



Pennsylvania Department of the

AUDITOR GENERAL

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News for Immediate Release

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Auditor General DePasquale Holding Cyber and Charter Schools Accountable for Child Abuse Reporting Policies

New state report shows 47 children died of abuse in 2018

HARRISBURG – Auditor General Eugene DePasquale today said that a review of 179 cyber and charter schools found a vast majority lacked updated policies on reporting child abuse until he contacted them this spring — and that nine schools flatly ignored his repeated requests to produce their reporting policies.

“With new data showing child abuse deaths in Pennsylvania increased again last year, we must do everything in our power to educate school staff on how to report suspected abuse,” DePasquale said. “Our schools have a clear obligation to protect the safety of every student.”

According to [statistics](#) just released by the state Department of Human Services, 47 children died and 89 children nearly died from abuse in 2018 – a 6 percent increase from the previous year. More than one out of every three of those children were already known to county children and youth services (CYS) agencies.

“While the majority of children who tragically died of abuse were 4 years old or younger, more than 12 percent of those killed or nearly killed were of school age,” DePasquale added.

Of the 44,063 child-abuse allegations reported to the state’s ChildLine abuse hotline last year, 83 percent were submitted by [mandated reporters](#). Those are people who work with or care for children and are required by law to file reports of suspected abuse or neglect. School employees file the largest number of those reports, far outweighing any other category of mandated reporters.

“Making sure school staff are trained to spot abuse and neglect is clearly affecting the number of allegations being reported – and I’m very glad that awareness has been raised,” DePasquale said. “All school staff must be properly trained to act as the first line of defense against abuse and neglect, and to do that schools should have a policy in place that outlines how staff are to handle making reports.”

DePasquale said his review found nearly 80 percent of cyber and charter schools reported having such a policy in some form. However, he noted, the vast majority of those were created after he contacted the schools this spring.

“It’s been more than four years since Pennsylvania changed its law to make sure that no one at the local level could try to sweep reports of suspected abuse under the rug, as happened in the Jerry Sandusky case,” DePasquale said.

Prior to 2014, when all school personnel who have direct contact with children became mandated reporters, their only requirement was to report abuse or neglect concerns to a supervisor.

Now, requirements for child-abuse reporting are contained in both the Public School Code and the Child Protective Services Law. The Public School Code requires that school personnel receive training that directs them to first call ChildLine to report any concern of abuse or neglect, then directs them to inform a designated school official.

The number to reach ChildLine is 1-800-932-0313. Learn more about how to report child abuse or neglect online at www.keepkidssafe.pa.gov.

Learn more about the Department of the Auditor General online at www.paauditor.gov.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Following are lists of cyber and charter schools that did not respond and that had a policy containing outdated reporting language as of May 8, 2019.

NO RESPONSE TO REPEATED REQUESTS	
Allegheny	Hill House Passport Academy Charter School
Delaware	Chester CS for the Arts
Delaware	Widener Partnership CS
Lehigh	Innovative Arts Academy CS
Philadelphia	ACT Academy Cyber CS
Philadelphia	Alliance for Progress CS
Philadelphia	Discovery CS
Philadelphia	Green Woods CS
Philadelphia	People for People CS

HAVE POLICY WITH OUTDATED LANGUAGE	
Adams	Vida Charter School
Allegheny	City CHS
Beaver	Lincoln Park Performing Arts CS
Bucks	School Lane CS
Columbia	Susq-Cyber CS
Erie	Erie Rise Leadership Academy CS
Erie	Robert Benjamin Wiley Community CS
Huntingdon	Stone Valley Community CS
Lackawanna	Fell CS
Lehigh	Lincoln Leadership Academy CS
Philadelphia	Community Academy of Philadelphia CS
Philadelphia	Laboratory CS
Philadelphia	MAST Community CS
Philadelphia	MAST Community CS II
Philadelphia	New Foundations CS
Philadelphia	Preparatory CS of Mathematics Science Tech and Careers
Philadelphia	Southwest Leadership Academy CS
Philadelphia	Universal Alcorn CS
Philadelphia	Universal Audenried CS
Philadelphia	Universal Bluford CS
Philadelphia	Universal Creighton CS
Philadelphia	Universal Daroff CS
Philadelphia	Universal Institute CS
Philadelphia	Universal Vare CS
Philadelphia	West Oak Lane CS
Philadelphia	Young Scholars CS

improving CHILD PROTECTION



New data shows more must be done to prevent child abuse and neglect in Pennsylvania

2018 CHILD ABUSE DATA



47

DEATHS

In 2014, 30 children died.

89

NEAR-DEATHS

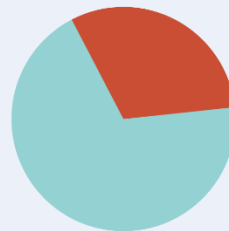
In 2014, 66 children nearly died.

SCHOOL STAFF REPORTS



■ Reports by school staff 13,640

■ All other abuse reports 30,423



REPORTING CHILD ABUSE



To report suspected child abuse or neglect, call **ChildLine** at:

1-800-932-0313

