

Notes for Board Members – On the advice of counsel, this policy has been revised to reflect the new PA Child Protection laws as follows:

- *Volunteers and staff are required to:*
 - *report a reasonable suspicion of child abuse directly to ChildLine*
 - *also notify the CEO of any reasonable suspicion that child abuse is occurring during a GSHPA activity*
- *Removed a lengthy list of criminal laws that do not need to recited in this policy*

CHILD ABUSE REPORTING POLICY **Adopted February 3, 2015**

In keeping with the Girl Scouts' mission to build the courage, confidence and character of girls, Girl Scouts in the Heart of Pennsylvania (GSHPA) strives to maintain safe environments for the girls we serve. Protecting our girls from maltreatment is paramount. Policies have been established to ensure the safety of the girl members while under the supervision of GSHPA and to ensure protection from further harm if child abuse is suspected. Our emphasis on child protection is evidenced throughout all policies and procedures.

Any GSHPA employee or volunteer who has reasonable cause to suspect that a minor is a victim of child abuse is **required** to report the suspected abuse **immediately** to the Department of Human Services CHILDLINE (800) 932-0313 and to provide a written report within 48 hours after the telephone report. In addition, the employee or volunteer is **required** to notify the Office of the President and Chief Executive Officer immediately of any reasonable suspicions that child abuse is occurring during any GHSPA activity.

If any employee or volunteer receives information that any employee or volunteer has been named a perpetrator of child abuse or convicted of a disqualifying state or federal crime, the person receiving that information must immediately report the information to GSHPA's President & CEO. GSHPA will review the circumstances and take appropriate action, as required by law and according to its discretion, which may include termination of employment or volunteer service.

Failure by any employee to make the required reports will result in discipline for employees, up to and including termination, and may result in the restriction or termination of a volunteer's service. In addition, Pennsylvania law provides that if a person who is required by law to report suspected child abuse fails to do so, the person may be charged and/or convicted of a misdemeanor of the third degree.

Child abuse in Pennsylvania is defined by the CPSL as any of the following:

- i. Any recent act or failure to act by a perpetrator which causes nonaccidental serious physical injury to a child under 18 years of age.

- ii. An act or failure to act by a perpetrator which causes nonaccidental serious mental injury to or sexual abuse or exploitation of a child under 18 years of age.
- iii. Any recent act, failure to act or series of such acts or failures to act by a perpetrator which creates an imminent risk of serious physical injury to or sexual abuse or exploitation of a child under 18 years of age.
- iv. Serious physical neglect by a perpetrator constituting prolonged or repeated lack of supervision or the failure to provide essentials of life, including adequate medical care, which endangers a child's life or development or impairs the child's functioning.

Sexual abuse or exploitation means 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.
- 2) The employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement or coercion of a child to engage in or assist another individual to engage in simulation of sexually explicit conduct for the purpose of producing visual depiction, including photographing, videotaping, computer depicting and filming.