying. The Borough will not tolerate the mistreatment or abuse of one child by another child. Bullying is aggressive behavior that is intentional, repeated over time, and involves an imbalance of power or strength. Bullying can take on various forms including:

1. Physical bullying – when one person engages in physical force against another person, such as by hitting, punching, pushing, kicking, pinching, or restraining another.

2. Verbal bullying – when someone uses their words to hurt another, such as by belittling or calling another hurtful name.

3. Nonverbal or relational bullying – when one person manipulates a relationship or desired relationship to harm another person. This includes social exclusion, friendship manipulation, or gossip. This type of bullying also includes intimidating another person by using gestures.

4. Cyberbullying – the intentional and overt act of aggression toward another person by way of any technological tool, such as email, instant messages, text messages, digital pictures or images, or website postings (including blogs). Cyberbullying can involve:

- i. Sending mean, vulgar, or threatening messages or images.
- ii. Posting sensitive, private information about another person.
- iii. Pretending to be someone else in order to make that person look bad.

- iv. Intentionally excluding someone from an online group.
- v. Hazing – an activity expected of someone joining or participating in a group that humiliates, degrades, abuses, or endangers that person regardless of that person’s willingness to participate.
- vi. Sexualized bullying – when bullying involves behaviors that are sexual in nature. Examples of sexualized bullying behaviors include sexting, exposing private body parts, creating or sharing images or videos involving private body parts or sexualized material (including artificially generated materials), and utilizing sexualized language or innuendos. Anyone who sees an act of bullying, and who then encourages it, is engaging in bullying. This applies to all children, employees, and volunteers. Engaging or participating in bullying will result in disciplinary action, up to and including, dismissal from the program. Parents/guardians will be notified as appropriate.

(h) Reporting Because the Borough is dedicated to maintaining zero tolerance for abuse, it is imperative that everyone, including children, actively participate in creating a safe environment. If any employee, volunteer, or children observes suspicious or inappropriate behaviors and/or policy violations by an employee, volunteer, or other children, that person must report their observations. The policies apply to everyone. Reports will be taken seriously and investigated in the manner described in this policy. Examples of Suspicious or Inappropriate Behaviors Between Employees/Volunteers and Children:

- Violation of this policy or any abuse prevention policies outlined by the Borough.
- Seeking private time or one-on-one time with children(s).
- Privately communicating with children(s) via electronic communication or social media
- Buying gifts for individual children(s) or their parents
- Making suggestive comments to children(s)
- Picking favorite children. Children are encouraged to report concerns or complaints about employees, volunteers, or other children to a supervisor who can be reached by calling the Borough Building.

(i) Policy Requiring Confidentiality of Reports. The Borough will protect the confidentiality of anyone who reports allegations or disclosures of abuse, or other violations of law or policy to the extent possible under law. Legal and civil authorities (police, child, or adult protective services) may require confidential information in order to investigate any report of illegal conduct, but this does not eliminate the requirement to maintain confidentiality within the Borough and its employees, volunteers, and children. The Borough will provide written communication of any changes to this policy to all employees, volunteers, children, and parents/guardians.

The Borough is committed to creating a safe environment for our employees, volunteers, and especially our children and their parent/guardians. For that reason, we

will treat every concern or complaint with the utmost seriousness and provide a timely, thorough, and objective response in every instance. When an individual shares a concern or complaint they will be:

1. Given the time and attention necessary to allow them to share their thoughts in person, if they feel comfortable doing so.
2. Thanked for sharing their concerns with the Borough and for contributing to maintaining a healthy and safe environment for everyone.
3. Advised that their concern is being taken seriously and that action will be taken.
4. Reassured that they have done the right thing by reporting and that their communication is valued.
5. Informed, in general statements, of the steps that the Borough will take in addressing the matter.
6. Given contact information for someone in the Borough with whom they can contact should they become aware of additional information.
7. Provided regular updates of how the process is advancing.
8. Protected by the Borough from any form of retaliation to the extent possible.

While the Borough hopes that its employees and volunteers feel that they can openly communicate any concerns, complaints, or grievances directly to someone in the Borough, the Borough understands that doing so can often be difficult. Because it is important to the Borough that everyone be able to share their concerns, the Borough will provide the following mechanisms through which you can make an anonymous report: The following is a list of anonymous reporting methods:

1. A mailbox, located at the Borough Building, which will be checked every other day by the Borough Manager.
2. An anonymous online form that you can find and submit on the Borough's webpage.
3. A reporting line you can reach by calling the Borough Building. Please keep in mind that the Borough's ability to respond quickly and adequately may be affected if the information provided is limited. However, the Borough is committed to responding to all anonymous concerns to the extent possible.

(j) Guidance for Collecting Data Relevant to Abuse Prevention. Strong internal feedback systems leverage various types of data to identify high-risk activities, individuals, or

programs and the overall Borough climate for reporting. Data (including incident reports, survey results, turnover or discharges, children and parent/guardian complaints, and employee or volunteer reported concerns) can provide valuable information for a wide variety of considerations, such as identification of programs that may require additional monitoring or resources, or about individuals who may require increased supervision or training. It may also alert decision makers about changes that need to be made to reduce potential exposures. Finally, data from like programs and trends over time may show where additional abuse risk management efforts are necessary. The Borough has data collection systems that can help identify risk. The key is to identify available opportunities for collecting data and begin to look for red flags of concern or abuse risk. Data relevant to the prevention and detection of abuse can be collected from the following items:

- Incident reports
- Injury reports
- Physical restraint/de-escalation reports (if applicable)
- Satisfaction and/or feedback surveys from employees, volunteers, parents/guardians, and children
- Turnover or retention of employees, volunteers, and children
- Employee and volunteer exit interviews
- Complaints from children, parents/guardians, and other stakeholders
- Reported concerns from employees, volunteers, children, and parents/guardians
- Licensing violations
- Internal quality improvement audits and/or case reviews
- Monitoring visits or calls to programs and/or specific activities

Regarding the prevention and detection of abuse, incident reports should include the following documentation of data:

- Date and time of incident
- Location of incident
- Type of incident (bullying and hazing, children sexualized behavior, adult to children abuse, adult to children boundary violation, general injury, property destruction, verbal assault, physical assault, etc.)
- Names of children and other individuals involved in the incident
- Names and positions of employees present during incident (or disclosure of incident)
- Names of witnesses present during incident
- Immediate actions taken by employee or volunteer
- How the incident was resolved
- Next steps taken by supervisor or administrators
- Who was notified internally; when and how they were notified
- Who was notified externally (i.e., police, abuse hotline, parents/guardians, etc.) and when and how they were notified (i.e., phone call, email, online form)
- Reference numbers (if applicable) for calls to hotlines or law enforcement
- Identification of necessary corrective action to prevent a recurrence
- Signatures of key administrators who have reviewed the report
- Ongoing documentation of any new information that arises after the initial incident and investigation results

(k) Procedure for Supervisors and Administrators Responding to Allegations or Incidents of Abuse. As required by mandated reporting laws, employees and volunteers must report any suspected abuse or neglect of a children—whether on or off Borough property or whether perpetrated by employees, volunteers, or others—to state authorities. Reports may be made confidentially or anonymously. A person who mistakenly reports suspected abuse is immune from civil or criminal liability if the report was made in good faith and without malice. *Refer to state specific mandated reporting requirements for definitions of abuse, good faith reporting, and more specific reporting information. For a complete list of each state’s mandated reporting requirements and contact information, please see the RAINN State Law Database for reporting child abuse: RAINN | Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network <https://apps.rainn.org/policy/compare/children.cfm> Guidelines for supervisors and administrators responding to allegations or incidents of abuse:

- First, determine if the children is still in danger and if so, take immediate steps to prevent any further harm.
- If receiving a report from an employee or volunteer, be sure to verify they have followed mandated reporting requirements or

will follow immediately after making an internal report. Be available to support the employee or volunteer making the report, including making the call to the appropriate authorities with them. • Report to any applicable external licensing or governing bodies. • Gather as much information about the allegation as you can. For example, who made the report, who was allegedly abused, who was the alleged abuser, what was the nature of the alleged abuse, where and when did the alleged abuse occur, etc. • Accurately record everything you learn in as much detail as you can. Remember your notes may be read by others. Stick to the facts. • If you were the one to witness the incident of abuse or hear the initial allegation, contact the appropriate local authorities as indicated by your mandatory reporting procedures. Make sure you get a case number and the name and contact information of the person with whom you speak at the reporting agency. • If the alleged abuse involves an employee or volunteer, notify your crisis management team, and follow your crisis management plan. • Suspend the accused employee or volunteer until the investigation is completed. • Ensure that the children’s parents/guardians are notified (when applicable). The parents/guardians of the children should always be notified if a boundary violation or abuse occurred from an employee or volunteer or another child. If the abuse concern is about a parent/guardian, then it may not be appropriate to inform them that a report is being made. • Deploy communication plan according to the crisis management plan. • Provide resources for survivors, families, and other stakeholders.

(I) Crisis Management Plan:

- Key Crisis Management Objectives
- Prioritize children protection, safety, support, and comfort.
- Be proactive, timely, transparent, accurate, consistent, and unified in the messages presented internally and to media, stakeholders, and the public.
 - Maintain strong relationships with various stakeholders.
 - Evaluate the Borough’s policies and protocols and demonstrate to stakeholders and the public how the Borough is evolving to correct past challenges and improve the Borough’s safeguarding efforts.
- Prepare for a potential crisis year-round, not just when one occurs. Prior to Allegation/Incident
 - Determine who from the Borough will be on the Crisis Management team.
 - Educate all employees and volunteers on what to do if someone alleges current or historical abuse involving a children, employee, or volunteer of the Borough.
 - All employees and volunteers should know how to fulfill their duties as mandated reporters (if they are mandated reporters according to state law).
 - All employees and volunteers should be trained on how to complete the appropriate incident forms for the Borough. Once Allegation/Incident Occurs Secure Immediate Safety and Minimize Access
 - To the extent possible, ensure the survivor is secure and safe from additional harm or abuse.
 - Follow all mandated reporting requirements and contact the authorities as appropriate.
 - If the accused person is an employee, follow progressive discipline policy accordingly. This may involve suspending the accused during the investigation. Where applicable, prevent the accused from having further access to children until a thorough

incident review and/or investigation is completed. Before beginning an internal incident review, verify with local authorities that this will not interfere with their investigation.

- When applicable, notify other employees that there has been a critical incident and the crisis management plan has been activated.

Initial Communication Plan.

- Designate a point person to respond to all inquiries from parents/guardians, the media, and other stakeholders.

- o Prepare a short media statement in advance or anticipation of receiving a media or public inquiry.

- o All oral and written communication should speak with a voice of compassion and confidence.

- o All employees and volunteers should know how to refer media inquiries to the appropriate spokesperson.

- As soon as possible, meet in person (not over the phone) with identified survivors and their parents/guardians, if applicable.

- o Reassure them that they were right to tell you, and you are taking the allegation or incident seriously.

- o Find out what response they desire and be prepared to explain what support you will offer, such as counseling or therapeutic services.

- Consider reaching out in writing to parents/guardians of all children attending your Borough or the specific program in which the accused offender was involved or had contact with children.

- o The message should communicate: § Empathy: Begin by stating that such incidents run counter to your Borough's values. § Facts: Include a summary of the incident, including information about any suspensions, investigations, arrests, etc. Keep the names of those involved confidential, especially during the investigation process. § Contact Request. Ask parents/guardians to contact the Borough or the specified authorities if they suspect their children may have been abused. § Your Response: Explain that your Borough is fully cooperating with the authorities. Describe proactive steps the Borough is taking such as offering resources to individuals, hosting a parent/community meeting, training employees and volunteers, and plans to conduct an independent investigation to learn from this incident so the Borough can prevent it from happening again.

- Host a parent/community meeting to speak directly with concerned families and directly answer any questions before rumors or misinformation is spread.

- o Communicate as much information as you can about the incident, while maintaining the confidentiality of those involved. o Provide information regarding the proactive steps leadership is taking in response to the incident.

- o Describe resources the Borough is providing families and give parents/guardians a chance to ask questions.

- o Provide parents/guardians with information about how to talk to their children about abuse.

Ongoing Communication and Response

- Determine how to manage ongoing relations with authorities, parents/guardians, the community, and media relations.

- o Consider adding a designated page to your website with updated details about the incident.

- o Designate specific individuals in the Borough to handle various communications and outreach efforts. Promote

Prevention at All Levels of the Borough

- Educate parents/guardians on abuse prevention information. Offer a workshop during which parents/guardians can learn how to protect their children from abuse. This is an educational session that is different from the parent meeting described above.

- Provide a children education program to all children involved with the Borough on how to protect themselves from abuse and how to express concerns.

- Train (or re-train) all employees and volunteers on how to identify and report red flag behaviors that do not rise to the level of suspected abuse. This is an important part of the overall response and ongoing prevention effort.

3. CHANGING THE POLICY. Borough Council may change this Policy from time to time. Officials, employees, contractors, or volunteers are permitted to suggest future specific changes to this Policy by submitting suggestions to the President of Borough Council in writing. Such requests may be considered and adopted by Borough Council in its sole discretion.

4. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT. All officials, employees, contractors and volunteers shall confirm that they have read and agree to comply with this Policy by signing the written acknowledgment below upon hire and annually thereafter. The Borough shall ensure that all employees, contractors and volunteers have signed a written acknowledgment upon hire and annually thereafter by keeping signed acknowledgement forms in personnel files or in electronic personnel files.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

By signing below, I acknowledge that I: (1) have received a copy of the Borough's Abuse or Mistreatment of Children Policy; (2) had a full opportunity to read and understand it; and (3)

agree to abide by its terms. I also understand that a copy of this signed Acknowledgement will be kept in the office of the Borough Manager.

Name (Printed)

Date

Signature

This Policy was ADOPTED and becomes effective this 21st day of January, 2025 by Conyngham Borough Council.

ATTEST:



Lynn Falatko, Manager

CONYNGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL:



Gary Gregory, President

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

By signing below, I acknowledge that I: (1) have received a copy of the Borough's Abuse or Mistreatment of Children Policy; (2) had a full opportunity to read and understand it; and (3) agree to abide by its terms. I also understand that a copy of this signed Acknowledgement will be kept in the office of the Borough Manager.

Name (Printed)

Date

Signature

CERTIFICATION

I, Lynn Falatko, duly qualified Manager of Conyngham Borough, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania, hereby certify that the forgoing is a true and correct copy of a Resolution duly adopted by a majority vote of the Borough of Conyngham at a regular meeting held January 21, 2025 and the original Resolution has been recorded in the Minutes of Borough of Conyngham and remains in effect as of this date.

Date: January 21, 2025



Lynn Falatko, Manager