

Gunpowder Friends Meeting

Child Safety Policy

(Revised 2019)

Purpose and Spiritual Context

Gunpowder Friends Meeting (GFM) seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for the children who participate in First Day School and other meeting programs. GFM strives to provide an atmosphere of openness and trust among children, among adults, and between children and adults. We affirm that the adults of GFM have the responsibility for the safety and care of all, but especially for the children who participate in GFM activities.

After research, thought, and prayer and honoring our understanding that there is that of God in both adult and child, GFM has prepared this Child Safety Policy

- to maintain an environment in which both children and adults can work together safely and respectfully;
- to comply with Maryland law (Fam. Law §5-701);
- to educate youth workers and volunteers in the prevention of child abuse; and
- to conform with the Baltimore Yearly Meeting Youth Safety Policy as approved 17 Tenth Month 2009, updated in 2013, and amended from time to time.

Trustees will review the GFM Child Safety Policy from time to time as necessary or as requested but not less frequently than every five years.

Queries

Those who work with children, as well as those young people participating in GFM programs, may wish to consider the following queries:

- Why am I drawn to participate? What spirit lies behind my decision?
- What do I have to offer the children of the Meeting?
- If I am in doubt about a particular action, do I consult the “Inner Teacher” for clearness before acting?
- When I find myself in uncertain situations, do I seek other Friends’ insights for clearness before proceeding?
- Does my behavior enable me and others to live more fully in the Light?

Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, the following definitions shall apply:

1. “Minor” (“Preschooler,” “child,” or “youth”) is an individual under the age of eighteen (18) (or whose mental capacity is that of a minor).

2. "Adult" is an individual at least eighteen (18) years of age.
3. "Youth Worker" is an adult who serves as a volunteer and/or paid person given the responsibility of working with or caring for minors.
4. "Teenage Worker" is a worker at least fourteen (14) years old and under the age of eighteen (18) enlisted to assist with the care of minors.
5. "Lead Teacher" is the Youth Worker who takes on responsibility for the planning or execution of a lesson or activity during First Day School or other GFM activity and who has been approved by the First Day School Committee.
6. "Child Abuse" is verbal, physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, or neglect of a minor.
7. "Criminal Background Check" is the procedure used to check if a potential youth worker has a record of criminal activity.
8. "Regular volunteer" is an un-paid Youth Worker who works with the children three or more times during the year.
9. "Occasional Volunteer" is a volunteer who works with the children less than three times during the year.
10. "Designated responsible adult" is a person to whom the parent or guardian has designated responsibility for their child/children.

Guidelines

1. There will be at least one lead teacher in each classroom during First Day School.
2. There will be a ratio of at least one Youth Worker per ten children for GFM activities.
3. Parents, guardians, or designated responsible adults are responsible for supervising their children before and after First Day School classes and other GFM activities.
4. No adult or teenage worker should be alone with one child unless the adult is the parent or guardian, or is acting as the designated responsible adult for the child.
5. Parental permission shall be obtained in advance for involvement in GFM programs or activities when an adult might be spending time alone with a child.
6. There will be a first-aid kit in the immediate vicinity of all GFM activities involving children.

Violations of the Child Safety Policy

The following acts are violations of the Policy and will not be tolerated during any activity or program of GFM:

1. Abuse of a minor, including:
 - any sexual activity in the presence of or in association with a minor.
 - any display or demonstration of sexual activity, insinuation of abuse, or abusive conduct towards a minor.
 - sexual activity of any kind between any adult and a minor.
 - infliction of bodily injury on a minor.
 - physical neglect of a minor, including failure to provide adequate supervision of minors in the activities of GFM.
 - infliction of mental or emotional injury to a minor.
 - possession of obscene or pornographic materials at an GFM activity involving minors.
 - any action or omission that would harm or injure a child.
2. The possession or consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs while participating in a function that includes minors.
3. Being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while participating in a function that includes minors.
4. Smoking or using tobacco products while participating in a function that includes minors.

Expectations for Youth Workers

Youth Workers will:

- be familiar with GFM's Child Safety Policy, including the section on abuse response and reporting;
- review first aid procedures;
- plan/execute lessons and activities so that there is adequate supervision; and
- respond in a timely and appropriate way to any suspicion or incident of child abuse.

Youth Worker Enlistment

1. A lead teacher or regular volunteer must have been a member or regular attender of GFM for six months.
2. Youth Workers and Teenage Workers are subject to the following screening procedures, which will be conducted by the Assistant Clerk of GFM, using the forms in Appendix A.

	Reference Screening	Criminal Background Check	Sex Offender Registry	Parental Endorsement
Regular Volunteer	√	√	√	
Occasional Volunteer		(only if overnight)	(only if overnight)	
Paid Worker	√	√	√	
Teenage Worker				√

Reference Screening

- Youth Workers will be required to complete the “Screening Form for Youth Workers (Adults)” (Appendix A).
- The Assistant Clerk will check prior employment/volunteer service and personal references. Use may be made of the example letter in Appendix A.

Criminal Background Check and Sex Offender Registry

- Youth Workers, and Occasional Volunteers for an overnight activity are required to complete the “Criminal Background Check and Sex Offender Registry Information and Authorization Form” (Appendix A).
- The Assistant Clerk of GFM will initiate a criminal background check.
- The Assistant Clerk of GFM will check the Sex Offender Registry (www.dpscs.state.md.us/sorSearch/)

Parental Endorsement

- Teenage Workers are required to complete the “Screening Form for Teens Working with Minors” (Appendix A). A parent or guardian must sign the form as endorsement.

3. All screening results are confidential. A written record of screening results will be kept and stored in a locked container.
4. If no adverse findings are reported, the Assistant Clerk will notify the Clerk of the First Day School Committee.
5. If there are adverse findings in either the reference screening, the criminal background check, or the sex offender registry, the Assistant Clerk will notify the Clerk of Trustees. Trustees will then make a determination as to whether or not the individual involved can work with children. The Assistant Clerk and Clerk of Trustees will sign a non-disclosure statement (Appendix A) as necessary to protect confidentiality.

6. Youth Workers who have served on or before 1 First Month 2006 do not need to undergo the screening procedures.
6. Occasional Volunteers do not need to undergo the screening procedures unless participating in an overnight event.

Youth Worker Supervision

1. The Assistant Clerk of GFM will make at least two unannounced visits each year to First Day School classes to insure that class activities are in compliance with the GFM Child Safety Policy.
2. Lists of lead teachers shall be posted in the First Day School rooms.
3. The First Day School Committee of GFM will educate Youth Workers, and Teenage Workers on the importance of the GFM Child Safety Policy, as well as first-aid procedures. If changes are made to this policy, an updated copy of this policy must be presented to all persons listed as lead teachers.

Suspected Child Abuse Response and Reporting

Maryland Law requires that a health practitioner, educator, human service worker, or police officer report suspected child abuse both orally and in writing. GFM considers youth workers and volunteers to be educators within the meaning of the law.

Oral reports must be made immediately to:

Department of Social Services
(410) 853-3000 (Option 1)

Written reports must follow within 48 hours (Procedure 11, below). A written report should be prepared using the Abuse Report Form (Appendix A) and be mailed to:

Drumcastle Government Center
6401 York Road
Baltimore, Maryland 21212
(Attn: Child Protective Services)

The Clerk of GFM will make the oral report. The Clerk of GFM and the Clerk of Trustees will prepare and submit the written report.

Baltimore County police should be called (911) if the suspected abuse is flagrant (Procedure 3, below). Otherwise, the Department of Social Services will make the decision whether or not to involve the police.

Response Procedures

- 1) In the event that a Youth Worker, Teenage Worker, GFM member, or GFM attender observes or is made aware of a suspected child abuse incident, that person will first respond to the needs of the child and secondly notify the lead teacher or adult supervisor.
- 2) The lead teacher or adult supervisor will suspend the individual suspected of causing the abuse from any further duties involving children.
- 3) The lead teacher or adult supervisor will then notify the Clerk of GFM, or in his/her absence, the Assistant Clerk of GFM.
- 4) The Clerk (Assistant Clerk) will call the police (911) if, in his or her opinion, it is necessary. Consideration should be given to the severity of the suspected abuse and the potential impact of police presence on the child.
- 5) The lead teacher or Clerk (Assistant Clerk) will inform the parents or guardians, and
 - describe the child's condition,
 - offer any assistance that the parents/guardians might need, and
 - let the parents know what reporting GFM will do pursuant to the Child Safety Policy.
- 6) The Clerk (Assistant Clerk) will meet with the lead teacher and any witnesses to collect information for the required oral report to the Department of Social Services. The requested information is itemized in the "Suspected Child Abuse Report" form (Appendix A). The Clerk (Assistant Clerk) will make the oral report to the phone number listed above.
- 7) The Clerk (Assistant Clerk) will notify the Clerk of Trustees.
- 8) The Clerk of Trustees will inform GFM's insurance carrier and legal counsel as necessary.
- 9) The Clerk (Assistant Clerk), Clerk of Trustees, lead teacher, and the reporting adult will maintain confidentiality to the extent possible by limiting the flow of information to those persons with a need to know.
- 10) The Clerk (Assistant Clerk) will be the spokesperson to the media.
- 11) The Clerk (Assistant Clerk) and Clerk of Trustees will prepare the required written report (Appendix A) for submission to the Department of Social Services at the address listed above.
- 12) GFM officers, members, and attenders are expected to cooperate fully with any investigation conducted by civil authorities.

- 13) The Clerk (Assistant Clerk) and Clerk of Trustees will prepare a written record of all actions taken by GFM in response to the suspected abuse and pursuant to the Child Safety Policy.
- 14) All written reports and/or records, including copies of reports submitted to the Department of Social Services will remain confidential and be stored in a locked file.