

Ensuring the Safety of Children

NEYM Background Checking Policy of all Youth Workers

Our policy requires all applicants who want to work with children and teens within our Yearly Meeting to complete a formal background check before they are allowed to staff. Currently all youth-serving staff and coordinators are in compliance with this policy.

Policies & Procedures for JYM-JHYM Staff

UNIVERSAL HEALTH PRECAUTIONS:

When possible, have the designated “Retreat Nurse” care for a child’s wound—seeing that the wound is washed with soap and water, using a disinfectant, and bandaging it.

Always, when administering first-aid, wear gloves and wash your hands with soap and water after disposing of the gloves and any other first-aid materials.

If bodily fluids have been spilled or gotten on a surface, put on gloves, and clean up with a solution of 1 part bleach to 4 parts water.

SUPERVISION AND PREVENTIVE PRECAUTIONS:

Try to keep two adults present at all times (in sleeping rooms, during program and free time, etc.)

Keep doors open and windows unobstructed, striving to keep you and children visible to others at all times.

If you need to have a private conversation with a child, strive to stay in an open space whenever possible (i.e.. the corner of the meeting room, on the front stairs, walking around an open visible space like the parking lot/front yard, etc.). Or, encourage another staffer to join you.

If a child indicates that he/she needs assistance in the bathroom (or has wetting issues at nighttime, etc.), summon another staffer to be present also.

Think about maximizing the visibility of the situation so that the child doesn’t feel uncomfortable, etc.

PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

Model good, clear boundaries with fellow staff and children.

Staffers should not give or receive backrubs from children. Children may give other children backrubs and Staffers can give other Staffers backrubs. Comforting a child by rubbing their back who is hurt, upset, or who seeks adult reassurance is acceptable.

As a matter of course, let the child initiate the hug or contact. Having said that, we also know that some children, given their age, seek physical contact and nurture from staffers. Others do not. It's best to respond to the child's need as indicated.

Read body language and respond appropriately. If you sense that a child seeks or needs something you are not comfortable with providing, get another staffer to help.

PERSONAL AND EMOTIONAL SAFETY

Be conscious of how children are responding to situations: gently intervene to check-in with people, offer an out for someone, clarify rules/language/expectations, etc.

Follow up with concerns: "You looked really upset during that game or activity. Can I ask you what's going on?" (etc.)

Take care of yourself: recognize when someone/something has pushed your own limits or boundaries. Take a time-out, talk to another staff person, get a cup of tea, etc.

If something feels or seems weird, it very well may be. Acting on something that turns out to be nothing is ALWAYS a better choice than not acting. Bring any concerns or questions to the attention of the coordinator.

CONFIDENTIALITY

If a child asks to speak with you in confidence, remember that we can never promise full confidentiality. You can keep most information confidential, but always let the child in question know that if they share information that leads you to believe they are in danger, have been hurt or victimized, or are likely to hurt themselves or someone else, that you will tell the coordinator. An important part of our work and ministry is to help children to know that we care deeply about them and will do what's needed to keep them safe.

Remember, we are required by law to report cases of abuse and/or neglect. If you have reasonable cause to suspect that a child under the age of 18 is suffering from physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or neglect, you must report it. It is important that you bring any concerns regarding a child's safety to the attention of the Retreat Coordinator.