

NPYM Youth Safety Policy

Approved by NPYM on July 15, 2011; revision approved March 20, 2021

I. INTRODUCTION

North Pacific Yearly Meeting (NPYM) is committed to the spiritual development of children and youth. NPYM is also committed to keeping children and youth safe while they participate in NPYM-sponsored activities. These goals are compatible: safety and wellbeing are essential features of an environment in which children and youth can grow in the Spirit. Safety and wellbeing are therefore high priorities in planning and carrying out child/youth events. These policies are meant to provide a structure for parents, volunteers, youth care workers, and children/youth to help ensure child and youth safety and wellbeing.

Major goals of these policies are to:

- keep safety and wellbeing high priorities in planning and carrying out activities for children and youth;
- minimize hazards to physical safety;
- remove opportunities for potential abuse by:
 - Requiring at least two adults with current background checks to be with each group of children and youth during all scheduled program times;
 - Making sure during all scheduled program times that all interactions with children and youth allow for observation and intervention;
- encourage communication among staff, parents, children/youth, and volunteers before and during NPYM events; and
- allow children and youth to take on increasing responsibility as they become more capable.

All parents, guardians, and sponsors of children and youth participating in NPYM-sponsored activities are expected to read, understand, and follow the Youth Safety Policy, as are all Children's Program staff members, Central Friend and Junior Friend Advisors, Friendly Adult Presences, and volunteers. Central Friends and Junior Friends are expected to discuss how the policies apply to them.

II. DEFINITIONS

Activities covered by these policies. NPYM-sponsored child and youth activities can be grouped into two categories:

- The Children's Program (CP) and childcare at Annual Session (AS). Annual Session occurs over a 4- or 5-day period once a year. The Children's Program includes nursery care for infants and toddlers and teacher-led groups for children in grades pre-K through 8th grade, at scheduled periods during AS. The AS Planning Committee also schedules some childcare and

evening activities times in addition to the more structured Children's Program, so that parents, guardians, and sponsors can participate in Annual Session more fully.

- Overnight events for Central Friends and Junior Friends include:
 - the JF program during Annual Session, where JFs have a separate program and separate space in one of the dorms (4-5 days)
 - JF camp held just before or after Annual Session (4-5 days)
 - JF ski weekend or "winter gathering," held on a winter weekend (2-3 days)
 - occasional JF service trips (5-7 days)
 - occasional CF camp held just before or after Annual Session (4-5 days)

Central Friends (CFs) are middle schoolers (entering 6th grade through summer after 8th grade, generally ages 11-13). Central Friends are one of the Children's Program age groups.

Central Friends Advisors: During Annual Session, CF Advisors are screened workers — members of the Children's Program staff — who plan for and work with Central Friends. If a CF camp will be held, NPYM will nominate, screen, and approve advisors and Friendly Adult Presences to plan and supervise it.

Friendly Adult Presences (FAPs) are adults who have been screened and approved to accompany and assist at CF or JF events.

Junior Friends (JFs) are high school aged youth (entering 9th grade through summer after 12th grade, generally ages 14-18).

Junior Friends Advisors are adults who are initially identified by the Junior Friends, and then nominated, screened, and approved through NPYM's nominating process. JF events are led by at least 2, and no more than 4, JF Advisors. JF Advisors guide JFs in planning all JF events and activities. JF Advisors may accompany JFs on service trips. They provide or arrange for appropriate adult supervision at all NPYM-sponsored JF activities.

Screened volunteers are individuals who assist in child/youth programs in various ways. All adult volunteers in NPYM child/youth programs are screened (including a criminal background check) before the event. They work under the direction of the Youth Coordinator and program staff. Having screened volunteers available gives the Youth Coordinator more support and flexibility in maintaining necessary levels of adult supervision.

Screened workers are paid child/youth program staff members who have gone through the NPYM screening process, including a criminal background check. Details in Policies below.

Young Adult Friends (YAFs) have completed high school (generally age 18 through 35). They have separate activities during Annual Session. This Youth Safety Policy is not concerned with YAFs as a group. Individual YAFs may serve as CP staff, CF or JF Advisors, FAPs, or screened volunteers.

The Youth Committee is chosen and approved through NPYM's nominating process to support the yearly, quarterly, and monthly meetings in their work with children and youth. Committee responsibilities include supporting the Youth Coordinator and implementing the Youth Safety Policy.

The Youth Coordinator is a paid employee of North Pacific Yearly Meeting, hired through NPYM's personnel process, who plans and supervises the Children's Program. The Youth Coordinator also arranges for appropriate caregivers for times outside the Children's Program schedule which the AS Planning Committee has identified as needing childcare.

See npym.org for complete job descriptions.

III. POLICIES

A. Screening for staff and adult volunteers

1. Child and youth program staff members and volunteers should be at least 18 years old and at least 4 years older than the age group they will work with.
2. JF and CF Advisors and FAPs should be active in a Quaker group for at least 6 months before the NPYM event where they will work. The Youth Coordinator will verify their active participation with the group's clerk or other leadership.
3. While NPYM acknowledges the biases and inequities in the U.S. criminal justice system and the limitations of criminal background checks, such checks do have a place in a rigorous screening plan. Child and youth program staff members and adult volunteers are subject to criminal background checks. Background checks must be performed before each NPYM event (consecutive events such as Annual Session and JF camp count as one event for background-check purposes). The Youth Coordinator submits names for Children's Program staff members and volunteers, and for JF Advisors and FAPs. The Youth Coordinator does the preliminary review of background check results, looking primarily for indications of harm to children or other vulnerable people. The Youth Committee as a whole considers any questions that might arise from background checks, on a case-by-case basis, to decide whether that individual would be an appropriate staff member or volunteer.
4. Driving-record checks will be included in the background checks for any staff members or volunteers likely to be driving children/youth to and from special activities.

- B. Volunteers under age 18. Individual Junior Friends and Central Friends are encouraged to volunteer in the Children's Program. When they do, they work with children at least 4 years younger than they are, and they work under the supervision of screened workers. JFs and CFs do not go through a background check. The Youth Coordinator will screen JF or CF volunteers by contacting their home meeting about their experience working with children.

- C. Safety Policy Distribution. The Youth Coordinator sends all child and youth program workers and volunteers a current job description and a copy of these safety policies and guidelines at the time they are hired or approved.
- D. Safeguards in Program Activities. Safeguards are provided through careful monitoring and staffing. The most important safeguard is the requirement for 2 screened adults present with any child or group during all scheduled program times. Classrooms and activity spaces for children and youth are set up according to NPYM youth safety guidelines (see Preparation for the Event, below).
1. As a fundamental principle to preserve safety and prevent abuse, all activities with children and youth must allow for observation and intervention during all scheduled CP and JF program times.
 2. There must be 2 screened workers or 1 screened worker + 1 screened volunteer with each group of children/youth during all scheduled CP and JF times. The Youth Coordinator monitors staffing levels in all parts of the Children's Program at all times. If there are not enough screened workers and screened volunteers available, for example in the case of a medical emergency, the Youth Coordinator will combine groups or make other adjustments to keep staffing at necessary levels. Junior Friends Advisors monitor for appropriate supervision in JF activities.
 3. Central Friends (middle school) programs are for children entering 6th grade through the summer after 8th grade; Junior Friends (high school) programs are for youth entering 9th grade, through the summer after 12th grade. If families and group leaders find it wise for a child at a transitional age to be with younger children, that child is included in that younger group (see *Faith and Practice* p. 180).
 4. Central Friends may occasionally join with the younger CP age groups, especially when necessary to maintain appropriate supervision.
 5. Central Friends and Junior Friends may occasionally plan joint activities, which must include appropriate and separate CF and JF supervision.
- E. Medical Release Forms. Before any child/youth can participate in an NPYM-sponsored event, they must have a signed NPYM medical release form, which must be given to the teacher/leader before the child/youth can be left in the care of the teacher/leader. The medical release form includes a phone number that can be used during the event to contact the parent, guardian, or sponsor if needed. These forms can be filled out in advance of the event and sent to the registrar, or may be filled out upon arrival. The original form will remain in the classroom/gathering area, or be carried by the adults in charge during an outing. A copy of each medical release form should be kept in the NPYM office if possible.
- F. Mandatory Reporting. NPYM Children's Program staff and CF and JF Advisors may be mandatory reporters of child abuse according to state law. The Youth Coordinator keeps current information about mandatory reporting rules in each state where NPYM child/youth events may

take place, and informs staff and volunteers about legal responsibilities, authorities to be contacted (such as police or Child Protective Services), and how to report.

G. Preparation for the Event

1. Registration; Communication with Participants. The Youth Coordinator gathers information from the Registrar about children and youth attending the event and shares that information with Children's Program and Junior Friends staff. The Youth Coordinator also sends pre-event communications to parents and guardians to describe field trips and other activities that will require specific clothing or equipment and may require permission forms.
2. On-Site Preparation. The Youth Coordinator maintains a complete checklist for selecting and preparing Children's Program spaces. Whenever possible, the Youth Coordinator makes at least one site visit before the event. The following are basic considerations:
 - a. Nursery care and Children's Program spaces should be located close to each other. Isolated classrooms and activity spaces are to be avoided.
 - b. The Youth Coordinator is responsible for checking all Children's Program spaces for physical safety risks and mitigating risks as much as possible. Risks include:
 - closets and connecting rooms with lockable doors
 - unsafe furniture or equipment
 - tripping hazards such as unmarked steps
 - potential outdoor hazards nearby (construction sites, busy streets, etc.)
3. Equipment and Information for CP Spaces. The Youth Coordinator is responsible for making the following available in Children's Program spaces at all times:
 - check-in and check-out materials
 - first aid kit
 - covers for electrical outlets
 - the facility's emergency contact information and basic response procedures (e.g., fire evacuation routes; earthquake procedures; shelter-in-place procedures for an active shooter event)
 - a working cell phone or walkie-talkie radio
 - Youth Coordinator's contact information
 - names of NPYM Friends with CPR and first aid training
 - copy of the NPYM Youth Safety Policy (to be posted visibly in each space)
4. CPR and First Aid Assistance. When preparing for the event, the Youth Coordinator will ask the Volunteer Coordinator for names of adults who identify themselves at registration as having current CPR and first aid training.
5. Training and Orientation. The Youth Coordinator is responsible for training staff and orienting volunteers, parents/guardians/sponsors, and others as needed before the event. Orientations should stress essential safeguards and other main points of these safety policies, plus any details specific to the particular event (such as plans for field trips) or location (such as the site's rules about unsupervised children).

H. During the Event

1. All activities with children and youth must allow for observation and intervention during all scheduled program times. This requirement is fundamental to preventing potential abuse of children and youth.
2. At least 2 screened workers or 1 screened worker + 1 screened adult volunteer will be present with each group during all scheduled program times. When there are not enough screened workers and screened volunteers available, for example in the case of a medical emergency, the Youth Coordinator will combine Children's Program groups or make other adjustments to meet supervision requirements.
3. Minimum ratios of adults to children are as follows.
 - Nursery (infants and toddlers) — 1:4
 - Children's Program including Central Friends — 1:8
 - Junior Friends — 1:10
4. At overnight JF or CF events, the gender identifications of the adult leaders should, as much as possible, reflect the gender identifications of the participating JFs or CFs.
5. Classroom/activity space doors should be left unlocked at all times when children/youth are present.
6. The teacher/leader in charge of each child/youth group must ensure that there is a signed medical release form in the classroom or activity space before a child/youth may be left there without a parent, guardian, or sponsor.
7. The teacher/leader in charge of each Children's Program group, including Central Friends, must have a check-in sheet, and must ensure that each child is checked in and checked out by a parent, guardian, sponsor, or designee for each CP session listed on the event schedule. Information on the check-in/check-out sheet helps the Youth Coordinator locate the responsible adults in case of emergency.
8. Parents, guardians, and sponsors are responsible for their children's behavior outside of Children's Program activities. When not in a scheduled Children's Program session, all children of Central Friends age or younger are expected to be under the direct (line of sight) supervision of a parent, guardian, sponsor, or designee. When children are not in the Children's Program, the adults responsible for them must follow the event site's rules concerning children. The Youth Coordinator is responsible for conveying the site's expectations to parents/guardians/sponsors and to the children and youth themselves.

- I. Field Trips and Special Activities. Field trips and special activities such as service projects or swimming and hiking need extra planning because they can bring additional risks. This is especially true when the activity takes NPYM children/youth off-campus. Standards of supervision must be maintained and special care taken to keep all children/youth safe. Specific activities may require specific additional safeguards. The following requirements apply whenever a child/youth group leaves the main Children's Program area as part of a scheduled official NPYM event, whether driving, walking, taking public transport, cycling, or traveling by other means. (Note: these requirements do not apply to transportation to or from the NPYM event as a whole.)

1. Parent/guardian/sponsor pre-approval. Before an activity involving a Children's Program age group, including Central Friends, the Youth Coordinator should inform parents, guardians, and sponsors about the activity (including location, time, type of activity, transportation, supervision, clothing and supplies needed, and known hazards) and invite them to ask questions and decide whether they want their children/youth to participate. For the Children's Program, the parent, guardian, or sponsor should sign a form giving permission for each child to participate in the specific activity. Junior Friends Advisors should share similar information about special activities for Junior Friends. For Junior Friends, the signature of the parent/guardian/sponsor on the medical release form gives permission for the JF to participate in off-campus activities.
2. Alternate arrangements must be made for children/youth who do not participate in the special activity. Possibilities: the child/youth temporarily joins a younger age group's activity; the Youth Coordinator arranges appropriate supervision; the child/youth stays with a parent, guardian, sponsor, or designated adult during the off-campus activity time.
3. Drivers
 - a. The owner of a vehicle used to transport NPYM children/youth must:
 1. carry liability insurance (including coverage for a guest driver if the owner is loaning use of the vehicle for this purpose); and
 2. confirm that the vehicle is in good working order, with a functioning seatbelt for each person.
 3. Make sure that vehicle safety measures (seat belts, etc.) are followed
 - b. A driver transporting NPYM children/youth must:
 1. be at least 21 years old;
 2. have a valid driver's license;
 3. have a good driving record (subject to background check);
 4. avoid situations of one adult with only one (non-related) child in the vehicle.
4. Child car seats and booster seats must be available for children who need them. The parent/guardian/sponsor is responsible for providing the car seat or booster, installing it in the vehicle, and showing the driver how to ensure that the child is safely buckled in.
5. First aid kits. The leaders or adults in charge of a special activity must carry a basic first aid kit and a working cell phone or walkie-talkie radio, plus emergency contact numbers.
6. Medical release forms. When a child/youth group leaves the campus during an NPYM child/youth event, the leaders or adults in charge must carry a signed medical release form for each child/youth participating in the off-campus field trip. (Note: These should be already available in the classroom.)
7. Young children stay on campus. While they are officially participating in an NPYM youth event, children in grades pre-K through 8th grade are not allowed to leave campus unless:
 - a. they are with a parent, guardian, sponsor, or designated adult; or
 - b. they are part of a planned off-campus event, accompanied by Children's Program staff and following the safety policies.
8. Junior Friends off campus. When Junior Friends go off campus for a planned and scheduled JF activity, they and their advisors follow these safety policies (carrying first aid kit and

release forms, maintaining 2-screened-worker supervision, etc.). In addition, a group of JFs may leave campus informally and independently with the consent of the JF Advisors or by signing themselves out according to the JF code of conduct. The JFs must state who is in the group, their destination, their expected return time, and a phone number for at least one member of the group. The group of JFs must check back in upon returning to campus. JFs leaving campus are expected to carry a working cell phone so that JF leaders can contact them if necessary.

9. Extra precautions for certain activities. For rigorous activities such as swimming or hiking, the Youth Coordinator and child/youth program staff review potential hazards with parents, guardians, and sponsors. Program staff determine how many screened workers, screened volunteers, and other accompanying adults will be needed and what they must carry. Program staff set equipment and safety guidelines (for example, for hiking: appropriate shoes & clothing; stay with the group) and plan how to bring children/youth who can't complete the activity back to campus safely.

J. Incident Reporting in the Children's Program

1. Children's Program workers must prepare a written report about:
 - a. any injury that requires medical attention beyond simple first aid; and
 - b. any incident that would call into question an adult's suitability as a staff member or volunteer. Examples of such incidents (this is not an all-inclusive list):
 - i. Actions (shouting, showing bad temper, using foul language, etc.) that result in children being frightened of the adult;
 - ii. Substance abuse while caring for children;
 - iii. Disregard for NPYM's safety policies, especially the essential safeguard of 2 adults with any child or group during all program times.
2. Workers should discuss the incidents with the Youth Coordinator immediately and draft the reports as soon as possible afterward.
3. The Youth Coordinator reviews incident reports with the Youth Committee after each NPYM event.
4. The Youth Coordinator is responsible for keeping incident reports for at least 7 years. Some reports may be kept longer, depending on the circumstances, at the discretion of the Youth Coordinator and Youth Committee.

K. Appropriate and Inappropriate Interactions with Children and Youth

1. The Youth Coordinator trains staff and advises volunteers about what is or is not appropriate behavior while working with children and youth at NPYM events. Basic issues include: modeling consent (e.g., asking "could I give you a hug?" and accepting the answer), preserving physical safety, and eliminating situations that might lead to abuse (e.g., no adult one-on-one with a child in a space separate from the rest of the group). Adults working with children must remain aware and take care to avoid interactions that might be seen as "grooming" behavior which could be a prelude for future abuse.

2. The Youth Coordinator regularly reviews the content of such trainings with the Youth Committee.

L. People Convicted of Sexual Offenses

1. If someone who has been convicted of a sexual offense participates in an NPYM Annual Session, that person or their home meeting or worship group should inform the Ministry & Counsel Committee and the Youth Committee as far in advance as possible, so that those committees can agree on a participation plan that will maintain appropriate distance and safeguards for children.
2. Under no circumstances will anyone who has been convicted of a sexual offense be permitted to work or volunteer with NPYM children and youth.

M. Consequences of Non-Compliance

1. The Youth Coordinator, with support from the Youth Committee, is responsible for monitoring compliance with these policies. Consequences of non-compliance will depend on the person involved — staff member, parent, volunteer, etc. — and the circumstances and severity of the situation.
2. In most cases, the Youth Coordinator and the CP staff will consider the circumstances and severity of the situation and reach unity on an appropriate response. They may consult with others, as needed:
 - a. The Youth Coordinator can ask the Youth Committee to help with fact-finding, discernment, and response. Members of the Youth Committee will be on-call during the event for this purpose.
 - b. If the Youth Coordinator and Youth Committee members have concerns that are not easily resolved, they will consult with the Clerk of NPYM's Ministry & Counsel Committee about the immediate situation and potential next steps during the NPYM event.
 - c. If the circumstances affect NPYM's working relationship with the event site, the General Arrangements Clerk and representatives of the event site may be involved in assessing and resolving a situation.
3. A Children's Program staff member who does not follow these safety policies may be removed from the program for the remainder of the NPYM event and may be blocked from staffing future events.
4. A volunteer who does not follow safety policies may be asked to leave the program immediately and may be blocked from future volunteering with child/youth programs at NPYM and, possibly, quarterly meeting events.
5. NPYM expects children and youth, especially in the older age groups, to be accountable for their own behavior. When a child or youth is having a hard time abiding by these safety policies, the teacher and the Youth Coordinator discuss the situation with the child/youth and their parents, guardians, or sponsors as soon as possible after any immediate safety issues are resolved. A CP participant who remains unable or unwilling to follow the safety

policies may be removed from the program and would need to be under direct supervision by a parent, guardian, or sponsor for the rest of that NPYM event.

6. Junior Friends maintain their own code of conduct and safety policy in addition to the NPYM Youth Safety Policy, with procedures for handling safety incidents. The Youth Committee can act as a resource for JFs reviewing their safety policy, if requested.
7. If anyone — staff member, volunteer, participant, parent, or other NPYM Friend — sees behavior in an NPYM program that raises concerns about child/youth safety and wellbeing, they should speak with the Youth Coordinator, who will speak with all parties involved.
8. Anyone who has concerns about the Youth Coordinator's own behavior should speak to the Clerk of the Youth Committee and the Clerk of the Ministry & Counsel Committee. Those clerks can consult with other Ministry & Counsel and Youth Committee members and with the Coordinating Committee Associate Clerk (as Clerk of the NPYM Personnel Committee) as necessary.

N. Updating the NPYM Youth Safety Policy

1. After every Annual Session and other NPYM-sponsored child/youth event, the Youth Coordinator will discuss safety incidents with Children's Program staff and with the Youth Committee, to fine-tune procedures based on experience.
2. The Youth Committee will regularly consult with Junior Friends and their advisors about how the NPYM Youth Safety Policy affects them and how it might be improved.
3. The Youth Committee will review these safety policies annually. When changes are necessary, the Committee will take legal advice as appropriate, then bring proposed new language to the Coordinating Committee for discussion and to Annual Session for approval as the Coordinating Committee deems necessary.