



NEW ENGLAND  
YEARLY MEETING  
OF FRIENDS  
QUAKERS

## **Child Safety Policy**

NOTE: “Youth worker” or “worker” will refer to all paid and volunteer staff for youth and children’s programs sponsored by NEYM, including retreats, programs at NEYM Sessions and childcare provided at other NEYM events.

### **Qualifications and Screening for Youth Workers**

1. Youth workers must be mature and responsible adults. In general youth workers should be 18 or older and no less than five years older than the children they serve. Exceptions can be made at the discretion of the coordinators in consultation with their advisor. If workers under 18 are used, they should be in an assistant capacity under the direct supervision of an adult youth worker.
2. All youth workers will undergo a careful screening process, including an application and reference checks. A documented interview will be at the discretion of the coordinator.
3. Criminal background checks are required for all workers who spend significant amount of time with youth and children. This includes Program Coordinators, people who staff retreats, people who staff any of the youth programs at Sessions, including staff of Afternoon Choices, Childcare and the Family Neighborhood as well as people who provide childcare at NEYM sponsored events. Decisions regarding the requirement for criminal background checks shall be at the discretion of NEYM and pursuant to applicable state law.

### **Expectations and Training of Youth Workers**

4. Responsibilities and expectations for proper behavior will be clearly defined and communicated to all youth workers.
5. Training will be offered regularly to youth workers, including a job description, resource information, crisis procedures, mandated reporting laws and information about abuse and neglect.
6. In support of youth workers, there will be a communitywide effort to educate both adults and children, appropriate to the groups being addressed, on sexual abuse awareness.

## **Program guidelines**

7. Safeguards will be provided through careful monitoring and staffing. It is recommended that no fewer than two adults be present at any activity. Where this two adult rule is not possible, minimally there should be a roamer regularly checking on all group activities. Ratios of staff to youth for elementary and junior high programs should be no less than 1:8. For high school, 1:10.

8. Staff workers will engage in a risk assessment at the beginning of any new activity and as part of a review of any regular programs or activities. They will monitor and plan in consideration of levels of isolation, accountability and degree of caretaker power and authority. As risk increases, increased supervision is needed. (See appendix on risk assessment.)

9. Youth and children will be regularly educated regarding sexuality, personal boundaries and assertiveness, appropriate to the age.

## **Reporting and Responding to Allegations of Abuse**

10. Youth workers who suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect or receive a report from a child must report this to the coordinator. If that person is unavailable or involved in the allegation, the worker should report to the Clerk of Permanent Board. Similarly, if that person is unavailable or inappropriate, the Presiding Clerk should receive the report. The youth worker must insure that a report is made to the proper state authorities. Anyone who works with children is a mandated reporter. Mandated reporters are defined as the people who are required by law to report suspicion or knowledge of abuse or neglect of a child to the proper authorities. (See Appendix)

11. Program coordinators must know and comply with mandated reporting laws. They will report suspicion or report of abuse or neglect to the proper state authorities.

13. Programs will have a written response plan regarding suspicions or allegations of abuse, including identifying the individuals responsible for the plan.

If the concern is within the program, the plan should take into account:

- a) the immediate requirement is to stop all possibility of further harm;
- b) the documentation of allegations and the community's response to them;
- c) a plan for long term outreach and follow-up, including who needs to know;
- d) the centrality of pastoral care as a process to support individuals and the community.

If the concern is outside the program, after reporting, the coordinator will

- a) Consult with their advisor to develop an appropriate pastoral care plan.
- b) Document who was involved and what was done.

### **Recordkeeping**

14. Personnel files will be kept for all workers who are significantly involved with children, as determined by NEYM. Documentation of allegations will be placed in personnel files of affected parties. All files related to personnel and any alleged incidents will be kept permanently in a secure place with limited access.

### **Policy Revision**

15. The Youth Ministry Committee will review this Child Safety Policy at least once a year and will bring proposed revisions of this Policy to Permanent Board as needed.

Policies Approved by Youth Ministries Committee: June 28, 2016

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