

BYM Youth Safety Policy & Procedures

Approved by BYM TRUSTEES on 09 March 2026

Purpose & Background

The purpose of the BYM Youth Safety Policy is to document and communicate:

1. our policy to keep children and youth in Baltimore Yearly Meeting (BYM) programs safe from abuse,
2. procedures for ensuring that safety, and
3. mechanisms for reporting any instance of suspected abuse.

Baltimore Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, Inc. (the “Yearly Meeting” or “BYM”) seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for the children and youth who participate in our programs and activities. We strive to provide an atmosphere of openness and trust among children, among adults, and between children and adults. We seek Divine guidance in all aspects of our programming, operations and staffing. We affirm that the adults in our programs have the responsibility for the safety and care of all, but especially the children in our programs. We recognize that youth safety depends fundamentally upon the quality of our hiring and screening processes, the training we provide for our staff and volunteers, layered supervision, and the matrix of support we provide for our staff and volunteers. Beyond written policies, we recognize that careful attention and vigilance needs to be maintained to nurture this atmosphere and provide individuals the opportunity to experience safety in our community.

All of our youth programs honor that of God in every person. After research, thought, discussion, and prayer, we have created this policy and procedures to promote the safety of all within the Yearly Meeting community while respecting the Light within each of us. The policy set forth in this document acknowledges that each of our youth programs is unique and has different operating norms. Therefore, this document strives to provide overarching policies and guidelines which allow each program the flexibility needed to operate. These procedures focus on preventing harm and responding in a timely and appropriate way to suspicions or incidents of child abuse. By implementing the following practices, our goal is to maintain high-quality care and protection of the children and youth of Baltimore Yearly Meeting. The Yearly Meeting also seeks to protect from false accusations all who work with and support any of the Yearly Meeting's programs.



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FINAL

Definitions

For purposes of this policy, the terms “child,” “children,” “youth,” or “minors” refer to all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years. “Applicant” refers to anyone who is applying to be a youth worker. “Participant” is any individual, regardless of age, who is not working but participating in a Youth Program. “Support Workers” are those who assist in various youth programs by doing jobs necessary to such programs, but who are not directly responsible for youth - for example, kitchen staff, bus drivers, and workshop leaders. “Youth Worker” refers to someone who is working within the Yearly Meeting programs for youth, including paid staff, work-grant recipients, and volunteers. “Minor Youth Worker” refers to a Youth Worker who is under the age of 18 , such as a camp counselor-in- training.

“BYM Youth Programs” include the Junior Yearly Meeting program of Annual Sessions, the BYM Youth Program Committee conferences and other events, and the BYM camping programs.

Those in charge of those programs are referred to in this Policy as “program managers.”

The expression “includes” means “includes, but is not limited to”.

“State” includes the District of Columbia.

Because Baltimore Yearly Meeting is a voluntary association of Quaker Meetings with no central oversight or governance of Monthly Meetings, “BYM Youth Programs” do not include the programs, activities or services of Monthly Meetings. Monthly Meetings are encouraged to adopt youth safety policies appropriate to their local environment in consultation with counsel. The Yearly Meeting can provide resources and referrals to Monthly Meetings in the development of their independent youth safety policies.

Screening & Hiring

All BYM employees and any volunteers who desire to work directly with the children participating in our programs and activities will be screened using the following procedure.

Written Application

All staff and youth program volunteers must complete an application to be approved to work with youth. The applications for various BYM youth programs may differ slightly depending on individual program needs. However, each application will request basic information from the applicant, and will inquire into such matters as previous experience with children and religious affiliation. It will require at least two references, employment information, and disclosure of any criminal convictions. Applicants with experience in one or more Quaker programs are encouraged, but not required, to obtain one of their references from someone associated with that program or from their Monthly Meeting.

Access to the completed application forms will be available to those reviewing the application and to relevant BYM staff and committee clerks.

Applicant Interview

Upon review of the applications, a personal interview will be conducted with selected applicants to consider their suitability. The General Secretary conducts interviews for all year-round staff. The Camp Directors conduct interviews for the camp staff; the Junior Yearly Meeting committee clerks interview volunteers for JYM; and the Youth Programs Manager or Clerk of Youth Programs Committee interviews Friendly Adult Mentor volunteers. Procedures for conducting and documenting the interview or training process will be determined by the particular youth program. Any concerns raised during the interview process should be noted in writing on or with the application, and signed and dated by the noting interviewer.

Reference Checks

Before an applicant is permitted to work with youth in any BYM program, at least two of the applicant's personal references must be checked. References must be institutional in nature, including organizations where the applicant worked or volunteered with minors in the past. Individuals familiar with the applicant but not identified by that applicant as a reference also may be contacted for input.

Six-Month Association Rule

In an effort to ensure that we know the individuals who will help our youth develop and be asked to serve as role models, no volunteer may be considered for any positions involving supervisory contact with youth until they have been known to a Quaker community for a minimum of the previous six (6) months before applying for a position in a BYM youth program. Quaker communities include Friends schools, Friends camps, Monthly Meetings, or other Quaker organizations.

Support Workers/Exceptions to the Selection Process

Some categories of staff and volunteers are not vetted using the above detailed application

process, such as occasional workshop leaders and non-program-affiliated bus drivers. Such workers are still required to undergo a criminal background check unless fully-vetted program staff will be present at all times during the occasional person's direct contact with youth. The bottom line is that any adult who has not been fully vetted through the BYM Youth Safety Policy may not be left in the presence of youth program participants without a fully-vetted staff or volunteer in immediate line of sight and sound.

Criminal Background Check

A state and national criminal background check covering the jurisdiction in which the worker resides is required for all staff and volunteers within BYM youth programs, excepting Minor Youth Workers. Until the background check is complete, no adult applicant will be allowed to volunteer or be employed in any of the youth programs. Rechecks will occur annually.

Declining to consent to a background check means that the individual is prohibited from working with children or acting in a support capacity in our youth programs. An applicant will be provided with the opportunity to explain any extenuating circumstances regarding criminal convictions or other criminal-legal dispositions that appear on the background check.

Conviction of a crime or other criminal-legal disposition does not automatically mean that someone cannot work with children nor does it mean that they do not have gifts to offer the BYM community. However, in order to protect the safety of our youth, any individual 1) convicted of any of the following types of crimes, 2) with any final criminal-legal dispositions related to the following types of crimes, or 3) who is facing a pending charge for the commission or attempted commission of any of the following types of crimes will not be employed nor serve as a volunteer in our youth programs:

- Any crimes involving children, including child abuse, sexual abuse, child neglect, child pornography, child abandonment, endangering the life or health of a child, aiding or abetting child abduction, confinement of an unattended child, and human trafficking.
- Any crime involving any of the following: murder, manslaughter, homicide or reckless homicide; vehicular endangerment; infliction of great bodily harm; any sex offense; abduction or kidnapping; harboring a runaway; assault; battery; domestic battery; violation of an order for protection; intimidation; a hate crime; stalking; home invasion; criminal abuse or neglect of an elderly or disabled person; abuse and criminal neglect of a long-term care facility resident; ritual mutilation; a weapons or firearm violation (including felony unlawful use of weapons and aggravated or reckless discharge of a firearm); armed violence; contributing to the criminal delinquency of a juvenile; obstructing justice; concealing or aiding a fugitive; tampering with food, drugs or cosmetics; the unauthorized manufacture, distribution, delivery or dispensing of any controlled dangerous substance; trafficking of a controlled substance; felony possession of a controlled substance; sale or delivery of drug paraphernalia; or criminal drug conspiracy.
- Additionally, as defined in Maryland law, employment in youth camps is prohibited to individuals who have been convicted of certain other crimes, including cruelty to animals, domestic violence, a weapon or firearm violation of federal or state laws, a violent crime classified as a felony, manufacturing, distributing, or dispensing a controlled dangerous substance, perjury, and reckless endangerment.
- Additionally, applicants convicted of "barrier crimes", as defined by Virginia law, will not be placed in positions working with youth in any BYM programs located in Virginia.

- All other convictions will be assessed based on the type of crime, number of convictions, and date(s) of convictions, and any other pertinent information to ascertain whether the individual is suited to working with youth at all, or at the time of the application.

The background check results will be maintained in confidence in a locked file and/or in secured digital files. Should the criminal background check indicate any convictions that would ban or limit the involvement of an applicant, the Yearly Meeting staff will communicate with the applicant and notify them of the reason they are not eligible to work with youth in BYM programs. The applicant has the right to review the report. If the applicant believes that the criminal background report is incorrect, they may go through the appropriate legal channels to correct it and then reapply. BYM staff will notify the person responsible for the appropriate program that the applicant is not currently eligible to work with youth. In these instances, the General Secretary, program manager, and the appropriate program committee clerk will be consulted. The Yearly Meeting Presiding Clerk may substitute for the General Secretary, as needed.

If BYM engages any contractor or subcontractor the employees of whom may have direct, unsupervised and uncontrolled access to children and youth in any of BYM's programs or activities, such contractor or subcontractor shall be required to conduct a criminal background check on those employees in accordance with this policy as if those employees were direct employees of BYM. Any reference in these policies to employees of BYM will be deemed to include employees of a contractor or subcontractor of BYM who have direct, unsupervised and uncontrolled access to children and youth in any of BYM's programs or activities.

Minor Staff and Volunteers

Because of the difference in legal status between minors and those over 18, the selection process for minor staff and volunteers is somewhat different. We recognize that there may be times when it is necessary or desirable for individuals who are under age 18 to assist in caring for children during programs or activities. The following guidelines apply to such workers:

- Minor staff & volunteers must be at least 14 years of age; the minimum age may be higher for some BYM youth programs based on the program, job description, location of where the program is conducted, and the regulations in that jurisdiction.
- There should be an age gap of at least two years or two grade levels between minor youth staff or volunteer and the children under their care. Some programs may require a wider age gap. The director of a program may authorize a one year or one grade level gap on a case-by-case basis.
- Minor staff and Volunteers must provide at least two references, with one preferably from their Monthly Meeting or another BYM program, or from a person in a position of responsibility concerning such experience at another Quaker or religious institution or other group. It should include information about the applicant's prior experience working with children.
- All minor staff and Volunteers must have the express permission of a parent or guardian to engage in this ministry.
- Minor staff and volunteers must be under the supervision of an adult at all times.
- Note: Criminal background checks are not available for minors.

Training

All new staff and volunteers will receive training on the BYM Youth Safety Policy & Procedures.

All new staff and volunteers will be required to complete an online child abuse prevention training. Occasional employees and volunteers are exempt from this training.

All staff and volunteers will be required to complete an annual background check and annual acknowledgement of these Policies & Procedures.

It is the responsibility of each program manager and the program's supervising committee to ensure these three training requirements are met and reported annually to the Youth Program Manager. The Youth Program Manager is responsible for maintaining the training records and ensuring their long-term storage in the BYM archives.

- The Camping Program Manager (CPM) and Camping Program Committee (CPC) is responsible for the summer camp program
- The CPC is further responsible for any events run by the property committee.
- The Youth Program Manager (YPM) is responsible for programming run for Young Friends and Junior Young Friends
- The Junior Yearly Meeting of Annual Session is responsible for scheduled times during the Annual Session Gathering
- STRIDE is responsible for events led by STRIDE and any children in that program unless they are under the care of the summer camp program.
- Other (e.g., childcare worker for Interim Meeting) - The General Secretary is responsible for ensuring compliance for this situation.

BYM will strive to provide opportunities for additional training. The General Secretary will maintain a list of child abuse prevention resources. All persons working with youth are encouraged to attend regular continuing education regarding youth safety and may be required to complete additional training at the request of the Trustees, General Secretary, or Youth Program Manager.

Safe Environment Procedures

Zero Tolerance of Child Abuse & Neglect

BYM supports and maintains a **zero-tolerance** policy concerning child abuse and neglect. It is a violation of law in all states where BYM operates for any staff member or volunteer to physically, sexually, or emotionally abuse or neglect any child participating in BYM programs. It is the responsibility of every staff member and volunteer at BYM to act in the best interest of all children in every program.

In the event staff members or volunteers observe any inappropriate behaviors (i.e., policy violations, neglectful supervision, poor role-modeling, etc.) or suspected abuse (physical, emotional, or sexual), it is their responsibility to immediately report their observations to their program manager, the General Secretary, or the Presiding Clerk.

Preventive Measures

BYM seeks to prevent the occurrence of child abuse within its programs. Prevention occurs in various ways that include: carefully screening applicants, checking references, conducting criminal background checks, and regularly re-checking criminal records. It also includes training on the signs of possible child abuse, regular monitoring of staff during youth activities, ensuring this Policy is disseminated to all who work with youth, training on this Youth Safety Policy, creating procedures appropriate for each youth program, and monitoring compliance with those procedures.

Supervision Ratios

Given that our Yearly Meeting youth programs serve children from infancy through early adulthood, each youth program will develop guidelines for its programs and events that identify the maximum number of participants that one worker may be responsible for supervising, in accordance with applicable laws. Programs employing or otherwise engaging staff or volunteers under the age of eighteen (18) years will include in their guidelines the discernment as to the number and ages of children they may supervise.

Discipline

BYM strives to create a safe and nurturing environment where youth of all ages can experience the community of Friends. Our program leaders and staff work hard to use conflict resolution familiar to Friends when the need arises. Physical discipline such as spanking, grabbing, or hitting children is unacceptable under any circumstance. Staff and volunteers should consult with the program manager or committee clerk if assistance is needed with disciplinary issues.

Bullying

Verbal, physical, or emotional bullying is not acceptable in BYM programs. At the first sign of bullying in any form, act decisively and inform another BYM adult. Care should be taken to correct bullying behavior without embarrassment or chastisement. If bullying is severe or repeated, privately, but with another adult present, confirm that the child who was the target of the bullying behaviors is not in danger of continued harassment and is physically and emotionally stable. Bullying incidents should be disclosed and discussed with the parents at the conclusion of the program.

One-on-One Interactions with Children

One-on-one, unobservable interaction between adults and unrelated minors is strictly prohibited, except as may be required for medical or unavoidable emergency purposes. When transporting minors, at least two adults must transport a single minor participant or at least two minors must be present if transported by a single adult. Private conversations between an adult and a child should be held in public view. During times when there are not two adults present with a group of youth, another adult should be assigned to make periodic unannounced site checks of such a group.

Restroom & Showerhouse Supervision

Either 'line of sight' or 'line of sound' supervision must be maintained while youth are using bathhouses and other multi-user restroom facilities of BYM. If staff or volunteers are assisting younger youth, doors to the facility must remain open. When off-site or using public restrooms, staff and volunteers will inspect the restroom prior to use. Staff and volunteers will ensure that no youth, regardless of age, enters a multi-user public bathroom alone on a field trip. Staff and volunteers should conduct or supervise private activities in pairs—putting on bathing suits, taking showers, etc. When this is not feasible, staff should be positioned so that they are clearly visible to others.

Open Door Guideline

When a program involving youth uses a classroom or other meeting room, the door to the room should always remain open unless there is an uncovered window in the door or a side window beside it that provides a clear view into the room. Doors are never to be locked while youth are inside the room.

Check-in/Check-out Procedure

All programs which serve youth within BYM will have clear check-in and check-out procedures which ensure that the staff/volunteers can account for the number, identity, and whereabouts of the youth under their care from arrival to departure. Each program will provide the particular procedures for these safeguards. Each such procedure should be submitted for approval to the program manager, or the person in charge.

Communicating with Families

BYM deeply respects the role of parents in the lives of their children and encourages parent involvement in our youth programs. Each program maintains its own rules and standard procedures for parental involvement in various youth activities. Parents who desire to participate in or have a continuous, ongoing presence at their children's programs at BYM will be required to complete the BYM volunteer application and screening process.

Parents of children who participate in BYM youth programs will be contacted if their child becomes ill, is injured, or has a severe disciplinary problem while participating in BYM programs. Parents will be informed by a BYM staff member if their child is bullied or abused while participating in a BYM program. Parents will also be informed if, for any reason, their child is included in any mandatory abuse or neglect report made by BYM to authorities, except when the parent has been named in such a report as the actual or suspected abuser.

Transportation

Staff and volunteers may provide transportation for youth program participants under the following conditions. Any staff member or volunteer transporting youth program participants must:

1. Be in full compliance with the BYM Youth Safety Policy
2. Be on the BYM Approved Driver List, maintained by the General Secretary. This list resets every December 31st and drivers must undergo recertification annually.
3. Sign and comply with the BYM Vehicle Policy.
4. Minors may only be transported in safe, reliable vehicles. When possible, youth should be transported in BYM-owned vehicles or cars rented under BYM's corporate rental account. BYM Camps youth participants (campers) may not be transported in the private vehicles of staff or volunteers, except in emergencies or with the permission of the General Secretary. Youth participants in other BYM programs may only be transported in private vehicles of staff and volunteers a) that are safe, reliable, and fully-insured and b) with express permission of the parents.

Online Events

During BYM-sponsored youth events that take place online, care should be taken to abide by all aspects of the BYM Youth Safety Policy & Procedures, especially those relating to staffing and youth worker interactions. Youth workers should be screened according to this policy before participating in online BYM youth events. Private one-on-one interactions between youth and youth workers remain prohibited, and at least two adults should be present during the whole of any online BYM youth event to ensure that the possibility of private one-on-one interaction is minimized. Youth workers should continue to act responsibly when interacting through active (video, calls, chat) or inactive (content filtering, social media posting, or any other youth-accessible forum use) mediums with youth on any online, virtual, and/or long-distance platforms.

For any BYM program that wishes to hold online youth events, program-specific policies in the following areas must be developed and distributed to participants based on their role:

- Registration procedures that ensure youth only attend with parent/guardian consent.
- Rules for the setup and use of any specific web application or software used to facilitate the program, to minimize risk of harm to youth, recognizing that the features and risks of each application are different.
- Procedures for managing disruptive behavior, including malicious interruptions (like "Zoom-bombing").
- A photo and recording consent policy and procedure.

Rental of BYM Property

BYM is not responsible for the safety of youth participating in programs by outside entities renting or using BYM properties or facilities. When outside groups, including Monthly Meetings, rent or use BYM properties they will be required to:

- Sign a Facility Usage Agreement listing BYM as Hold Harmless, Additional Insured, and Waiver of Subrogation
- Carry Sexual Abuse & Molestation coverage (if youth will be present during the rental)

EMMA

Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers

Baltimore Yearly Meeting is committed to the safety and protection of children and youth. This Code of Conduct, along with the BYM Youth Safety Policy & Procedures, applies to all staff, employees, and volunteers who represent the BYM and who interact with children or youth in both a direct and/or unsupervised capacity.

We must, at all times, be aware of our sacred responsibility to treat young people with dignity, respect, and care. The public and private conduct of staff, employees, and volunteers acting on behalf of BYM can inspire and motivate those with whom they interact, or can cause great harm if inappropriate.

We are responsible for maintaining physical, emotional, and sexual boundaries in all interactions. We must avoid any covert or overt sexual behaviors with those for whom we have responsibility. This includes seductive speech, jokes or gestures as well as physical contact that exploits, abuses, or harasses. We are to provide safe environments for children and youth at all times. In addition, staff members and volunteers should not accept or give gifts to children without the knowledge of their parents or guardians.

We must show prudent discretion before touching another person, especially children and youth, and be aware of how physical touch will be perceived or received, and whether it would be an appropriate expression of greeting, care, concern, or celebration. BYM personnel and volunteers are prohibited at all times from physically disciplining a child.

Physical contact with children, such as hugging, should occur only when completely nonsexual and never in private. One-on-one meetings with a child or young person should be held in a public area; in a room where the interaction can be (or is being) observed; or in a room with the door left open, and another staff member or supervisor is notified about the meeting.

We must intervene when there is evidence of, or there is reasonable cause to suspect, that children and youth are being maltreated in any way. Suspected abuse or neglect, including peer-on-peer abuse, must be reported to the appropriate organizational and civil authorities as described in the BYM Youth Safety Policy.

While working with youth or on BYM properties, we are mature and responsible in our conduct and in our communications.

- **Staff and volunteers are prohibited from using tobacco products, alcohol, cannabis, and/or illicit drugs while at work,** while on BYM properties, and when in the presence of BYM youth program participants. Any intoxication during working hours is prohibited. Adults should never buy alcohol, drugs, cigarettes, or inappropriate reading/video material for youth.
- **Staff or volunteers should not release youth to anyone other than the authorized parent, guardian, or other adult authorized by the parent or guardian.** When in doubt staff will ask to see ID when picking up youth.

- **Communication with children by staff and volunteers is only allowed for BYM business.** For the protection of all concerned, the key safety concept that will be applied to these interactions is *transparency*. The following steps will reduce the risk of private or otherwise inappropriate communication between staff, volunteers, and minors:
 1. Communication between BYM personnel (including volunteers) and children/youth that is outside the role of the professional or volunteer relationship is prohibited.
 2. Where possible, email exchanges between a minor and a person acting on behalf of the organization are to be made using a BYM email address.
 3. Electronic communication that takes place over a BYM's network or platform may be subject to periodic monitoring.
 4. Staff, and volunteers who use text messaging or any form of online communications including social media to communicate with children/youth may only do so for activities involving BYM business. Care should be taken to preserve all such communication, and it shall be made available for inspection by BYM.

The organizational contact for questions about or reports of breaches of this Code of Conduct is the General Secretary (GenSec@bym-rsf.org) or the Presiding Clerk (YMclerk@bym-rsf.org).

In the event that a child is in immediate danger, and a program manager (or designated alternate) is not available, call the Department of Children and Families or the local Police Department and notify the program manager as soon as possible.

BYM will not discharge or in any manner retaliate or discriminate against any person who, in good faith, submits a report to authorities, expresses a concern, or reports a breach of any of the behaviors contained in this Code or the BYM Youth Safety Policy.

All incidents will be investigated within 30 days by General Secretary and/or Presiding Clerk, and the employee/volunteer reporting the incident will be informed of the outcomes.

Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers: Agreement & Signature Page

I promise to strictly follow the rules and guidelines in the Baltimore Yearly Meeting (BYM) Youth Safety Code of Conduct as a condition of my employment or volunteer service to the children and youth of BYM.

I will:

- Treat everyone with respect, loyalty, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity and consideration.
- Never be alone with individual children and/or youth at organizational activities without another adult being notified.
- Use positive reinforcement rather than criticism, competition or comparison when working with children and/or youth.
- Maintain appropriate physical boundaries at all times, and touch children – when necessary – only in ways that are appropriate, public, and non-sexual.
- Comply with the mandatory reporting laws of the Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia and with the BYM Youth Safety Policies and Procedures to report suspected child abuse. I understand that failure to report suspected child maltreatment to civil authorities is against the law.
- Cooperate fully in any investigation of abuse of children and/or youth.

I will not:

- Touch or speak to a child and/or youth in a sexual or other inappropriate manner. Inflict any physical or emotional abuse such as striking, spanking, shaking, slapping, humiliating, ridiculing, threatening, or degrading children and/or youth.
- Smoke or use cannabis or tobacco products, or possess, or be under the influence of alcohol, cannabis, or illegal drugs at any time while working with children and/or youth and while on BYM property, including camps and vehicles.
- Give a child who is not my own a ride except under the conditions of the BYM Transportation Policy.
- Accept or give gifts to children or youth without the knowledge of their parents or guardians.
- Engage in private communications with children or youth via text messaging, email, Facebook, Twitter or other similar forms of electronic or social media.
- Use excessive profanity in the presence of children and/or youth.
- Release youth to anyone other than the authorized parent, guardian, or other adult authorized by the parent or guardian.

I understand that as a person working with and/or providing services to children and youth under the auspices of BYM, I am subject to a criminal history background check.

My signature confirms that I have read this Code of Conduct and agree to follow the standards it contains. I understand that any action inconsistent with this Code of Conduct, or failure to act as mandated by this Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action up to and including removal from my position.

Name (Print): _____ Signature/Date: _____

Code of Conduct for Youth Program Participants

Each program of Baltimore Yearly Meeting is tasked with developing its own code of conduct for youth participants. These codes of conduct should be reviewed annually by the supervising committee; readily available to program participants, staff, volunteers, and parents; and reviewed with participants at the beginning of each program session.

Individual program codes of conduct must include a clear prohibition on bullying and peer-on-peer sexual abuse.

FULLY

Reporting

Reporting Violations of Policy

Together, we keep young people safe. The entire BYM community - staff, volunteers, and program participants - is expected to be aware, speak up, and act to keep children safe. If you see something that concerns you or makes you uncomfortable, report it. Our community listens to children, believes them, and takes their concerns seriously. Leadership is expected to follow-up on any reported concerns. BYM staff and volunteers are expected to report any questionable circumstance, observation, act, omission, or situation that is a violation of these policies. All questions or concerns related to inappropriate, suspicious, or suspected grooming behavior should be directed to the program manager, the General Secretary, or the Presiding Clerk. Anonymous reports can be sent to GenSec@bym-rsf.org or YMclerk@bym-rsf.org or mailed to Baltimore Yearly Meeting, Attention: Youth Safety, 17100 Quaker Lane, Sandy Spring, MD 20860 or by phone at 301-774-7663.

Concerning or Inappropriate Behavior

Behaviors Occurring Internally

We recognize that some situations, actions, or behaviors of Youth Workers that are not reportable as abuse may still concern us or may indicate “grooming behavior.” Grooming is the process used by an abuser to select a child, win the child’s trust (and the trust of the child’s parent or caregiver), manipulate the child into sexual activity, and keep the child from disclosing the abuse. Situations involving grooming or any other disconcerting behaviors are to be handled in the following manner:

1. The behavior will be brought to the attention of the person in charge (PIC), i.e. Camp Director, Youth Programs Manager, Friends Adult Mentor, or program manager by the individual(s) observing or receiving a report about the behavior.
2. If the behavior appears to be of a serious, but still non-reportable, nature, the PIC will note the concern in writing and notify the program staff person or the program committee clerk of the concern as soon as possible. The General Secretary or designee must be consulted as soon as possible and is to be kept informed throughout the entire process.
3. If, after this, the behavior is deemed serious by the PIC or the General Secretary, the individual in question will be notified in writing that he/she is being put on inactive status and cannot participate in any Baltimore Yearly Meeting youth program until the matter is investigated. At this point, an inquiry will be initiated by the program staff person, in concurrence with the General Secretary, to determine the following:
 - The complaint has a basis for further investigation. If so, conduct an internal inquiry and,
 - If deemed reportable, take reporting steps as indicated previously.
 - If non-reportable but the behavior indicates
 - a lack of good judgment, or
 - an insufficient level of maturity for the position of Youth Worker, or
 - an inappropriate sense of boundaries, then
 - The PIC and/or the General Secretary shall determine a course of action appropriate to the circumstances. Actions may include the following:
 - provide additional training,

- provide closer supervision,
- offer a clearness committee,
- temporarily restrict participation in Youth Programs pending additional maturity, and/or
- bar permanently from youth work.

If the internal inquiry indicates that the individual should be barred from the youth program, the program staff person may contact the clerk of the individual's Monthly Meeting to convey the general outline of the situation and to request that the Monthly Meeting attend to the spiritual and emotional needs of the individual.

Information about the situation will be shared only on an as-needed basis, and only to the extent necessary. Any documentation relating to a report will be kept in a confidential file in a secure digital or physical location.

Behavior Outside of BYM that Raises Concerns

An individual may question the appropriateness of a BYM staff member's or volunteer's involvement with youth based upon that person's behavior outside of Yearly Meeting activities. When such a concern is brought to the attention of BYM, care needs to be taken to discern the appropriate response after determining whether the behavior raises an issue under this policy or otherwise jeopardizes the safety of program participants. The response shall be determined by the program manager, program committee clerk, and the General Secretary and may include any of the steps listed above.

Knowledge, Allegations, or Suspicions of Abuse

We report all suspected or alleged abuse or neglect of children to local law enforcement or the State Child Protective Services Hotline, no matter when or where the suspected abuse took place.

- 1-800-352-2873 (Maryland)
- 1-800-552-7096 (Virginia)
- 1-800-352-6513 (West Virginia)
- 1-202-671-7233 (DC)
- 1-800-932-0313 (Pennsylvania)

Tandem Reporting

Because many adults are unfamiliar with state reporting requirements and may be fearful of the process, BYM utilizes a 'tandem or dual report' model, where permitted. A 'dual report' occurs when a BYM supervisor reports the suspicion or allegation *together* with the individual who saw, heard, or received information causing them to suspect abuse or neglect.

This practice is not required or intended to inhibit any staff member or volunteer from reporting to law enforcement, Child Protective Services (CPS)/Department of Social Services (DSS), or the abuse hotline directly. Instead, this practice is meant to facilitate reporting, protect children, and support individuals who may not feel able or willing to report alone.

No permission is needed from BYM before reporting to law enforcement or the Child Abuse Hotline. In addition, a report may be made without involving or informing BYM personnel.

What to Report

BYM operates in Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia. While the terms “child abuse,” “child neglect,” and “child sexual abuse” have different legal definitions and reporting requirements by individual state law, BYM follows the most stringent definitions and reporting requirements. All youth workers are encouraged to make themselves familiar with applicable state laws. Notwithstanding these various state definitions, child abuse, neglect, or sexual abuse generally include the following:

- **Any treatment, action, or behavior or lack thereof to a child by any adult or other child that is not accidental, and that causes physical, sexual, or emotional harm or injury to that child.** This includes actions or behaviors that are direct as well as indirect through writing, phone calls, texting, instant messaging, via any form of social media or other form of communication or interaction.
- **Any act that involves sexual molestation or exploitation of a child by a parent or other person who has permanent or temporary care or responsibility for supervision of a child, or by any household or family member.** These acts include incest, rape, sodomy, sexual offense, and unnatural or perverted sexual practices. (These acts by other adults would be defined as sexual crimes and be described in another part of the Law.) This includes actions or behaviors that are direct as well as indirect through writing, phone calls, texting, instant messaging, via any form of social media or any other form of communication or interaction.
- **Any action or failure to act that deprives a child of essential needs**, such as adequate food, water, shelter, or medical care, by a caregiver.
- **Any sexual activity between children that occurs without consent, without equality (mentally, physically, or in age), or as a result of physical or emotional coercion.** “Without equality” refers to a power difference between two children, such as age, size, or ability. 40% of all child sexual abuse is peer-on-peer. While the trauma for the victim is the same, this type of abuse often goes unreported—either because it’s dismissed by adults as “kids being kids” or for the fear of what will happen to one or both of the children to have the abuse known.

When in doubt, report it!

How to Report

If an individual suspects abuse or neglect of a child participating in any BYM program, including peer-on-peer child sexual abuse, whether the abuse is suspected to have occurred in the youth program or elsewhere, they will immediately:

1. Notify the relevant Yearly Meeting program manager (i.e. Youth Program Manager, Camp Director, Camping Program Manager, General Secretary, etc). The program manager who receives the initial report shall notify the General Secretary as soon as possible. Anonymous reports can be sent anytime to GenSec@bym-rsf.org or YMclerk@bym-rsf.org.

2. Make an oral report to the authorities. This can be done in tandem with the program manager or General Secretary.
3. Make a follow-up written report to the authorities within 24-48 hours, as mandated by state law. This can be done in tandem with the program manager or General Secretary.

Internal Steps After Initial Report of Actual or Suspected Abuse or Neglect

1. Immediate steps will be taken by the program manager or person in charge to ensure that all other children and youth in the youth program are safe, as applicable.
2. If applicable, the employee or volunteer alleged to be the perpetrator of abuse or misconduct will immediately be placed on leave from working with children and will not be permitted to participate in any activities involving children, pending an investigation.
3. The parent or guardian of the youth will be notified by the person in charge as soon as possible, except in circumstances in which such parent or guardian is the alleged abuser. Information on the suspicion or incident will be provided to the parent or guardian.
4. In situations where the parent or guardian is available and not the alleged abuser, the program manager will assist as requested by the parent or guardian to care for the needs of the child. If the parent or guardian is not immediately available or is the alleged abuser, the program manager will ensure that the child, the alleged victim, receives immediate medical attention, if and as appropriate.
5. Investigation of the suspicion or incident is the responsibility of the civil authorities who are trained for this purpose. BYM officials and all involved are expected to cooperate fully with any investigation. During the course of any investigation, all involved are reminded that confidentiality is important to the alleged victim as well as the alleged perpetrator. Any person ultimately found guilty of abuse by the authorities will be permanently removed from their position with children or youth, and will not be permitted to participate in any activities involving children and youth in the Yearly Meeting.
6. The General Secretary of the Yearly Meeting or their designee will ensure that all required reports to the civil authorities are made and that internal written records are kept regarding the suspicion or incident. The internal records should include, in detail, all steps taken by BYM in compliance with this policy and state law, as well as all actions to foster the healing of everyone involved. These will be kept in a locked file or secure digital location.
7. The Presiding Clerk of the Yearly Meeting and the Yearly Meeting's insurance carrier will be notified by BYM's General Secretary or their designee. If the insurer of the local venue is not the same as BYM's carrier, staff will advise the contact person for that venue that an incident has occurred, and that while BYM carries insurance, it is also appropriate for a representative of that venue to contact its insurer.
8. After consultation with BYM's legal counsel, the Presiding Clerk of the Yearly Meeting or their designee will determine whether, to what extent and by whom internal announcements or reports will be made within BYM to Friends.
9. After consultation with BYM's legal counsel, the Presiding Clerk of Yearly Meeting or their designee will be the spokesperson to the media, if that is deemed necessary, concerning incidents of abuse or neglect. However, if that person is alleged to be involved, the Interim Meeting Clerk or their designee will be the spokesperson. All others should refrain from speaking to the media.
10. The Clerk of the Committee charged with supervision of the Program (or Supervisory Committee for staff), the General Secretary, the Presiding Clerk of Yearly Meeting, the appropriate program manager, the Camp Director (where appropriate), and BYM's legal

counsel will together determine what information might need to be communicated to help the community recover. This group will make decisions about communicating information and facilitating healing, and will assist in carrying these out.

11. The point person among those in charge will contact the parent or guardian and the victim to inform them of steps that were taken so as to close the feedback loop.
12. At the conclusion of the investigation, if it is determined by the civil authorities that they do not have enough information to move forward, or if the suspicion is unsubstantiated, the program manager or person in charge will meet with the appropriate persons to determine whether any further internal steps need to be taken.

Throughout the process, Yearly Meeting staff and leadership will prioritize first the safety of children and our legal obligations, then the confidentiality of both the victim and the accused, and finally the healing of the community. While Friends are accustomed to conducting our community business in an open, transparent manner, this is not always possible in cases of child abuse and neglect. Every effort will be made to share and debrief circumstances of child abuse or neglect with the wider community as deemed appropriate by the General Secretary, Presiding Clerk, Trustees, Youth Safety Working Group, and legal counsel.

FRIENDS

Accountability

Enforcement of Policies

BYM staff members and volunteers who supervise other staff members or volunteers are charged with the diligent enforcement of all BYM policies. Anyone working with children at BYM is subject to the supervision and evaluation of staff members and must follow these guidelines.

Consequences of Violation

Violations of these policies or any act considered by BYM to be harmful to a child are grounds for immediate dismissal or disciplinary action – for both staff members and volunteers. Final decisions related to policy violations will be the responsibility of the General Secretary, Presiding Clerk, and Trustees.

Any person found to have committed a prohibited act or violation of policy will be precluded from future participation as a staff member or volunteer in all activities and programming that involves children, students, or vulnerable populations. If the person is a staff member or employee, such conduct may also result in termination of employment from BYM.

Failure to report a prohibited act or violation of this policy to the designated person is a violation of this policy and grounds for termination (employee) or removal (volunteer).

Staff members and volunteers should discuss immediately with their supervisor any inappropriate action or breaking of this policy and will seek counsel from the Yearly Meeting leadership and attorney, if needed.



Youth Safety Working Group

Recognizing the importance of providing and maintaining a safe environment for children, BYM will appoint and maintain a Youth Safety Working Group, which will meet at least once per year.

The purpose of the Youth Safety Working Group is to enable BYM to carry out appropriate activities while safeguarding program participants against emotional, physical, or sexual abuse. Throughout the year, the General Secretary keeps the members of the Youth Safety Working Group informed about best practices for youth safety.

Composition

The BYM Youth Safety Working Group is under the care of the BYM Trustees and will be comprised of the following members:

1. General Secretary
2. Youth Programs Manager
3. Camp Program Manager
4. Presiding Clerk
5. Clerk of Supervisory Committee
6. Clerk of Trustees (or a designated member of Trustees)
7. Clerk of Youth Programs Committee (or a designated member of that Committee)
8. Clerk of Camping Program Committee (or a designated member of that Committee)
9. Clerk of Religious Education Committee (or a designated member of that Committee)
10. Clerk of Junior Yearly Meeting Staff (or a designated member of JYM staff)
11. STRIDE Coordinator
12. Others as needed, including BYM legal counsel

Responsibilities

The BYM Youth Safety Working Group is charged with the following duties:

1. Applying existing BYM policies and procedures related to youth safety and risk management issues.
2. Monitoring all BYM youth programs for ongoing compliance with safety policies.
3. Meeting at least once per year to review any youth safety concerns that may have arisen and the Youth Safety Policy & Procedures.
4. Making recommendations to the BYM Trustees regarding safety issues.

Statement of Acknowledgment and Agreement

I have received and read a copy of Baltimore Yearly Meeting's Youth Safety Policies and Procedures and understand their importance. I agree to abide by these guidelines while serving or working at BYM.

I understand the policies and procedures may be modified, and that any guideline may be amended, revised, or eliminated by BYM.

I acknowledge and understand that the materials and guidelines contained in this policy in no way express or imply a contractual employment relationship between me and BYM. If applying as a volunteer, I acknowledge and agree that I will receive no monetary compensation for hours worked.

I understand it is my responsibility to review new guidelines which may be created and distributed.

Staff member or volunteer name (please print)

Staff member or volunteer signature

Date