

III. PRACTICES TO SUPPORT POLICY

Below are recommendations for the implementation of the NEYM child safety policy within the youth programs of New England Yearly Meeting. Practices are ways of pursuing the policy, and may vary depending upon the program.

Note to meetings: While these practices are tailored to help uphold the specifics of the [NEYM child safety policy](#), the Youth Ministries Committee hopes that your meeting may find them to be helpful guidelines in designing your own practices for child safety within your meeting. Please adapt and use them in whatever way is most helpful to your meeting.

Qualifications and screening for youth workers

The applicant will be known by at least one Friend in New England, and be involved in a local meeting, connected with Friends Camp, or have participated in young adult Friends retreat programs.

The applicant will submit an application, which will include written references from several people who know them well and can speak to their competence in working with youth. The Coordinator can follow up with these references by phone in addition to receiving their written assessment of the applicant.

The Yearly Meeting Secretary implements background checks for prospective youth workers. The background check screens for criminal convictions. Violent crimes or crimes against children will automatically disqualify a volunteer from youth work. Individuals with other criminal convictions may be considered for these roles at the discretion of the program Coordinator and Yearly Meeting Secretary. Prospective youth workers provide written consent, their address and their social security number for the background check. This information is available only to the Yearly Meeting Secretary, the Coordinator of the program, the Office Manager and the individual in question.

Expectations and Training

The Coordinators of the Yearly Meeting youth programs will do their best to provide regular training for all staff working with youth on the topic of child abuse and its prevention. We believe that these types of educational opportunities contribute to a culture of safety and sensitivity which can empower the staff to act accordingly. Through written materials and trainings, workers will be informed of their responsibilities related to the NEYM child safety policy as it relates to prevention of abuse, and appropriate steps for reporting suspicion of abuse or neglect of any youth.

In addition to a screening process for all workers who will spend a substantial amount of time with youth, NEYM will provide all workers with information and literature about child safety. In addition, New England Yearly Meeting will provide regular training for youth workers. Included in this training is information and exercises related to the problem of sexual abuse of children and child safety. While it is unrealistic to assume that all youth workers will attend these sessions in person, NEYM strives to ensure that workers with continued contact with children do attend these

sessions whenever possible, and offers access to online trainings for people who are unable to attend. **Note to meetings:** If you are interested in learning more about the online trainings used by NEYM please contact the Yearly Meeting Office.

New England Yearly Meeting will also provide a mechanism for workers to communicate perceived needs and feedback on the policies, practices, and training that are implemented.

Program guidelines

The NEYM youth programs have the following safeguards in place to reduce risk:

- a. Doors to rooms where activities take place will either be at least half opened, or have windows in them. When this is not practical, other safeguards are applied, such as use of roamers (people assigned to drop in on each group from time to time during the program).
- b. For transportation during an event all drivers must be at least 21 years of age and have proof of insurance. Seatbelts must be used for all passengers. Written parental permission is required to transport youth under eighteen, except in the case of an emergency. If a youth worker is transporting a young person to an event there should always be at least two children in the car, and the youth should have access to cell phones which have full battery power.
- c. Expectations of participant behavior are age appropriate, and clearly communicated to both youth, and staff. These expectations include attendance at scheduled program, refraining from substance abuse and sexual activity, making responsible choices during free time, and responding to staff instructions.
- d. Program coordinators provide participants with an evaluation form at the end of all events, and work to solicit either verbal or written opportunities for feedback from families.
- e. Program coordinators report regularly to their advisor and the Yearly Meeting Secretary, and annually to the Yearly Meeting in Sessions.
- f. Program coordinators publicize retreats ahead of time including information about programming and expectations.
- g. The program Coordinators incorporate their understanding of the content of “[Risk Reduction Principles](#)” when planning programs. This document is shared with youth staff, and is also available on the website.
- h. Written consent of parents or guardians is required for events outside of the scope of normal activities, such as field-trips. In rare cases if written consent isn’t possible, verbal confirmation from a parent or legal guardian directly to the coordinator and with the approval of the Yearly Meeting Secretary will be considered consent.

Reporting and responding to allegations of abuse

The Coordinators will use the “[response checklist](#)” as a guide for their actions when responding to suspected abuse. This form will be available on the NEYM website and the Coordinator will share it with families at the beginning of each year.

The Coordinators will use the “[incident report form](#)” to report allegations of abuse or neglect. This form can be found on the Yearly Meeting website.

The identity of the alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator will be kept confidential. Only those with supervisory or organizational need-to know should be informed, unless permission is given otherwise.

In order to learn from an incident and reduce possible future risks and in cooperation with any legal investigation; if the incident occurred during a youth program it is the program coordinator’s responsibility to document factual information about the allegation and the circumstances during which the alleged event occurred in order to maintain the future safety of the program. Extreme caution should be used in exploring the child’s story.

Recordkeeping

Personnel folders for volunteers and paid staff will include job description and any annual reviews. Any documentation of allegations or concerns will be a part of the personnel folder. Each person’s folder will be available to them for review, and that person can add material to their folder at any time.