

Child Safety Policy

Baltimore Monthly Meeting of Friends, Stony Run

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Child abuse occurs every minute of every day, and it occurs in every community. Child abuse occurs in every economic, racial, ethnic, religious, or other demographic group. No segment of our society is immune. We are called to be vigilant in protecting the children in our midst and in preventing child abuse in the community of faith.

A Introduction

Baltimore Monthly Meeting of Friends, Stony Run, is a community of individuals committed to recognizing and honoring that of God within each person. All adults have responsibility for the safety of all, especially the children in the Meeting. The Meeting has a responsibility to establish clear guidelines for the interaction of adults with children. Child abuse occurs in many places, including faith communities.

This document states our policy on child safety, our procedures for ensuring that safety, and the process for reporting and investigating any instance of suspected abuse.

After research, thought, discussion and prayer, we have created policies and procedures to promote the safety of all Friends in the Stony Run community while respecting the Light within each of us. We seek an environment that encourages trust.

We have designed these policies and procedures to keep the children of our Meeting safe and to support and encourage our First Day School teachers and child care providers by educating them about the prevention of child abuse.

The Child Safety Committee, which revised this document, recognizes and greatly appreciates the efforts of the Child Safety Working Group, which produced the original Policy approved in First Month, 2011 by the Meeting's Trustees Committee. This policy is intended to provide education and information, and every attempt has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information as of the date of the latest revision. The policy is not intended to be a document for delivering legal advice and is not a substitute for obtaining legal advice in any given situation.

B Definitions

In this policy, the following definitions apply:

1. “Adult” means any individual at least eighteen years of age.
2. “Child Abuse” means the physical or sexual abuse of a child.
3. “Criminal Background Check (CBC)” is the procedure used to check the background of adult workers for criminal activity.
4. “Meeting” means Baltimore Monthly Meeting of Friends, Stony Run.
5. “Meeting Clerk” means the individual currently serving as the presiding clerk of Meeting.
6. “Meeting Facilitator/Coordinator” means an individual employed by Meeting to coordinate the day-to-day operations of the Meeting.
7. “Parent” means the usual sense of the word as well as to designate a person with whom a minor resides and/or for whom he or she acts *in loco parentis* (i.e., in place of a parent; for example, a guardian).
8. “Child” means any individual *under* the age of eighteen, except Teenage Workers.
9. “Regular Volunteer” means a person who works with children several times during the year.
10. “Teenage Worker” means a paid person or volunteer at least fourteen years old, but under the age of eighteen assisting with the care of Children.
11. “Teacher” means an adult who takes on responsibility for the planning and execution of a lesson or activity for Children.
12. “Worker” means any Adult who serves as a Teacher, Regular Volunteer, or paid person given the responsibility of working with or caring for Children.

C Child Protection Policy

1. Any group containing Adults and Children must have at least three people present. Ideally, there will be two Workers, either Adult or Teenage, present with Children in any situation. If one Worker has a group with fewer than two children, they must join another group. If there is only one Child with one Worker in the nursery, a parent must stay until another Child or Worker arrives.
2. Open door policy: When a program involving Children uses a classroom or other meeting room, the door to the room shall remain open unless there is an uncovered window in the door or a side window beside it which provides a clear view into the room. Doors should never be locked while persons are inside the room.
3. Parents are responsible for supervising their Children before and after First Day School classes and during all Meeting events in the Meetinghouse or adjacent property.
4. All Workers shall participate in an orientation session offered by the Child Safety Committee, become familiar with this document, and complete the required forms.
5. Adult Workers will complete a Criminal Background Check online through Protect My Ministry.
6. Anyone suspecting that a Child may be the victim of abuse must report their concern to the Meeting Clerk or Meeting Facilitator/Coordinator immediately.
7. Meeting's Child Safety Committee is responsible for ensuring adherence to this policy by all Adults in the Meeting community.
8. Meeting's Trustees Committee is responsible for approving revisions to this policy.
9. A Child is never responsible for causing abuse and is never to be blamed.

D Summary of Maryland Law**1. Who has to report suspected child abuse or neglect?**

Section 5-705(a)(1) of the Family Law Article of the Maryland Annotated Code requires any resident of the State of Maryland who has reason to believe that a child has been subject to abuse or neglect to notify the local department of social services or the appropriate law enforcement agency. There are exceptions provided in Section 5-705(a)(2) for attorney-client privilege and under Section 5-705(a)(3) for confidential communications made to clergy.

2. Immunity for making a report of suspected child abuse or neglect

Section 5-702(2) gives immunity to any individual who reports, in good faith, a suspected incident of abuse or neglect. Section 5-708 provides that any person who makes or participates in making a report of abuse or neglect under § 5-704, § 5-705, or § 5-705.1 of this subtitle or a report of substantial risk of sexual abuse under § 5-704.1 of this subtitle or participates in an investigation or a resulting judicial proceeding shall have the immunity described under § 5-620 of the Courts and Judicial Proceedings Article from civil liability or criminal penalty.

3. Additional reporting requirements for certain professions

Section 5-704(a) provides that health practitioners, police officers, educators, or human service workers, acting in a professional capacity in this State, who has reason to believe that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect, shall notify the local department or the appropriate law enforcement agency. Professionals in these categories are often referred to as “mandated reporters” and may be subject to sanctions if they fail to report a case of suspected child abuse or neglect.

4. What is Physical Child Abuse?

Section 5-701(b)(1) defines child abuse as the physical or mental injury of a child by any parent or other person who has permanent or temporary care or custody or responsibility for supervision of a child, or by any household or family member, under circumstances that indicate that the child's health or welfare is harmed or at substantial risk of being harmed. Section 5-701(b)(2) provides that sexual abuse is child abuse “whether physical injuries are sustained or not.”

5. What is Child Sexual Abuse?

Section 5-701(y)(1) defines “Sexual abuse” to mean any act that involves sexual molestation or exploitation of a child by a parent or other person who has permanent or temporary care or custody or responsibility for supervision of a child, or by any household or family member. Sexual abuse also includes sex trafficking of a child by any individual (Section 5-701(y)(2)). Section 5-701(z) defines “Sexual molestation or exploitation” to include allowing or encouraging a child to engage in obscene photography, films, poses, or similar activity; pornographic photography, films, poses, or similar activity; or, prostitution. It also includes incest, rape, sexual offense in any degree, sodomy, and, unnatural or perverted sexual practices. The Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR), further defines “sexual molestation or exploitation” to include exposure, voyeurism, sexual advances, kissing, fondling, grooming for sexual activity, photographing, filming or depiction of a child in a manner prohibited by law, and sex trafficking. COMAR 07.02.07.02B(51)(b)(i) through (vii).

6. Physical Abuse Includes “Mental Injury.” What is Mental Injury?

Section 5-701(r) defines “Mental injury” as the observable, identifiable, and substantial impairment of a child’s mental or psychological ability to function.

7. What is Neglect?

Section 5-701(s) defines “Neglect” as the leaving of a child unattended or other failure to give proper care and attention to a child by any parent or other person who has permanent or temporary care or custody or responsibility for supervision of the child under circumstances that indicate: (1) that the child’s health or welfare is harmed or placed at substantial risk of harm; or (2) mental injury to the child or a substantial risk of mental injury. “Proper care and attention” is defined by COMAR 07.02.07.02B (40)(a) as “providing care appropriate to the child’s needs and development.” It includes, but is not limited to, providing appropriate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, nurturing, activity, guardianship, supervision, and caring and planning for the child’s welfare. COMAR 07.02.07.02B(40)(b)(i) and (ii).

E. Expectations for All Workers

1. Treat all people with respect and consideration regardless of age, race, religion, culture, sexual orientation, disability and gender.
2. Be positive role models for minors by maintaining an attitude of respect, loyalty, patience, courtesy, and maturity. The use of profanity is prohibited.
3. Be free of physical and psychological conditions that might adversely affect a child's health, including, but not limited to, contagious disease.
4. Avoid being alone with a Child other than his/her own Child.
5. Inform co-workers or clerk of program if any personal circumstance limits worker's full participation in the program.
6. Understand that certain behaviors, including the following, are inappropriate in this setting and will not be tolerated:
 - a. Smoking or using tobacco products in the presence of Children or obtaining tobacco products for minors;
 - b. Using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, or using any drug or material not in the prescribed manner;
 - c. Using or having in one's possession, weapons of any kind, including but not limited to, guns.
 - d. Any display or demonstration of sexual activity with another person, including a partner or spouse;
 - e. Any display or demonstration of abuse, insinuation of abuse, or evidence of abusive conduct towards a Child or with another adult;
 - f. Sexual advances toward or sexual activities of any kind with a Child, including any touching of a Child in an inappropriate manner or in an inappropriate place on the Child's body;
 - g. Physical abuse or bodily injury to a Child;
 - h. Mental or emotional injury to a Child;
 - i. Neglect of a Child, including failure to provide adequate supervision in sanctioned activities of Meeting;
 - j. The presence or possession of obscene or pornographic materials or the transmitting of any obscene or pornographic materials through the use of any electronic or social media to any Child;
 - k. The photographing of a Child in any state of undress or in a sexually suggestive position, pose, or activity;
 - l. Any behavior which would generally be considered inappropriate, or offensive, and not otherwise outlined here.

F Criminal Background Checks for Workers

1. Criminal Background Checks are performed online using the Ministry Mobilizer screening vendor, also known as Protect My Ministry.
2. The Meeting Clerk or Meeting Facilitator/Coordinator sets up the background check in Protect My Ministry and the Worker completes a release online to start the background check. A sample of the online release is in Appendix 1.
3. Only the Meeting Clerk and the Meeting Facilitator/Coordinator have online access to the Criminal Background Check reports. Upon request, a Worker will be allowed to view the results of their check.
4. Any Worker who has prior convictions for the following crimes, will not be allowed to serve in any capacity where he/she would have contact with Children:
 - a. Criminal homicide
 - b. Rape
 - c. Aggravated physical or sexual assault
 - d. Any crime in any degree relating to Child physical abuse, sexual abuse or neglect
 - e. Any crime related to the possession, promotion or distribution of Child pornography
 - f. Kidnapping or unlawful restraint
 - g. Crimes related to the possession, use or sale of drugs or controlled substance to a Child
5. The Meeting Clerk and the Meeting Facilitator/Coordinator will review any other criminal convictions and decide if the Worker may work with Children.
6. To work with Children, a Worker must have been an active attender of Meeting for at least six months. This does not preclude a Parent sitting in a classroom with their own Child.
7. Teenage Workers who want to serve in any capacity with activities, studies, or programs for Children must first complete a Teenage Worker Screening Form (Appendix 2). Teenage Workers are exempt from the Criminal Background Check.
8. The Child Safety Committee will provide information about preventing abuse and neglect of Children to each Worker and Teenage Worker.

G Worker Supervision

1. The Religious Education Committee will supervise First Day School programs on an ongoing basis and make unannounced visits to classes or other program sites from time to time. A Meeting usher will check each classroom on First Day to be sure approved Workers are present and the correct ratio of Worker to Children is met.
2. A list of people who meet the requirements of this policy as Workers or Teenage Workers will be kept in the Religious Education Committee hall box.

H Child Safety Committee

The Child Safety Committee will:

1. Educate the Meeting community about this policy each year.
2. Ensure that each Worker and Teenage Worker receives a copy of this policy and signs the Acknowledgement of Receipt (Appendix 3).
3. Ensure that we are following the policy.
4. Suggest changes to the policy when appropriate.

The Child Safety Committee will consist of the Meeting Clerk, the Meeting Facilitator/Coordinator, one member each of Community, Care and Clearness, Trustees, and Religious Education, and two other members of Meeting appointed by the Meeting's Nominating Committee.

The Child Safety Committee will recommend to Meeting a response to alleged abuse. Foremost in the consideration will be concern for the Children of the Meeting. At the same time, it is important to remember that there is that of God within every person and to proceed with love and gentleness. Specific procedures for individual cases will be determined by the committee.

It is the duty of Parents to teach their Children about appropriate and inappropriate behavior of Children and Adults.

I Process for Reporting Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect

1. If a member, attender, teacher, employee, or volunteer suspects a case of child abuse or neglect, they shall report their suspicions immediately to the Meeting Clerk or the Meeting Facilitator/Coordinator and the **Incident Report Form** (Appendix 4) will be completed.
2. After the Meeting Clerk or Meeting Facilitator/Coordinator receives an initial report, they will confirm with the reporter that their observations have been accurately reported on the **Incident Report Form**. The Meeting Clerk or the Meeting Facilitator/Coordinator will immediately check on the condition of the Child if the Child is still present or make every attempt to check on the welfare of the Child on the same day on which the report was made, if the Child is not still present. The Meeting Clerk or Meeting Facilitator/Coordinator will use the **Child Abuse Reporting Checklist** (Appendix 5) to ensure compliance with Meeting responsibilities.
3. The Meeting Clerk will keep the Meeting community informed of the investigation with respect to matters that are not confidential.
4. Nothing in this policy prohibits or suggests that a person who suspects child abuse or neglect must follow this policy instead of reporting the case to the local department of social services and/or the appropriate law enforcement agency.
5. Nothing in this policy prohibits or suggests that a mandated reporter has met their legal obligations to report suspected child abuse or neglect by following this policy.

J Change History

1. 7/12/2020 restructured and revised policy approved by Meeting's Trustees Committee. Changes include:
 - a. Consolidated policy statements in a new section named Child Protection Policy.
 - b. Updated policy in many sections to reflect the use of online Protect My Ministry to conduct criminal background checks.
 - c. Clarified requirements separately for Workers and for Teenage Workers.
 - d. Added section on Maryland law.
2. 1/2011 original policy approved by Meeting's Trustees Committee

Appendix 1

Online Criminal Background Check Release Form

This release is done online through Protect My Ministry

The information contained in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge. I hereby authorize Baltimore Monthly Meeting of Friends, Stony Run (Stony Run) and its designated agents and representatives to conduct a review of my background for the purpose of generating a Child Safety Background Check report so I can volunteer at Stony Run.

I understand that the scope of the background check may include the following areas: verification of social security number; current and previous residences; civil and criminal history records from any criminal justice agency in any or all federal, state, county jurisdictions; driving records, birth records, and any other public records.

Stony Run will notify me of the results of this Child Safety Background Check. If any result other than “No record” is returned to Stony Run, I understand Stony Run will share that information with me.

I understand that this release will allow Stony Run to routinely re-check my background every two years as long as I am actively working with children at Stony Run. I further understand that unless I notify Stony Run, it will routinely ask Protect My Ministry (PMM) for a re-check of my records, and Stony Run will report any result other than “No record” to me. Without a background check, I cannot continue to work with children at Stony Run. A copy of this form is as valid as the original.

I hereby release from liability all persons, companies and corporations supplying information. I release and indemnify Stony Run and PMM against any liability from making such background checks.

Appendix 2

Teenage Worker Screening Form

This form is to be completed for any position (paid or volunteer) involving the supervision or care of Children. This is being used to provide a safe and secure environment for the activities and programs of the Meeting.

Name _____
Last First Middle

ID or DL# _____ Date of Birth _____

Present address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip code _____

Phone _____ Email _____

School _____ Grades _____

If less than one year:

Previous Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip code _____

Phone _____ Email _____

School _____ Grades _____

I *agree* that in serving as a volunteer or in a paid position for Baltimore Monthly Meeting of Friends, Stony Run that I will abide by the policies and procedures set forth in this policy to reduce the risk of child abuse in this Meeting. I understand that child abuse is a serious matter and will do my part in the prevention of child abuse.

Signature of Teen Worker Date

I do not know of any reason why my child should not serve as a Teenage Worker with Children. They do not demonstrate any signs of being a potential risk to the Meeting.

Signature of Parent/Guardian Date

A photograph of the Teenage Worker will be attached to this document if approved as a volunteer or paid staff of Meeting. The photo shall be updated as needed.

Appendix 3

Acknowledgement of Receipt

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I have received a copy of Meeting's Child Safety Policy.

I have read and understand the contents of this Policy.

I understand that if I have a suspicion of child abuse, I should immediately inform the Meeting Clerk or Meeting Facilitator/Coordinator.

I agree to comply with the policies set forth in this Child Safety Policy.

Signature

Date

Printed Name

Appendix 4

Incident Report Form

Reason for Report: _____

Person filling out this report: _____ Date: _____

Date and time of incident: _____

Location: _____

Event or program: _____

Name(s) and age(s) of Children: _____

Record the child's first words as closely as possible: _____

Briefly describe what happened: _____

What action did you take? _____

Has the incident been resolved? Yes _____ No _____

Were there witnesses? Yes _____ No _____

Names, addresses, and signatures of witnesses:

Report submitted to: _____

Appendix 5

Child Abuse Reporting Checklist

Completed by the reporting party and the Meeting Clerk or the Meeting Facilitator/Coordinator

In the case of an allegation of Child abuse or neglect, the person who observes or to whom the information is given is required by Baltimore Monthly Meeting of Friends, Stony Run and by state law to complete the tasks listed below. Date and initial as each step is completed.

Date	Initials	Task
		1. Remove the person whose behavior is in question from the situation and relieve that person from any duties involving Children.
		2. Notify the Meeting Clerk or the Meeting Facilitator/Coordinator, who will suspend the person whose behavior is in question.
		3. Make written documentation of everything done and said on the Incident Report Form.

The procedures after this point will be administered by the Meeting Clerk or Meeting Facilitator/Coordinator.

Date	Initial	Task
		4. Immediately notify the parents/ guardian (s) of the alleged victim and respond to their questions and concerns.
		5. Immediately notify Child Protective Services (410-361-2235) and the Baltimore City Police Department orally, and in writing within 48 hours, as required by Maryland law
		6. Make written documentation of persons contacted and action taken to this point.
		7. Immediately notify the Clerks of Trustees Committee and Community, Care and Clearness Committee to begin the internal and pastoral care process. Notify the Child Safety Committee members.
		8. Notify the insurance carrier of the incident immediately and comply with its investigation, if any. Since Meeting insurance is provided by Friends School of Baltimore, contact the school to coordinate with the insurance carrier.
		9. Cooperate with legal and state authorities in their investigations, if any.
		10. Prepare a written statement and designate a spokesperson to respond to media inquiries.
		11. Provide assistance to the alleged victim and his/her family in obtaining counseling or referral to a mental health professional, if needed.
		12. Respond to the needs of the families of the alleged victim and the person whose behavior is in question to seek a redemptive solution for all involved.
		13. Inform parties involved of the need for confidentiality.
		14. Consider and respond to the concerns of other parents.
		15. Make written documentation of persons contacted and actions taken.
		16. The Meeting Clerk or the Meeting Facilitator/Coordinator and the Clerk of Trustees shall make an ongoing review to assure that this procedure has been followed.
		17. All documents and written material pertaining to the incident will be kept in a locked file cabinet in the secretary's office. Access will be limited to the Meeting Clerk and the Meeting Facilitator/Coordinator.