Montana Gathering of Friends Monthly & Quarterly Meeting (MGOF) Youth Safety Policy

Approved by MGOF on 2/23/2019  **REVISED 01/28/2020**

Introduction

MONTANA GATHERING OF FRIENDS (MGOF) is the Quarterly Meeting (QM) for Montana and its surrounding region within North Pacific Yearly Meeting (NPYM) of the Religious Society of Friends.

MGOF is committed to making sure that youth are safe while participating in MGOF-sponsored youth events. These policies and guidelines are meant to provide structure for parents and youth program and childcare providers to help ensure youth safety.

Definitions

MGOF-sponsored youth activities can be grouped into two categories:

1. The Youth Program at Quarterly Meetings: The Youth Program includes volunteer-led activities for youth in grades K through 12th grade, at scheduled day and evening times during Winter & Summer Quarterly Meetings;

2. Childcare at Quarterly Meetings: childcare for youth under the age 5 at scheduled day and evening times during Winter & Summer Quarterly Meetings;

The Youth Program is overseen by the Youth Program Coordinator, who is nominated and approved through MGOF’s nominating process. Adult Volunteers and Childcare Providers are hired or volunteer and overseen by MGOF’s Youth Program Coordinator.

1. Job Descriptions
   a. **Youth Program Coordinator** is paid to work with the Youth Program Committee to nurture and oversee the MGOF Youth Programs and activities with the intent of encouraging the development of Quaker values in our youth. The Youth Program Coordinator (or designee or NPYM Youth Program Coordinator):
      a. maintains a record of these programs to provide continuity in planning and programming.
      b. with the support of the Youth Program Committee and Steering Committee finds and supports Adult Volunteers and Childcare Providers.
      c. plans, provides materials, implements and evaluates children’s programming activities during each gathering and facilitates evaluation and input from youth and parents.
      d. develops guidelines and ground rules for behavior during activities and free time with the youth and parents.
e. documents the programs and notes what worked, what could be better and what was missing.

f. contributes notes to a database of potential volunteers and their skills.

b. **Adult Volunteers** provide Friendly presence during scheduled Youth Program sessions

c. **Childcare Providers** hired at discretion of Youth Program Coordinator and are paid (room, board and a stipend) to provide care of youth during scheduled sessions.

MGOF Youth Safety Policy

The Youth Program Coordinator and Adult Volunteers are required to meet the following requirements.

1. Shall be active in MGOF Monthly Meeting or Missoula Monthly Meeting for at least 6 months prior to consideration for approval or prior to the event. This will be verified with each Monthly meeting clerk.

2. **Background Checks as per NPYM Process**

   Youth Program Coordinator, Child Care Providers, Adult Volunteers will be subject to a criminal background check provided by NPYM prior to each gathering with youth programs. Prior to each event, or when they are approved, Youth Program Coordinator, Child Care Providers and Adult Volunteers are included in the MGOF Handbook provided a job description as noted above as well as clearly defined responsibilities and expectations as laid out in the MGOF Youth Safety Guidelines, below.

3. **Monitoring**

   Safeguards are provided through careful monitoring and staffing. Gathering spaces for youth are set up according to MGOF youth safety policy. Where a guideline cannot be complied with in specific situations, there should be documentation about how safety concerns will be addressed.

4. **Registered Sex Offenders at MGOF Events**

   If a registered sex offender participates in a MGOF event, that person must inform the Ministry & Counsel Committee and Youth Program Coordinator at least 2 weeks prior to the event, so that those committees can cooperate in create a participation plan appropriate to the circumstances (for example the sex offender may not volunteer for any assignments working with or near youth, must be accompanied by another responsible Friend at all times, etc.)

MGOF Youth Safety Guidelines

1. **EMERGENCY CONTACT FORMS**
a. Each child must have a signed MGOF emergency contact information form, which must be given to the Youth Program Coordinator before the child can be left in the care of the Youth Program.

b. The emergency contact information form includes a phone number for the parent, guardian or sponsor, which can be used during the session to contact the parent, guardian or sponsor if needed.

c. These forms can be filled out in advance of the event and sent to the registrar; or may be filled out upon arrival.

d. The original form will remain in the gathering area or carried by the adults in charge during an outing.

e. A copy of each emergency contact information form should be kept in the MGOF files and secured in a manner to protect the privacy of participants.

2. ADULT SUPERVISION

a. At least 2 adults (preferably of different genders) will be present in each gathering area during scheduled youth program times. Where it is not possible to have 2 adults, the MGOF gathering coordinator should check in hourly.

b. At each MGOF gathering, youth share sleeping accommodations with their parents (and others) and are not under the care of MGOF or the MGOF Youth Program.

c. Childcare and Youth Program gathering areas should be near each other and not in isolated rooms away from adult traffic or other rooms.

d. Walk-in volunteers are welcome and greatly appreciated in MGOF childcare and youth programs at Quarterly Meetings; however, Adult Volunteers and Childcare Providers who have not been approved through the official MGOF screening process, including “walk-in” volunteers, will be under the supervision of the MGOF Youth Program Coordinator or designee.

e. Minimum ratios of adults to children are as follows.
   
   a. Childcare (infants and toddlers) 1 Adult for each 4 infants or toddlers

   b. Youth Program (age 5 through 12th grade) 1 adult for each 8 children

f. The Youth Program Coordinator must ensure that there is a signed emergency contact information form in the room or gathering area before a child/youth may be left there without parent, guardian, or sponsor.

g. During or after program, a child must not be allowed to leave the leader’s presence unless accompanied by a responsible adult unless otherwise noted on emergency contact form.
h. Each group must have ready access to a first aid kit and know where it is kept.

3. GOING OFF CAMPUS

The following requirements apply whenever a child or youth group leaves the campus as part of a scheduled official MGOF youth event, whether driving, walking, taking public transport, cycling, or traveling by other means. (Note: these guidelines do not apply to transportation to or from the MGOF event.)

a. Parent/guardian/sponsor pre-approval: The parent, guardian or sponsor should be informed beforehand about an off-campus event and given an opportunity to ask questions and decide if they do not want their child to participate. The parent, guardian or sponsor shall sign a form giving permission for their child to participate in specific off-campus activities.

b. Drivers must be at least 21 years of age and must have a valid driver's license. Owners of any privately-owned vehicles being used to transport youth must have proof of car insurance. Drivers are responsible for ensuring that vehicle safety measures (seat belts, child safety/booster seats, etc.) are adhered to.

c. First aid kits: When a youth group leaves the campus, the leaders or adults in charge should carry a basic first aid kit with them and carry working cell phones.

d. Emergency contact information forms: When a youth group leaves the campus during an MGOF youth event, the leaders or adults in charge must carry a signed emergency contact information form for each child participating in the off-campus field trip. (Note: These should be already available in the room.)

e. While they are officially participating in a MGOF youth event, children in grades pre-K through 12th grade are not allowed to leave campus unless accompanied by the responsible youth leader(s).
4. EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION FORM

Participant name, age __________________________________________________________

Parent, guardian or sponsor name _________________________________________________

Back-up responsible adult ________________________________________________________

Phone number (accessible during event) ____________________________________________

Allergies or other medical conditions ______________________________________________

Any restrictions on activities including running, hiking, etc ______________________________

I have read the Montana Gathering of Friends Monthly & Quarterly Meeting (MGOF) Youth Safety Policy and reviewed the location of Youth Program.

( ) My youth has my permission to self-check-in and check-out.

Signature _____________________________________________________________________

Date

5. CHECK-IN/CHECK-OUT FORM

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<tr>
<th>CHECK-IN TIME/INITIALS</th>
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6. PERMISSION TO TRAVEL OFF-CAMPUS

Participant name ________________________________________________________________

Parent, guardian or sponsor name ________________________________________________

Signature _____________________________________________________________________

Date