

# **THE BOULDER FRIENDS MEETING OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (Quakers)**

## **Child and Youth Abuse Prevention Program: Best Practices for the Protection and Safety of Children and Youth**

Quakers believe the Divine exists in every person. We are committed to honoring the Divine in everyone and to providing an environment in which every member, attender, and visitor -- whether a child or an adult -- can be free from harm, fear or dishonor. We respect each other through our actions and in that spirit, we make these best practices.

Boulder Friends Meeting cherishes the children and youth who participate in our programs and activities. They are a vital part of our faith community. We seek a community where no child (or adult) is at risk for emotional, physical or sexual abuse and where no adult or child is at risk for false accusation. We seek a community where a mutual sense of trust allows children and adults to speak out when they feel uncomfortable or unsafe, where difficult issues can be discussed and where our loving concern for one another is strengthened, not diminished, by these discussions.

We have reviewed and approved the practices outlined in this document. By implementing these practices, our goal is to protect the children and youth of Boulder Friends Monthly Meeting from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also protecting our volunteers, employees and children from false accusations.

The practices set forth in this document are not designed to replace good judgment and common sense. No best practice, guideline or procedure can anticipate all situations. Protecting and honoring children and youth is not a static event; it is a process that evolves together with the laws that govern our community and the circumstances of each particular interaction. This document is intended to be a working document and a reference for those working with children and youth, which will be updated when necessary.

### **I. Definitions**

For purposes of this document, the following definitions shall apply:

"Child," "children," "minors," and "youth" are defined as including anyone under the age of eighteen (18).

"Youth and child-care workers" or "workers" refers to all persons working with children and youth, paid and unpaid, including

- Those who will provide child care during worship, committee meetings, Meeting for Business and special events.
- Those who will lead First Day School and Young Friends group programs and events.
- Those who will have overnight responsibility during events sponsored by Boulder Friends Meeting.

"Youth and child-care workers" does not include guest speakers, one-time or infrequent volunteers, and parents or guardians staying in a class with their own child, as long as a second youth or child-care worker is present during the class or activity.

“Hiring committee” shall be a group of individuals including the following: at least one (up to 2) members of the REC, and the Clerk or her/his designee. When circumstances so require, the hiring committee may include or consult with the convenors of O&M and M&W.

## II. Selection of Workers

All youth and child care workers will be screened. This screening includes the following:

### a) Six-Month Rule (Volunteers)

A person may be considered for any regular volunteer position involving contact with children and youth only after s/he has been involved with the Religious Society of Friends for a minimum of six (6) months. If the involvement with Boulder Friends Meeting has been less than 6 months, a recommendation will be requested from the applicant’s prior meeting community(ies).

b) Application

Every prospective regular volunteer or employee will fill out an application. For those applicants that appear to meet the Meeting's needs, a personal interview will be the next step.

c) Personal Interview

Every prospective youth or child care worker will have a personal interview. The interview will provide an opportunity for the applicant:

- to discuss their interest and suitability for this service;
- to be advised of this document, the Best Practices for the Protection and Safety of Children and Youth;
- to be given a copy of this document, which shall be signed by the applicant, acknowledging its receipt and their understanding of the practices;
- to have an opportunity to raise and discuss any offenses that may be revealed in a criminal background check;
- and to sign a release form which allows the Meeting to request a criminal background check, and asks the applicant to identify any pending cases or convictions for sexual misconduct. The Meeting will keep the release form on file (and the result of the check), in a secure, confidential location.

The personal interview for prospective employees will be with the hiring committee. The interview for prospective regular volunteers will be with a member or members of the Religious Education Committee.

d) Criminal Background Check

A criminal-background check is required for all prospective (and current) adult workers. This check will be done by the Meeting through a background check organization to be identified by the Clerk. The cost of the background check

will be paid by the Meeting although volunteers may choose to donate the cost if so they so desire.

Convictions for an offense involving children, an offense involving violence, or an offense involving any conduct that the committee interprets to be inconsistent with working safely with children will preclude an applicant from being permitted to work with children. What constitutes a disqualifying offense that will keep an individual from working with children will be determined by the hiring committee on a case-by-case basis, in light of all the surrounding circumstances. The hiring committee will discuss with the applicant any negative decision.

e) Reference Check

Before an applicant is permitted to work with children, at least two of the applicant's references will be checked. If the applicant has worked with minors at another organization, the organization(s) should be included in the two references. The Meeting will keep the reference documentation on file.

f) Confidentiality

All personal information gained during the screening process about any individual will be held in confidence by the hiring committee and any other person involved in the decision-making process. All documents with personal information about applicants or workers will be kept in a locked file in the office.

### III. Other Safety Measures

a) Two Adults

It is our goal that a minimum of two adult workers will be in attendance when children are being supervised during our programs and activities.

However, if it happens that only one adult is present in a class or child-care setting, the adult shall do one of the following options:

- recruit another adult in the building to be a "friendly adult presence";
- join another class;

- inform each child's parent or guardian of the situation (which normally will happen when the children are checked in at 10:15).

b) Open Doors

Classroom doors (for child care, First Day School, and Young Friends groups) should remain open unless there is a window in the door or a side window beside the door. Doors should never be locked while persons are inside the room.

c) Teenage workers (under 18 years old)

Teenage workers must be at least age 14.

Teenage workers will be screened as specified above, except that criminal background checks are not required (or available). Teenage workers should be under the supervision of an adult worker.

d) Restroom Guidelines

Parents /guardians are strongly encouraged to change diapers and/or have their children visit the bathroom prior to child care or First Day School.

Children eight and older may leave the classroom to use the bathroom on their own.

e) Parental Responsibility

Parents and guardians are responsible for their children during times when children are not in First Day School or checked into child care. Parents of children eight and under are asked not to leave children unattended in child care or First Day School classrooms at any time. There is no child care during the first 15 minutes of the 10:00 Meeting.

f) Check-in/Check-out

A parent or guardian of any child under three years old will check their children in and out of any Meeting sponsored activity. Parents or guardians of children age three and older will check their children in and out of all events and programs other than First Day School. During the 10:00 Meeting for Worship, children may not be checked in until 10:15 a.m.; parents are

encouraged to attend the first 15 minutes of Meeting with their children, and then take the children to First Day School.

The Religious Education Committee may create a check-in/check-out or parental waiver procedure for youth 14 and older.

g) Safety Concerns

We recognize that safety concerns may arise that are not allegations of child abuse and which do not call for the response described in Section IV. As we try to maintain an environment that is safe for our children in every way, we hope that parents and others will feel comfortable raising these concerns. Any person (parent or guardian, employee, volunteer, child, or other person) with a concern regarding safety of a child or children in the Meeting is encouraged to take the concern to the Religious Education Committee or to the Clerk. The Committee and the Clerk shall treat these matters with discretion and confidentiality.

h) Oversight and Implementation

The Meeting will review these best practices and implementation on an annual basis; this shall be done by a group consisting of the Clerk or his/her designee, one member of REC and one member of Oversight and Membership. A calendar and procedure will be developed for this review. The Religious Education Committee may develop procedures and forms consistent with these best practices.

IV. Mandatory Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect

State and national laws covering child abuse and neglect have become far more proactive in the protection and reporting of suspected abuse and neglect of children. It is important for all of us who are involved in the on-going care and education of children to be aware of the laws regarding mandatory reporting.

Colorado law (C.R.S. 19-3-304) identifies several professions as mandatory reporters of suspected child abuse and neglect. Two of these categories are public or private school officials or employees and members of the Clergy and leaders of religious communities. It is a class 3 misdemeanor in Colorado for a mandated reporter to fail to report suspected child abuse or neglect or knowingly make a false report and is punishable under law.

For purposes of these best practices, Boulder Friends Meeting has identified the Clerk, Associate Clerk, and all youth and child-care workers (both employees and volunteers) as mandatory reporters.

a) Training

All mandatory reporters shall successfully complete the online Mandated Reporter Training For Colorado Educators which can be found at <http://www.coloradocwts.com/mandatedreporter/educators> prior to providing youth and child-care services at the Boulder Friends Meeting. A certificate of completion (issued at the end of the online training and successfully passing the quizzes) for each mandatory reporter shall be maintained by the convener for the Religious Education Committee.

b) Reporting

If a mandatory reporter has reasonable cause to know or suspect that a child/youth has been subjected to abuse or neglect or observed the child being subjected to circumstances or conditions that would reasonably result in abuse or neglect, the mandatory reporter shall, immediately upon receiving such information, report or cause a report to be made of such fact (1) through the child abuse reporting hotline system. (Call 1-844-CO-4-Kids or 1-844-264-5437), or (2) to the Boulder County Department of Human Services or (3) to the Boulder Police Department.

c) Guidance and Support for Reporting Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect within the Boulder Meeting of Friends

In addition to the mandatory reporting requirements, any First Day School teacher, child care provider, or member or attender at Boulder Meeting of Friends who witnesses or suspects abuse and/or neglect of a child under the care and supervision of the Meeting should immediately inform the Clerk of Boulder Meeting; in the event that the Clerk is not available, it shall be reported to the Associate Clerk and the convenor of Oversight and Membership. It shall be the duty of the Clerk, along with the Meeting's Oversight and Membership Committee, to offer guidance, support and council to everyone affected, and, if and when it is deemed appropriate, to the Meeting community.

The protection and well-being of the child or children involved is of paramount concern. In the event of such suspected abuse, the Boulder Meeting will proceed with the greatest of care and discernment, providing confidentiality for all involved, to the extent possible.

d) Clerk's Responsibilities after notification

The Clerk, or his or her designee, shall:

- notify the parent and/or guardian of the child.
- notify the Conveners of the Religious Education and Oversight and Membership Committees.
- notify the worker/volunteer alleged to be the perpetrator and immediately place him or her on

leave from working with children pending an investigation. During the investigation, an alleged perpetrator will not be permitted to participate in any Meeting activities involving children.

- notify civil authorities responsible for investigating child abuse. The Meeting will fully cooperate with the investigation of the incident by civil authorities.
- notify the Meeting's insurance company, complete an incident report, and forward any documents received relating to the incident and/or allegations to the insurance company.
- take any other action for the protection of the child appropriate in the circumstances.
- keep all information confidential outside of those who need to know information in order to carry out these best practices; the confidentiality requirement includes all those who become aware of the incident.

e) The Meeting's Responsibilities

- No adult will question the child or discuss the incident with the child on behalf of the Meeting, as we recognize that asking children questions can influence the process; we will leave such questioning to trained professionals conducting the investigation.

- The name of the child shall not be entered into the minutes of any meeting.
- Friends are reminded of the potential harm to both children and adults that can come from gossip or idle discussion.

#### V. Existing Workers

Any youth or child care worker who is working with children as of the date these best practices are effective will be required to complete a criminal background check (if one was not already conducted) and complete the mandatory reporter training in order to continue in his or her position.

#### VI. Effective Date/Changes to Best Practices

These best practices will become effective the second month after being approved by the Meeting for Business with Attention to Spirit. The Clerk shall be primarily responsible for the enforcement and maintenance of these best practices, together with the Committee on Religious Education. Any proposed changes to these best practices shall be proposed to the Meeting for Business for final approval.

Approved at Meeting for Business  
May 14, 2017

Stan Grotegut, Clerk  
Boulder Meeting of Friends

# Child and Youth Abuse Prevention Program: Best Practices for the Protection and Safety of Children and Youth

## **Acknowledgment**

These Best Practices have been designed to guide and assist you when working with minors. The information establishes general best practices and should not be construed in any way as a contract of employment or continued employment. Boulder Friends Meeting reserves the right to make changes in the content or application of this program and to implement those changes with or without notice.

The terms defined herein are defined for the purposes of the program and do not suppose or establish a legal relationship. These terms are not defined for the purposes of creating a legal relationship with the Boulder Friends Meeting or any related or associated entity and instead are to be used with this document.

I have received a copy of the Boulder Friends Meeting Child and Youth Abuse Prevention Program. I understand it is my responsibility to become familiar with and adhere to the information contained herein. I understand that these practices are the property of the Boulder Friends Meeting.

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Print Name

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Signature

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Date