

**THE BOULDER FRIENDS MEETING OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (Quakers)
Approved November 10, 2019**

**Child and Youth Abuse Prevention Program: Best Practices for the
Protection and Safety of Children and Youth
(Commonly referred to as the BFM Child Protection Policies or CPP)**

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 with changing governmental regulations and the circumstances of each particular interaction. This working document will be evaluated and updated when necessary. The annual review process will make sure that happens on a regular basis.

I. Definitions & Acronyms

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).

"Child," when used alone, as in BFM Child Protection Practices, includes both young children and adolescents, anyone under 18 years old.

Child-care workers refers to anyone who works with young children ages 0-5 years old.

Youth workers refers to anyone who teaches First Day School classes, or otherwise works with children and/or adolescents from ages 5 to 18.

"Youth and child-care workers" or *workers* refers to all adults working with children and youth on a regular basis, whether 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.

BFM refers to Boulder Friends Meeting

CPP refers to this Child Protection Policies document.

Child Protection Advocate refers to the person assigned by the Oversight and Membership Committee to coordinate the Meeting's child protection efforts, including the selection of youth and child-care *workers*, the biennial review of the program, and related follow-up work.

FDS refers to First Day School.

Mandatory Reporters include the Clerk, Associate Clerk, Child Protection Advocate, Religious Education Coordinator, and any youth or child care *workers*. That group does not include guest speakers, one-time or infrequent volunteers, parents or guardians who are not *workers*, or minors who assist with the child care or FDS programs.

REC refers to the BFM Religious Education Committee.

O&M refers to the BFM Oversight and Membership Committee.

II. Selection of *Workers*

A two-person Selection Committee will manage the application and screening process for selecting youth and child care *workers*. That committee will include one person to represent REC and one person to represent O&M. The REC convener will appoint the representative from that committee. The Child Protection Advocate will represent O&M. The REC representative on the Selection Committee will coordinate and convene the applicant interviews, which will include the Child Protection Advocate or someone designated by that person. The Child Protection Advocate from O&M will coordinate the background check process and reference checks. All *workers* will be screened. However, the screening process does not include guest speakers, one-time or infrequent volunteers, and parents or guardians staying in a class with their own child without being *workers*. (The Two Adult Rule described below provides enough supervision and accountability for managing any risk associated with these visitors.) The screening process 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 Boulder Friends Meeting for a minimum of six (6) months. If an applicant's involvement with Boulder Friends Meeting has been for less than 6 months, a positive recommendation from his or her prior meeting community(ies) may suffice, depending on the Selection Committee's judgment.

b) Application

Every prospective *worker* will complete an application.

c) Personal Interview

Every prospective *worker* will have a personal interview with the Selection Committee to determine their suitability, and to clarify expectations for the work involved.

The interview will provide an opportunity for the applicant:

- to discuss their interest and suitability for this service;
- to discuss this document, the Best Practices for the Protection and Safety of Children and Youth (commonly referred to as the BFM Child Protection Practices or CPP);
- to receive a copy of this document and sign a commitment to follow the practices described there.
- to learn about next steps in the selection process, including the background check and reference check;
- to discuss critical information that may result from the criminal background check.

d) Criminal Background Check

A criminal-background check is required for all prospective (and current) *workers*. This check will be coordinated by the Child Protection Advocate through a professional background check service that is selected by the Clerk or Child Protection Advocate. The cost of that research will be paid by the Meeting, although volunteers may donate that cost if they want.

The background check service currently employed by BFM is called TCSLogiq (www.TCSLogiq.com), which is the same service used by the Boulder Valley School District. According to the screening criteria used by that service, applicants will not be approved for work in the Child Care Program or First Day School if the background check shows:

Conviction of, imposition of a deferred sentence for, or any plea of guilty or no contest at any time, past or present, or the existence of any pending charges, for (i) any crime involving sexual misconduct, (ii) any crimes of abuse against children, (iii)

any crimes involving firearms, and (iv) any offense involving distribution or intent to distribute illegal drugs or substances, (v) felonious assaults or batteries.

To initiate the background check process, applicants use a web link provided by the Selection Committee to enter their personal information on the secure website of TQLogiq. The Selection Committee will not receive that personal information. The results of the background check are reported in separate emails to the applicant and to the Child Protection Advocate. That report merely indicates whether the person receives approval or not, based on the criteria above. No confidential information is provided in that email. A hard copy of that approval email is saved in a locked file in the Meeting office to document completion of the background check.

The Child Protection Advocate can obtain access to a detailed report on each background check via a confidential, password-protected area of the company's web site. That report would provide details about any offenses that might be revealed for applicants who do not gain approval. However, the Child Protection Advocate routinely accepts the approval decision from TQLogic, and does not access or read any background information on the applicants.

e) Reference Check

Before an applicant is permitted to work with children in FDS, at least two of the applicant's references will be checked by someone from the Selection Committee. That person will also interview the applicant to provide contextual information that would help interpret feedback from references. Candidates should provide the name and contact information for at least two character references from outside their family. Reference check interviews will be conducted by phone, video conference, or in person. Reference letters are not required and not sufficient. The purpose of the reference check is to determine whether the applicant has the good character and interpersonal skills that justify entrusting him or her with the supervision of children. If the applicant has worked with minors at another organization within the past five years, the reference interviews should include someone from that organization, if possible. The Selection Committee will maintain notes from reference calls, including contact information, in a confidential file locked in the Meeting office.

f) Confidentiality

All personal information gained during the screening process about any individual will be held in confidence by the Selection Committee and any other person involved in the decision-making process. Confirmation of background check approval for each youth and child-care worker is saved in a confidential file locked in the Meeting 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 FDS 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 Assistants (under 18 years old)

Teenage assistants must be at least age 14. They will be screened as specified above, except that criminal background checks are not required (or available). Teenage assistants and younger students who assist teachers in FDS classes should be under the supervision of an adult *worker*. They cannot take the place of an adult in meeting the requirement for having at least two adults supervising each FDS class.

d) Restroom Procedures

The goal of these procedures is to: facilitate restroom visits, maintain healthy relationships, encourage appropriate boundary management, protect children and youth from possible harm, and help child care and youth workers avoid accusations of wrongdoing.

Procedures for Child Care Program (children ages 0-5)

For children in diapers, their parents or guardians are responsible for providing diaper-changing instructions, materials, and permission to child care workers. For children who don't need diapers, a supervising adult will accompany the child to the restroom in the Child Care Program, leaving the restroom door open while in use. Allow the child to use the restroom as independently as possible, and provide only the assistance needed. Take care never to touch a child in private areas. Return to class after finishing the bathroom visit. For children in transition from diapers to using the bathroom independently, their parents or guardians are responsible for providing relevant guidance and instructions to child care workers.

Procedures for First Day School Children Ages 5-6

A supervising adult will accompany these children to the restroom, after informing the other *worker*. If the child does not need assistance, the adult will stay by the hallway door and hold it open. If another person comes to use the restroom, the supervising adult will close the hallway door and stay in the bathroom until the child is finished. If the child needs assistance, provide whatever help is needed and take care never to touch a child in private areas. Return to class after finishing the bathroom visit.

Procedures for First Day School Children and Youth Ages 7-18

Children and youth from seven to eighteen years old may use the restroom on their own, without supervision or accompaniment. However, one of the First Day School *workers* in charge should monitor restroom departures with sufficient attention to recognize when an unusual amount of time has passed. In those cases, a *worker* should search for the child or youth to determine whether he or she needs help or redirection back to class.

Special Needs

If a child or youth has a disability or a special need, the restroom protocol may need some adaptation. In that case, the parents or guardians of the child are responsible for providing related instructions to the FDS or childcare workers. If there is an accident that soils or wets a child's clothing, the supervising adult should get help from the child's parent or guardian, unless they have already provided relevant instructions and a change of clothing.

Managing Expectations and Communications

Child care and youth workers will be informed of the Restroom Procedures. Parents or guardians should also receive these procedures, with a request to provide any special information about their child that may be needed to help *workers* provide appropriate assistance or supervision for using the restroom. Parents or guardians should provide children with clothing they can manage independently, if possible.

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 supervision by FDS workers during the first 15 minutes of the 10:00 Meeting, or after 11:30am. Child care in the nursery is provided between 9:40 am until 11:20 am.

f) Check-in/Check-out (For Child Care Program only)

A parent or guardian of any child who is five years old or younger will check their children in and out of the child care provided for Meeting sponsored activities. There is no formal check-in or check-out procedure for children who attend First Day School.

g) First Fifteen Minutes of Meeting

During the 10:00 Meeting for Worship, children are not allowed in First Day School (FDS) classrooms until 10:15 a.m, unless given permission by the teacher. That time is ordinarily reserved for FDS workers to attend the first 15 minutes of Meeting or for classroom preparations. Parents are encouraged to attend the first 15 minutes of Meeting with their children, and then take the children to First Day School or child care afterward.

h) 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. 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 Coordinator, the Clerk, the Child Protection Advocate, or to the Associate Clerk. The person(s) receiving such a report shall treat these matters with discretion and confidentiality.

i) Oversight and Implementation

Compliance with the Child Protection Practices (CPP) will be assessed each year to determine whether changes are needed to improve consistency and effectiveness. That assessment will be called the CPP Annual Review. It will take place each year in January or February. That review shall be done by a group consisting of the Clerk (or his/her designee), the Child Protection Advocate, one member of Oversight and Membership (in addition to the Child Protection Advocate), one member of REC, and anyone else designated by the Clerk. The Clerk or his/her designee will be responsible for convening that group and leading the CPP Annual Review. The Child Protection Advocate shall be responsible for recording minutes of this annual assessment and providing follow-up as needed. A calendar and procedure will be developed for this review, which should include the following:

- Compare the written CPP document with current practice to affirm strengths and identify areas of practice that are not consistent with that policy.
- Make recommendations to REC and Religious Education Coordinator for improving child protection practices as needed.
- Develop ideas for making the CPP more practical and effective, both for safeguarding children and for optimizing resources (especially time and labor) to avoid placing needless burdens on FDS or others in the Meeting community.
Review the confidential personnel records of background checks and reference calls to confirm that these practices are well-implemented, and to provide appreciation, support, and guidance to those involved with those due diligence tasks.
- Report to Business Meeting about the results of the CPP Annual Review to reassure and inform the Meeting community, while also documenting the completion of that assessment in the Business Meeting minutes.
- That report to the Business Meeting should take place annually. The Clerk and the Child Protection Advocate from O&M will share responsibility for preparing that report for consideration by the Convener's Meeting before presentation to the Business Meeting.

After the CPP Annual Review is completed, the Child Protection Advocate will communicate any resulting recommendations and requests to the REC convener. They will work together to strengthen child protection in accord with conclusions reached in the CPP Annual Review..

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 Child Protection Practices, Boulder Friends Meeting has determined that mandatory reporters include the: Clerk, Associate Clerk, Child Protection Advocate, Religious Education Coordinator, and all *workers* in the First Day School or child care programs (both employees and volunteers).

a) Training

All mandatory reporters shall successfully complete the online Mandated Reporter Training for Colorado Educators, which can be found at 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) for each *worker* shall be saved in a confidential file locked in the Meeting office.

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 has observed the child being subjected to circumstances or conditions that would reasonably result in abuse or neglect, the mandatory reporter shall immediately notify the Clerk, Associate Clerk, or Child Protection Advocate and report that concern (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 *worker* 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 and/or the Child Protection Advocate; in the event that the Clerk or Child Protection Advocate are not available, such concerns shall be reported to the Associate Clerk or the convener of Oversight and Membership. It shall be the duty of the Clerk and Child Protection Advocate, along with the Meeting's Oversight and Membership Committee, to offer guidance, support, and counsel to everyone affected, including the Meeting Community.

The protection and well-being of the child or children involved is of paramount concern. In the event of 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 (such as the Child Protection Advocate), shall:

- notify the parent and/or guardian of the child.
- notify Conveners of the Religious Education and O&M Committees.
- notify the worker/volunteer who was suspected of wrongdoing and immediately place him or her on leave from working with children pending an investigation. During the investigation, the person suspected 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(s) for the protection of the child that seems appropriate in the circumstances.
- maintain confidentiality by sharing information about an alleged child protection incident only on a need-to-know basis.
- Take every reasonable precaution to safeguard the reputation of anyone suspected or accused of wrongdoing.

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 may compromise the investigation 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 committee or Business Meeting.
- Friends should take every reasonable precaution to safeguard the reputation of anyone suspected or accused of wrongdoing.

V. Existing Workers

Anyone working in the Child Care Program or First Day School when these best practices became effective is required to complete a criminal background check and mandatory reporter training (if that was not previously done).

VI. Effective Date/Changes to Best Practices

These policies became effective on _____. The Clerk and Child Protection Advocate shall be primarily responsible for the enforcement and maintenance of the BFM Child Protection Policies, with support and cooperation from REC and O&M and the Religious Education Committee. Any proposed changes to these best policies that result from the annual review process can be implemented after receiving approval from REC and O&M. When considering such revisions, the Clerk of Meeting and the conveners of REC and O&M shall determine whether any changes rise to a level of importance that merits deliberation and approval in Business Meeting. However, as a general practice, the locus of authority for approving changes

in the BFM Child Protection Policies shall reside at the committee level, with the Clerk of Meeting playing an oversight role. The annual child protection report to the Business Meeting should include an update on any changes made in the BFM Child Protection Policies.

Approved at Meeting for Business
November ____, 2019
Barbara Stephens, Clerk Boulder Meeting of Friends

**Child and Youth Abuse Prevention Program:
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(Commonly referred to as the BFM Child Protection Practices)**

Acknowledgment

The BFM Child Protection Policies 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 prescribed 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. I have received a copy of the Boulder Friends Meeting BFM Child Protection Practices. I understand it is my responsibility to become familiar with and adhere to the information contained herein. I understand that the BFM Child Protection Practices are the property of the Boulder Friends Meeting.

Print Name

Signature

Date