



The Children's Home of Easton
SINCE 1885

Code of Conduct

Staff at The Children's Home of Easton are expected to prioritize the safety, health and wellbeing of all clients in our care. We are committed to creating an environment that is safe, nurturing, empowering, and promotes growth. No form of abuse will be tolerated and confirmed abuse will result in immediate dismissal from our organization.

Please reference The Children's Home of Easton's Standard Operating Procedure Manual for more information about specific policy, specifically our Abuse Prevention Policies. As we strive to accomplish our mission together, all employees and volunteers are held accountable to the following standards:

- Clients will always be treated with dignity and respect.
- Clients will receive fair treatment regardless of race, sex, sexual orientation, gender identification or expression, age, religion, or any other protected characteristic.
- Staff and volunteers will adhere to uniform standards of appropriate and inappropriate verbal interactions as outlined by our organization.
- Staff and volunteers will not stare at or comment on client's bodies or appearance.
- Staff and volunteers will not date or become romantically involved with current or former clients.
- Staff and volunteers will not have sexually oriented materials, including printed or online pornography, on our organization's property or at organization-related events.
- Staff and volunteers will not have secrets with clients and will only give gifts with prior permission.
- Staff and volunteers will not have any private and personal contact with current or former residents while they are still involved with the child welfare system or under the age of 21.
- Staff and volunteers will comply with our organization's policies regarding interactions with clients outside of our programs and scheduled work.
- Staff and volunteers will not engage in inappropriate electronic communication with clients.
- Staff and volunteers will not abuse clients in anyway including (but not limited to) the following:
 - *Physical abuse*: hitting, spanking, shaking, slapping, unnecessary restraints, corporal punishment
 - *Verbal abuse*: degrading, threatening, cursing
 - *Sexual abuse*: inappropriate touching, exposing oneself, sexually suggestive conversations
 - *Mental abuse*: shaming, humiliation, cruelty
 - *Neglect*: withholding food, water, shelter, medical care
- Our organization will not tolerate the mistreatment or abuse of one client(s) by another client(s). In addition, our organization will not tolerate any behavior that is classified under the definition of bullying, and to the extent that such actions are disruptive, we will take steps needed to eliminate such behavior. Bullying is aggressive behavior that is intentional, is repeated over time, and involves an imbalance of power or strength. Bullying can take on various forms, including:
 - *Physical bullying*: when one person engages in physical force against another person, such as hitting, punching, pushing, kicking, pinching, or restraining another.
 - *Verbal bullying*: when someone uses their words to hurt another, such as belittling or calling another hurtful names.



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- *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.
- *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 sending mean, vulgar, or threatening messages or images.



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ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY

The safety and well-being of those in our care is The Children's Home of Easton's (CHE) top priority. We are committed to providing a safe and nurturing environment where all people are treated with dignity and respect. Therefore, we maintain a strict zero tolerance policy against any form of abuse, mistreatment, or neglect by any staff member, client, or volunteer.

Our policy is clear:

1. **Zero Tolerance:** All forms of abuse, mistreatment, and neglect are prohibited and will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Any allegations or suspicions of such behavior will be taken seriously and addressed promptly and thoroughly.
 1. **Physical Abuse:** Any action or inaction that intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly harms or injures another person.
 2. **Sexual Abuse and Exploitation:** Any enticement, coercion, persuasion, or contact of a sexual nature with a child. This includes any activity which is meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of the adult or perpetrator. **OR** Any contact of a sexual nature that occurs between a client and adult or between two clients. This includes any activity which is meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of the adult or other client.
 3. **Emotional Abuse:** Mental or emotional injury to a client that results in an observable impairment in the client's growth, development, or psychological functioning.
 4. **Mistreatment:** Behavior that is harmful, threatening, demeaning, or intimidating.
 5. **Neglect:** The failure to provide basic needs or protect against harm, including but not limited to inadequate supervision, medical care, nutrition, education, and emotional support.
2. **Mandatory Reporting:** All staff members, direct service volunteers, and board members as required by law, will immediately report any incidents or suspicions of abuse, mistreatment, or neglect as outlined by the PA Child Protective Services Law.
3. **Cooperation with State/Law Enforcement:** CHE will fully cooperate with any state and/or law enforcement investigation, providing all necessary information and support. When required or deemed appropriate, staff will be suspended or reassigned duties while the investigation is active and until a final determination is made.
4. **Disciplinary Action:** Any individual found to have engaged in abuse, mistreatment, or neglect will face immediate disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or volunteer status.



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Appropriate Interactions

Our organization's physical contact policy promotes a positive and nurturing environment while aiming to protect clients, employees, and volunteers. Our organization allows appropriate physical contact with clients and strictly prohibits inappropriate displays of physical contact. Any inappropriate physical contact by employees or volunteers towards clients will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Appropriate Physical Interactions	Inappropriate Physical Interactions
<p style="text-align: center;">WITH CONSENT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Side hugs • Shoulder-to shoulder or "temple" hugs • Pats on the shoulder or upper back • Handshakes • High-fives, hand slapping, fist-bumping • Pats on the head when culturally appropriate • Touching hands, shoulders, and arms • Arms around shoulders • Holding hands (with young children in escorting situations) • Consented application of hair/makeup products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full-frontal hugs • Kisses • Touching bottom, chest, or genital areas • Any form of affection that is unwanted by the client, employee, or volunteer • Any type of massage given by or to a client • Allowing clients, older than kindergarten, to sit on an employee or volunteer's lap • Allowing a client to cling to an employee's or volunteer's leg • Tickling • Piggyback rides • Wrestling • Showing affection in isolated areas or while one-on-one
Appropriate Verbal Interactions	Inappropriate Verbal Interactions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive reinforcement • Appropriate jokes • Encouragement • Praise • Strength-based conversations • Self-disclosure as a supervised therapeutic tool by licensed clinicians, medical professionals, and pastoral counseling • Appropriate nicknames with consent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussing sexual encounters or desires • Off-color or sexual jokes • Cursing • Name-calling • Shaming, belittling, or derogatory remarks • Oversharing personal history or personal issues • Harsh language that may frighten, threaten or humiliate • Compliments relating to physique or body development



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One-on-One Interactions

One-on-one interactions with clients should only occur during programming and under authorized circumstances. In those situations where one-on-one interactions are authorized, employees and volunteers must comply with the following guidelines to manage the risk of abuse or false allegations of abuse:

- Under no circumstances should any employee, volunteer, client, or other individual be inside a client's bedroom or bathroom with the door closed.
- Meet clients in a public place where you are in full view of others whenever possible. 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 and volunteers that you are alone with a client and encourage them to drop in or pass by.
- Avoid physical affection during one-on-one interactions to avoid misinterpretation. If physical interactions are relevant and appropriate, ensure they align with CHE's established policies and are limited to the task at hand. Immediately document the nature and extent of interactions that occurred.
- To the extent possible, ensure one-on-one interactions occurring behind closed doors are scheduled in advance, communicate it to your supervisor, and occur in a room with windows in the door or surveillance cameras.
- Immediately report and document 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. Communicate all incidents to supervisors through the appropriate chains of command, up to and including the Vice President of Operations and Executive Director.

Off-Site Interactions

CHE prohibits unapproved interactions between employees and volunteers with clients outside of scheduled program activities. However, when those interactions are part of programming or otherwise unavoidable, staff are expected to:

- Obtain written approval from their supervisor/administrator prior to engaging in the interaction. Approval documentation must include appropriate staff ratio plans based on the circumstances.
- Define the purpose or reasoning for the interaction and intended plans.
- Provide a written summary of the interaction including times of engagement, individuals involved, location, and all pertinent details.

Examples of Appropriate Off-Site Interactions	Examples of Inappropriate Off-Site Interactions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Taking clients on an organized trip/activity• Attending sporting activities with clients• Taking clients to the store, appointments, etc.• Visiting a client's home with parents/guardians present	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Taking clients off-campus without approval• Entertaining one client in the home of staff or volunteers• Client spending the night in the home of staff or volunteers• Visiting a client's home without a parent/guardian present



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Employee Personal Devices and Social Media Policy

The Children's Home of Easton is required to comply with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's 3800 and 3680 Regulations governing child residential facilities. Pursuant to these regulations, **staff are not to be using cell phones or other devices in a personal capacity and/or on social media while on duty or in charge of supervising the youth. Should a staff member be in violation of this rule, the staff member may be charged with abuse by omission, as well as subjected to disciplinary action.**

All time and effort spent on personal cell phones, devices, and/or online social networking sites shall be done only on personal time and shall not interfere with job duties and commitments.

Electronic communication and social media present the potential for inappropriate behavior, increased access to vulnerable clients, and privacy violations. Employees, volunteers, and clients participating in this organization's programs, events, and activities shall adhere to the following Social Media Code of Conduct:

1. Do not engage in behavior or comments that are, or could be construed by any observer to be, harsh, abusive, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating.
2. Do not engage in personal attacks, sexually oriented conversations, or discussions about sexual activity.
3. Be a positive role model by exhibiting professionalism in all interactions; portray an attitude of respect, loyalty, patience, courtesy, tact, and maturity.
4. Only program-related messaging may be communicated electronically between organization personnel (staff or volunteer), clients, and parents/guardians. Such communication should generally occur during standard business hours and using approved emails or communication platforms.
5. Employees and volunteers are prohibited from sending private messages to clients and/or replying to private messages from a client. If a client attempts to privately communicate with an employee or volunteer electronically, their supervisor must be notified immediately.
6. Personal social networking profiles and/or blogs of employees and volunteers shall be private and not shared with clients. Employees and volunteers with profiles on social networking sites shall not request to connect with or follow clients or approve requests from clients.
7. Employees and volunteers may not engage in electronic communication or social media contact with other family members or friends of clients except parents/guardians as appropriate.
8. Never reveal sensitive or confidential information, including identifiable details or photos of a client without written consent from their parent/guardian.
9. Employees and volunteers may not post or share on their personal social media accounts any photographs or videos of clients participating in the organization's programs.
10. Employees and volunteers may not post or share inappropriate photos or comments on photos of clients.
11. Do not make pornography in any form available to clients participating in the organization's programs, events, and activities or assist clients in any way in gaining access to pornography.
12. Employees and volunteers may not create web pages on behalf of the organization unless they have prior approval to do so and may not misrepresent their work with the organization or the organization itself.



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13. Employees and volunteers engaging in social media and online communication become a public figure associated with the organization and are responsible to help protect the organization and its clients. Always act in a professional and constructive manner and use sound judgement before posting or sharing content.
14. Rather than personally defend the organization's reputation, employees and volunteers should notify their supervisor or an administrator of a negative comment or online representation or if any member of the media contacts them about any matter related to the organization.
15. Employees and volunteers must adhere to uniform standards of electronic communication and social media use as outlined in any applicable organizational policies and procedures.
16. This Code of Conduct and associated policies and procedures shall be provided to parents/guardians of clients. It shall also be available on the organization's website for public view.
17. Clients and parents/guardians may request in writing that a client not be contacted through any form of electronic communication or social media by an employee or volunteer of the organization.
18. The Children's Home of Easton may at any time review public social networking sites.

Gift Giving and Acceptance Policy:

This organization strongly discourages employees and volunteers from exchanging gifts with clients. However, gifts to clients may be given under the following circumstances:

1. Group gift requests must be submitted to a supervisor or a designated administrator prior to being purchased. The supervisor and/or designated administrator will determine a cost limit regarding how much can be spent on the gift.
2. Employees and volunteers are prohibited from giving gifts to individual clients except when the gift is authorized by a supervisor or designated administrator and given to the individual client on behalf of the organization, not the individual employee or volunteer.
3. Employees and volunteers are prohibited from giving gifts to clients except when the gift is authorized by a supervisor/designated administrator and given to all clients (i.e., celebration for special events/holidays or group recognition).
4. Employees and volunteers are not permitted under any circumstances to accept money from clients or their families as a gift.
5. Employees and volunteers are not permitted to accept any gift of significant monetary value. Any gift that is accepted from a client must be reported to your immediate supervisor.
6. Artwork and letters of appreciation written by clients for employees or volunteers may only be accepted if these items are displayed in a public area at the organization. Employees and volunteers may not take client artwork or letters away from the organization whether to their personal homes or any other location.



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Orientation and Training

Required Personnel	Required Training	Timeline Requirements	Recurring Requirements
All employees, resource parents, and direct service volunteers	CHE Orientation	Prior to engagement	None
All employees and resource parents	Risking Connection	Prior to engagement	None
All employees, board members, resource parents, and direct service volunteers	Child Protective Service Law (CPSL)/Mandated Reporter	Prior to engagement	Every 3 years
All employees and resource parents	First Aid, CPR, and AED	Prior to engagement	Every 2 years
All employees, board members, resource parents, and direct service volunteers	Abuse prevention and risk management	Prior to working with children	Yearly
All employees, resource parents, and direct service volunteers	CHE Policies & Procedures	Prior to engagement	Yearly
All employees and resource parents	Therapeutic Crisis Intervention	Prior to engagement	Yearly
All employees and resource parents	Psychological Trauma Training	1-year after completing the Risking Connection training	Yearly
All employees involved in the hiring process	Screening and selection	Prior to making hiring decisions	Yearly
All direct service and program staff	Program specific policy & procedure training	Prior to working with children	Yearly
All direct service and program staff	Medication Administration	Within 30 days of hire	Never



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Orientation – The orientation of all new staff members will be the New Employee Orientation. Newly hired employees are required to complete 30 hours of training prior to starting employment.

- Introduction to Executive Director
- Review of CHE's Mission, Vision, Pillars and Promise
- Organizational chart
- Code of Conduct
- Zero-Tolerance Abuse Prevention Policy
- Review of licensing and accrediting bodies
- CHE departments
- Explanation of where children live
- Review training curriculum
- Prudent Parenting and Normalcy Standard
- Suicide Prevention, Intervention, and CHE Procedures
- Safety Protocols
- Runaway Reporting Procedures
- Proximity and Boundaries
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- Fire Safety
- Grievance Procedure
- Performance and Quality Improvement
- Tips and information about working at CHE

Child Protective Services Law (CPSL) – Staff, board, and direct service volunteers are trained on the Child Protective Services Law at their time of engagement and every 3 years thereafter. This training is 3 hours in length and is titled How to Report and Recognize Child Abuse; Mandated Reporter Training.

Therapeutic Crisis Intervention – this is a 3-day course that is facilitated regularly by a certified staff member who has completed The Cornell University National Residential Child Care Training Project and received certification. Each staff member will receive a certificate of completion.

First Aid, Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), and Automatic Electronic Defibrillator (AED) – this is given regularly by a certified CHE staff Red Cross Instructor. Those completing the course, which is required of all staff, receive certification.

Medication Administration – this is an 8-hour course given regularly by a CHE staff certified by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Those completing the course will receive certification.

Risking Connection – a nationally recognized training that focuses on working with children that have experienced traumatic life events. The Children's Home of Easton is a trauma informed agency and Risking Connection teaches staff about the importance of building positive, appropriate relationships.