

## **Policy on Reporting Child Abuse**

### **Purpose**

The University of Scranton is committed to the protection and safety of minors. While the vast majority of the members of the University of Scranton community are adults 18 years of age or older, our community also includes minors less than 18 years of age, both in formal relationship to the University, and more informally, as frequent visitors. For example, minors may be matriculated or prospective students, participants in camp programs, volunteer programs, or outreach and enrichment programs.

### **Policy**

It is the obligation of every member of the University community to report suspected child abuse as soon as possible as outlined below.

### **Duty to Report**

Every member of University of Scranton Community has a duty to report as soon as possible if he/she has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is a victim of child abuse based on:

1. Information shared with him/her by the child or any other individual; or
2. His/her own observations or knowledge.

The duty to report is triggered by reasonable suspicion or belief. There is no requirement that there be actual evidence of abuse, nor should any individual seek to investigate the matter for him/herself. Any doubt as to whether or not to report should be resolved in favor of making the report to ensure that the appropriate professionals in child protective services can assess the report and evaluate the safety of the child.

### **Procedure**

Under this policy, any University of Scranton community member (faculty, staff, students, volunteers) suspecting abuse of a child is required to bring all reasonable suspicions or beliefs to the attention of the appropriate state authorities immediately by calling:

**Child Line: 1-800-932-0313**

As soon as the report is made, the caller must next contact Public Safety. Public Safety will, in turn, have the obligation to verify that appropriate authorities and supervisors have been notified and to coordinate investigations by police or other agencies. Note that the requirement to contact Public Safety may not apply to mandated reporters who have received the reported information in a confidential communication. In those cases, the initial report and any required follow up will be handled by the reporter in accordance with his or her professional requirements and limitations.

Failure by any member of The University of Scranton community to report information related to suspected child abuse as soon as possible to either Child Line or the designated

officials will result in discipline up to and including termination for employees and dismissal for students. Failure of these officials to initiate timely notice and timely and appropriate investigation will result in discipline up to and including termination. Those who make a good faith report under this policy are not subject to discipline or other sanction for having made the report.

The definition of child abuse is defined under PA Law: 23 Pa.C.S. § 6303(b.1) available at <http://www.legis.state.pa.us/WU01/LI/LI/CT/HTM/23/00.063.003.000..HTM>

Child abuse may be committed by any individual, including an employee, student, volunteer, parent, caregiver or other party in the child's life, including another child. The duty to report exists regardless of whether or not the suspected perpetrator is a member of The University of Scranton community and regardless of the specific role he/she occupies in the child's life.

### **Cross Reference**

Minors on Campus Policy (<http://www.scranton.edu/hr/compliance-corner/index.shtml> )