

## **BAY COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM SEXUAL ABUSE/ASSAULT POLICY**

The Bay County Library System prohibits and does not tolerate sexual abuse or misconduct in the workplace or during any organization-related activity. Those reasonably suspected or believed to have committed sexual abuse or misconduct will be appropriately disciplined, up to and including termination of employment or membership, as well as criminally prosecuted. No employee, volunteer, board member or other person, regardless of his or her title or position has the authority to commit or allow sexual abuse or misconduct.

### **Definitions and Examples**

The following definitions or examples of sexual abuse, misconduct or harassment apply to everyone.

Sexual abuse or misconduct may include, but is not limited to:

- Child sexual abuse – any sexual activity, involvement or attempt of sexual contact with a person who is a minor (under 18 years old) where consent is not or cannot be given.
- Sexual activity with another who is legally incompetent or otherwise unable to give consent.
- Physical assaults or violence, such as rape, sexual battery, abuse, molestation or any attempt to commit such acts.
- A sexually hostile environment characterized as comments or conduct that unreasonably interferes with one's work performance or ability to do the job or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.
- Direct or implied threats that submission to sexual advances will be a condition of employment or affiliation with the organization.

### **Anti-retaliation and False Allegations**

Bay County Library System prohibits retaliation made against any employee, volunteer, board member or other person who lodges a good faith complaint of sexual abuse or misconduct or who participates in any related investigation. Making knowingly false or malicious accusations of sexual abuse or misconduct can have serious consequences for those who are wrongly accused. Bay County Library System prohibits making false or malicious sexual misconduct allegations, as well as deliberately providing false information during an investigation. Anyone who violates this rule is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or membership and criminal prosecution.

### **Investigation and Follow-up**

Bay County Library System will take all allegations of sexual abuse or misconduct seriously and will promptly, thoroughly and equitably investigate whether misconduct has taken place. The organization may utilize an outside third-party to conduct an investigation of misconduct. Bay County Library System will cooperate fully with any investigation conducted by law enforcement or other regulatory/protective services agencies. Bay County Library System will make every reasonable effort to keep the matters involved in the allegation as confidential as possible while still allowing for a prompt and thorough investigation.

## **BAY COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM SEXUAL ABUSE/ASSAULT REPORTING PROCEDURE**

### **Reporting Procedure**

Immediately report suspected sexual abuse or misconduct to your immediate supervisor and Managing Librarian. Either of those two will report the incident to the Assistant Director and Director. It is not required to directly confront the person who is the source of the report, question or complaint before notifying any of the individuals listed. Bay County Library System will take every reasonable measure to ensure that those named in complaint of misconduct, or are too closely associated with those involved in the complaint, will not be part of the investigative team.

### **Media Response**

All media inquiries will be forwarded to the Director or their designee. Only the designated staff will speak with the media on behalf of the organization so the message is consistent and controlled. An appropriate media statement will not name the alleged victim or perpetrator and will refer to the fact that BCLS is cooperating fully and that the appropriate authorities will undertake an investigation into the alleged incident. The media response may also include a statement that the person alleged to have committed any improper act has been suspended (if they are an employee) and is no longer on the premises.