

Northern Yearly Meeting Children and Youth Committee

Policy Manual

Committee Description

*

Personnel Policy for NYM Employees

*

NYM Policies for Responding to a Report of
Physical or Sexual Abuse of a Young Person

*

NYM Children and Youth Committee
Safety Practices for Kindly Adult Presences (KAPs) Working with the
Middle School and High School Programs

*

Northern Yearly Meeting Children and Youth Committee
Grade/Age Policy for Youth Retreats

*

Guidelines for Virtual Meetings

Job Description of Northern Yearly Meeting	
<i>Committee</i>	Children and Youth Committee
<i>Position(s)</i>	
<i>Date Approved by NYM</i>	
<i>Page</i>	1 of 1
<i>File Name</i>	

Gifts:

The Children and Youth Committee seeks to provide opportunities that nurture Quaker values and practices in our young people. These are some of the possible gifts that committee members may bring:

Members may have served on their Meeting First Day School Committee or been involved as a teacher or helper in the FDS program. Members may bring valuable insights as parents of youth currently or previously involved in the NYM C & Y program. Members may bring experience from their secular jobs or activities that are relevant to the responsibilities of the committee. Members may bring a variety of personal skills and qualities that can contribute to the success of the committee's activities.

Responsibilities and Activities:

1. Overseeing the Children and Youth program for middle and high schoolers. This consists of:
 - a. Hiring coordinators for the Middle School and High School programs.
 - b. Overseeing implementation of Middle School and High School retreats and of the MS and HS programs at Annual Session.
 - c. Evaluating the work of the Coordinators and the overall program.
 - d. Developing policies necessary to successfully accomplish these activities.
 - e. Monitoring the budget for the C & Y program and informing MfB of changes that may be required in the budget.
2. Coordinating Children and Youth activities occurring at Annual Session with the Annual Session Planning Committee and the Annual Session C & Y Program Coordinator.
3. Supporting NYM's commitment to Camp Woodbrooke.
4. Facilitating communication among NYM member meeting First Day School programs (e.g. maintain listserv, website).
5. Maintaining C & Y webpage on NYM website.

Membership on Committees:

1. The committee generally has five adult members, plus two teens selected by the HS program.
2. Members of the committee do not need to be Members of a monthly meeting.
3. The MS and HS coordinator will participate in committee meetings on a regular basis.
4. The committee Convenor will:
 - a. Prepare and disseminate meeting agendas.
 - b. Facilitate committee meetings.
 - c. Be the primary oversight person for the C & Y Coordinators.
 - d. Be the point of contact with NYM Annual Session Planning Committee and the Annual Session C & Y Coordinator.
5. The roles of the Convenor may be shared with a formal Co-Convenor or delegated to other members of the committee as mutually agreed upon.

Meetings

1. Meetings are generally held on a monthly basis by teleconference during the school year.

Reports and Correspondence:

- Presents annual written report to the NYM Meeting for Business and at Interim Session Meetings for Business.
- Submits written reports to NYM Newsletter as Committee activity warrants or as requested.

Appointment and Term:

1. Adult members are nominated by NYM Nominating Committee and approved NYM Meeting for Business to serve for staggered 3-year terms.
2. Teen members are nominated by the HS program participants at Annual Session and serve a one-year term. They may be nominated for additional one year terms.

General Committee Commitments:

1. Attend monthly meetings.
2. Respond to email correspondence that might occur between meetings.
3. Consider participation in MS or HS retreats on occasion or attend portions of MS and HS programs at Annual Sessions as a way to both support the program and gain understanding of the program activities. This will enhance the member's ability to provide positive support for the program.
4. Share in the exercise of other committee responsibilities, such as writing or reviewing policies, interviewing prospective Coordinators, presenting reports at MfB.

Final March 2017

Personnel Policy for NYM Employees

December 1, 2009

Hiring Policies

When there is a job vacancy, a letter announcing the job vacancy will be sent to all NYM Meetings and Worship Groups along with the job description.

Employment Arrangement

NYM is an at-will employer. This means that regardless of any provision in the personnel policy, either the employee or NYM may terminate the employment relationship at any time, for any reason, with or without cause or notice.

New Employee Orientation

Each new employee will participate in an orientation meeting with their supervisor. This personnel policy will be reviewed, along with the job description and the payroll procedure to answer any questions the employee may have.

Employee Evaluation

The employee will receive an annual evaluation from their supervisor following the process outlined in their job description. The employee will have the opportunity to provide comments on their performance evaluation for their personnel file.

Personnel File

All documents related to employment arrangements and performance, including annual evaluations and the employee's written comments on those evaluations, will be part of the employee's personnel file. The personnel file will be kept by the employee's supervisor. It is available for review by the employee at any time in a secure and supervised environment agreed on by the two parties. Members of the NYM Personnel Committee, other NYM committees designated by the NYM Personnel Committee, and individuals who receive permission from the NYM Personnel Committee, have the right to review the employee's personnel file in a secure and supervised environment with the understanding that the information should be treated as confidential and used only for the purposes of carrying out NYM business.

Standards of Conduct

Each employee has an obligation to observe and follow NYM's policies and to maintain proper standards of conduct at all times. If an individual's behavior interferes with their ability to fulfill the responsibilities stated in their job description, corrective disciplinary measures will be taken.

Disciplinary action may include a verbal warning, written warning, suspension with or without pay and/or discharge. The appropriate disciplinary action imposed will be determined by the NYM Personnel Committee. NYM does not guarantee that one form of action will necessarily precede another.

The following may result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge: violation of NYM policies or safety rules; insubordination; unauthorized or illegal possession, use or sale of alcohol or controlled substances during working hours; unauthorized possession, use or sale of weapons, firearms or explosives during working hours; theft or dishonesty; physical harassment; sexual harassment; poor attendance, or poor performance. These examples are not all inclusive. Discharge decisions will be based on an assessment of all relevant factors.

If employment is terminated for disciplinary reasons, there is no guarantee of continued wages or

severance pay from NYM. All NYM property must be returned upon termination.

Grievance Procedure

If the employee has a grievance with their employment situation, it is recommended that they first discuss it with their supervisor in the hopes of finding a mutually satisfactory resolution to the problem. At all times the employee has the right to take their grievance directly to any member of the NYM Personnel Committee for consideration by the entire committee.

Employee Resignation

Should the employee decide to end the employment relationship with NYM, it is requested that they provide their supervisor with at least two weeks' advance notice. A longer period of advance notice would be appreciated if it is possible since it generally requires more than two weeks to find a replacement.

Additionally, all resigning employees must complete a brief exit interview with a member of their choice from the NYM Personnel Committee. All NYM property must be returned upon termination.

Benefits

At this time, all NYM employment is on a part-time basis. As such, NYM does not offer any paid vacation, sick leave, holidays or personal days. Overtime work is not paid or required. Health insurance is not covered. There is no pension plan or life insurance offering.

Pay

The employee should check with their supervisor for information on whether they are required to record their hours and if so, how to record their hours. Their supervisor can supply information regarding how and when the employee will be paid. The employee should review their paycheck for accuracy. If they find an issue, they should report it to their supervisor immediately.

Paycheck Deductions

NYM is required by law to make certain deductions from each paycheck each pay period. These deductions typically include federal and state taxes and social security (FICA) taxes. All deductions and the amount of the deductions are provided to the employee with each paycheck. These deductions are totaled each year on a Form W-2, Wage and Tax Statement, and provided by NYM to the employee before January 31 of the following year.

Social Security

During employment, both the employer and the employee contribute funds to the federal government to support the Social Security program. This program is intended to provide the employee with retirement benefit payments and medical coverage once they reach retirement age.

Unemployment Insurance

Upon separation of employment, the employee may be entitled to unemployment insurance benefits. Information about unemployment insurance can be obtained from the appropriate state agency.

Workers' Compensation

On-the-job injuries are covered by a Workers' Compensation insurance policy. This insurance is provided by NYM at no cost to the employee. If the employee is injured on-the-job, no matter how slightly, they should report the incident as soon as possible to their supervisor. Failure to report an injury within a

reasonable period of time could jeopardize the claim. Employees should alert their supervisor to any conditions in their working environment that could lead or contribute to an employee accident.

Expense Reimbursement

All NYM employees are entitled to recovery of personal expenses they incur to perform the responsibilities listed in their job description. These expenses will be covered up to the total annual budget amount for such expenses that was set for them by their supervisor. These expenses will typically include mileage to NYM events and meetings that require their presence and phone and mailing expenses for conducting business related to their job responsibilities. Mileage should be charged at the Internal Revenue Service's prevailing Standard Mileage Rates. Itemization of these expenses, along with receipts, should be sent to their supervisor for review and approval of payment by the NYM treasurer

**NYM Policies for Responding to a Report of Physical or Sexual Abuse of a
Young Person
Final: May 12, 2014**

1. Responsibility for responding to reports of physical and sexual abuse would be with the NYM Children and Youth (C & Y) Committee.
2. NYM will consider its paid staff to be mandated reporters and that any allegations of abuse would be subject to the mandated reporting requirements.
3. The paid C & Y staff will be required to complete the mandated reporter training. These staffs, along with the C & Y Committee, will compile a folder containing information that can be readily available to aid in decision-making should a report need to be made.
4. For NYM annual session:
 - a. C & Y will identify three people to whom concerns about abuse or neglect would be reported. At least one of these should be one of the paid staff. One of these would be the C & Y Coordinator for annual session. The third individual could be the other paid staff person, a member of the C & Y Committee who has taken the mandated reporter training, or another person who is already a mandated reporter because of their profession, or is familiar with mandated reporting requirements. These individuals may choose to consult with the Lions Camp Director, as needed.
 - b. Should anyone bring a concern to them the three individuals would gather information about the known facts (see Appendix A for guidelines about interviewing children), review the criteria for reporting and document what is known. Then they would contact child welfare or law enforcement if the criteria for reporting appear to be met.
5. For high school or middle school retreats:
 - a. Other adults participating as Friendly Adult Presences or hosts for the retreat will be asked about agreeing to be part of the response team. One such adult will be selected with whom the NYM C & Y staff could confer if there is a report or evidence of abuse.
 - b. A member of C & Y who has completed the mandated reporter training will be identified as an “on-call” person in the event that the adults on-site feel the need to have additional input on whether a report meets the criteria for reporting.
 - c. Should anyone bring a concern to one of the adults at the retreat the identified individuals would review the criteria for reporting and document what is known. Then they would contact child welfare or law enforcement if the criteria for reporting appear to be met.
6. The C & Y Coordinator for annual session will encourage identified leaders for each of the age level groups at annual meeting to view the mandated reporter training so that they are better attuned to identifying signs of abuse. The C & Y Coordinator will request individuals to inform him/her if they have completed this training.
7. During annual session the C & Y Committee will inform M & N about any reports brought to them and the determination. It is assumed that whether or not a report is made that there will be a need for ministry with the individuals directly involved (the person who has been alleged to have perpetrated the abuse, the alleged victim, and

family/significant others of these individuals). It is assumed that should a report be made that there may be a need to address this with the larger community (C & Y will seek to obtain information about how this can be handled while respecting the limitations that a formal report may put on communications).

Resources:

It Shouldn't Hurt to be a Child:

http://dcf.wi.gov/publications/pdf/dcf_p_pfs0101.pdf

Mandated reporter training for Wisconsin can be accessed

at: <http://wcpds.wisc.edu/mandatedreporter/>

Information about mandated reporting in Minnesota:

<https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfservlet/Public/DHS-2917-ENG>

Appendix 1: Guidelines for Talking with Children and Adults

The California Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Law: Issues and Answers for Mandated Reporters <http://mandatedreporter.ca.com/images/Pub132.pdf>

Talking with Children

You may become concerned about possible child abuse by observation of physical signs, by a child's behavior, or by a child's verbal disclosure. If you observe physical signs of abuse, employ only open-ended questions when asking the child about it. For example, if a child displays unusual bruising, ask "How did you get hurt?" rather than "Did your father do that?" or "Who hit you?". If it is the child's behavior that concerns you, ask the child privately whether there is anything going on that is making the child angry or unhappy.

Among younger school-age children, verbal disclosures sometimes occur by accident, or the child may tell another child who then tells you. However it is disclosed, do not be dissuaded from reporting the situation if the child recants his or her statements. It is very common for a child who discloses abuse to then deny it out of fear of reprisal or of breaking up the family. When talking with children about possible abuse, the following guidelines should be followed:

The Setting

- Conduct the discussion in private
- Sit next to the child, rather than behind a table or desk
- Conduct the discussion in language the child understands
- Talk with the child away from parents/guardians/suspects or other potentially influential people.

Gathering Information

- Remember to manage your own emotional response; do not express shock, disapproval, or disgust regarding the child, parent, or disclosure
- Allow the child to tell you of their experience in their own words; refrain from asking leading or suggestive questions

Common Mistakes to Avoid

- Do not introduce new terminology or information, especially when dealing with allegations of sexual abuse
- Be aware that children's understanding of the concept of time is often limited, and information about when and how often an incident occurred is best obtained from adults familiar with the child's history.
- Do not paraphrase. Allow the child to tell of his/her experience in his/her own words, and then
- document what the child says.

Finally, avoid making unrealistic promises to a child. For example, a child may ask you to promise not to tell anyone else of their disclosure. Mandated reporters must report suspicions of abuse. Therefore, it is important to let the child know what you will do as a result of the disclosure, explaining who you will tell and why. It is also important to reassure the child that he

or she is not to blame for the abuse and that he or she deserves praise for having the courage to reveal the abuse.

What to Tell Parents/Caretakers

One of the biggest obstacles to reporting may be the feelings of the potential reporter. It is important to remember that the intention of a child abuse report is to protect a child, not punish the family. When a report is made, child protective agency workers can investigate and, when appropriate, intervene to provide services and education for parents.

Concerns about the caretaker's reaction to the report can also be a deterrent to reporting, and should be addressed. Although the identities of mandated reporters are confidential, mandated reporters often worry about repercussions, including being confronted by angry parents. Remember that becoming involved with investigatory agencies is often a confusing and perplexing experience for parents or caregivers. When confronted with an angry parent, it is important to remain calm and maintain a professional demeanor. Listening to and normalizing a parent's feelings while expressing appropriate concern and respect may help diffuse the situation. Informing the parent of your status as a mandated reporter during your initial contact may also help to alleviate some of this concern.

Deciding whether or not to tell a parent that you plan to report or already have reported child abuse can be a difficult decision. Although there are no legal guidelines for mandated reporters to follow in making this decision, keep in mind that your first priority is establishing the safety of the child. Any information that suggests that informing the parent(s) could increase the risk of further abuse to the child should be considered. Also, be aware that such action could interfere with the initial child welfare agency's investigation. For example, a parent might intimidate a child into recanting allegations and/or flee to avoid contact with investigators. It is important to advise the child welfare staff if a child is afraid to go home, may be at risk of harm due to disclosing the abuse, or may be under pressure to change or retract his or her statement.

Manual for Mandated Reporters

Illinois Dept. of Children and Family Services

http://www.state.il.us/dcf/docs/CFS_1050-21_Mandated_Reporter_Manual.pdf

Sexual abuse investigations are often more complex than investigations of physical abuse. Sexual abuse of children can include acts that leave little or no physical evidence. Fondling children (over or under clothing) and exploitation (such as making children watch sexual acts) may leave no physical evidence at all. Most sexual abuse is conducted in secrecy, and children are frequently cajoled, bribed, or threatened into silence by the perpetrators of the abuse. Witnesses are seldom available to corroborate the abuse. Therefore, determining credible evidence in sexual abuse cases usually depends heavily on the testimony of the victim. A child's disclosure of sexual abuse is an important event in the subsequent investigation of the case, and it must be handled sensitively. For younger children, the telling of the abuse may happen accidentally, slipping out in conversation with another child or adult. But for many children, the disclosure is painfully deliberate.

A mandated reporter who suspects that a child is struggling to communicate information about sexual abuse needs to observe the child closely and listen attentively while maintaining a calm and neutral demeanor. The child may be hesitant to continue if the adult expresses shock or anger either through verbal responses or facial reactions. Children are likely to feel embarrassment about disclosing sexual abuse and may disguise their involvement by saying the abuse happened to a friend or sibling. Finding a more private setting for following up with some observations (i.e. “Your friend must be feeling confused and upset by what is happening to her”) may allow the child to relax and give a fuller disclosure.

A report of sexual abuse is frequently handled by a team of special investigators—one from DCFS and one from the police. More than 60 counties in Illinois are served by Children’s Advocacy Centers that provide specially trained personnel to interview alleged victims of sexual abuse. These interviewers, DCFS investigators, and juvenile officers are skilled in the techniques of talking with children about stressful topics, and they know how to gather information in a thorough and non-traumatizing way. Interviewers are specially trained to cover all possibilities as to what has happened.

Just as in physical abuse investigations, there are several critical factors that investigators take into account when deciding whether or not to indicate a report of sexual abuse. These factors are:

- alleged victim’s testimony, especially if:
 - a. testimony is detailed;
 - b. testimony reveals experience or knowledge beyond expected age or developmental levels;
 - c. testimony provides information that can be corroborated.
- the alleged perpetrator’s testimony, especially if there is a confession;
- physical evidence, especially in cases of sexual penetration of young victims;
- behavioral indicators of abuse, especially if the behaviors represent marked changes in normal behavior for the child;
- corroboration of elements of the victim’s testimony by credible witnesses.

In a significant number of cases, the decision to indicate a case or not comes down to weighing the testimony of an alleged victim describing the sexual abuse and the testimony of an alleged perpetrator denying it. In these cases, the credibility of the alleged victim’s testimony is critically important. It is critical that the mandated reporter pay very careful attention to the disclosure of the abuse by the victim.

In general, the mandated reporter who hears a child’s disclosure should not encourage the victim to disclose additional information beyond what is given voluntarily. Further questioning may result in traumatizing the victim still further. Reporters should concentrate on taking very careful notes about what the victim discloses voluntarily. Every detail of the incident is potentially important. Such things as the time and place of the incident, the identity of the alleged perpetrator, and any potential witnesses or others told of the incident are critical pieces of information and may assist investigators in getting enough evidence to indicate the report and implement protection of the child.

In some instances, a mandated reporter will need to ask a clarifying question or two if a child's statement seems vague or lacking in detail. For example, a child may say "My mommy touched me there" (indicating the genital area). Further questions posed to the child ("Where were you when this happened?" and "What was mommy doing?") may reveal the mother touched the child with a washcloth in bathing the child. Or a parent may take a young boy to the doctor for an injury on the end of his penis. A concerned doctor will want to ask the parent and the child, separately, a question like "How did this happen?" or "What was it that hurt your penis?" The questions might reveal that the child pinched himself on his tricycle and no report would need to be made. On the other hand, the child and parent may have differing versions of what happened or the child could indicate that some person pinched him or bit him. This latter explanation would warrant a call to the Hotline.

Medical reporters may be able to provide critical information about any physical evidence of sexual abuse. If females receive a physical examination that reveals evidence of sexual penetration, especially in children not expected to be sexually active, this evidence is extremely valuable in investigation. All physical evidence, for any alleged victim, should be noted carefully and conveyed both to the Hotline worker and to the DCFS investigator.

NYM Children and Youth Committee
Safety Practices for Kindly Adult Presences (KAPs) Working with the
Middle School and High School Programs
Approved by Committee: 11/21/17

The Purposes of these Practices

Youth workers hold a position of responsibility and great trust with our young people. We are grateful to all those who are called to work with youth. The parents, staff, and the larger body of Friends want the safety, spiritual development, and general well-being of the young people in our care to be nurtured and respected.

These safety practices were developed to ensure that NYM provides a safe and secure environment for the middle and high school youth entrusted to our care. We recognize that there are two aspects to creating such an environment: screening practices to help us reasonably discern that individuals seeking to volunteer with the program have the temperament for working with youth in these age groups and do not pose any known risk to youth safety; and, behavior guidelines that establish clear and appropriate physical and emotional boundaries between the volunteers and the youth with whom they are working.

Challenges Related to Safety Practices for NYM Retreats

- Despite best intentions, sometimes we identify people fairly late in the process, perhaps two or three weeks (or less) prior to a retreat. People are often reluctant to make this commitment further in advance. This makes screening or training more challenging, although written "training" materials and behavioral guidelines can be provided.
- Some Meetings have screening practices and can provide a confirmation that a potential KAP has completed this, but most Meetings probably do not. Even for those who do, the time constraints could make it difficult to obtain confirmations.
- The KAP may not be located in the same community as the Coordinator, making some aspects of screening more challenging.
- KAPs fill different roles that involve different levels of interaction with youth and create different types of potential safety concerns:
 - ✓ Providing support during a limited period of time for structured activities e.g., spending 3-4 hours in the afternoon while the group is doing educational and exploration activities related to the retreat topic.
 - ✓ Providing transportation for an out-trip.
 - ✓ Making, serving and help cleaning up after one or more meals, with some interaction with youth.
 - ✓ Spending the night with the group.

Safety practices may take these differences into account.

Screening

- Individuals interested in serving as a KAP will have a phone interview with the Coordinator if the person is otherwise unknown to the Coordinator.
- Middle school KAPs must be at least 18 years old. High school KAPs must be 21.
- The individual will provide the names of two individuals as references, one of whom is someone familiar with the individual from their home Meeting; ideally someone who can speak to their work with and safety in regards to children and youth. The Coordinator or a member of the C & Y Committee will complete the reference check by phone, email or snail mail. The reference check will consist of questions approved by the C & Y Committee. See Attachment 1 for reference check forms. If the reference cannot confirm the individual's relationship to the home Meeting the Coordinator or C & Y Committee member can contact the Meeting Clerk or FDS Coordinator.
- If the individual interested in serving as a KAP has been screened by a credible organization for working with children and youth, verification of this by the Clerk or FDS Coordinator of that Meeting will serve as sufficient for screening although the Coordinator may still wish to have a phone interview with the individual. Such organizations include but are not limited to:
 - ✓ The individual's home Meeting;
 - ✓ Camp Woodbrooke;
 - ✓ NYM Annual Sessions as a program leader;
 - ✓ Boy Scouts/Girl Scouts;
 - ✓ Professional role as a teacher or therapist.
- The NYM C & Y Committee will maintain a list of individuals who have been approved as KAPs. Individuals on this list may be used without additional screening for future retreats, although the Coordinator may still wish to have a phone interview with the individual. The Coordinators may request that an individual be removed from the list and identified as not appropriate for serving as a KAP if the individual has violated the behavior guidelines (see below) or in other ways has demonstrated inappropriate or unsafe behaviors. The Coordinator will notify the Convenor of the C & Y Committee if they wish to have an individual removed and the Convenor will determine what actions need to be taken prior to removing the individual from the list. Minimally, the Convenor and one other committee member will speak with the identified KAP to inform them of the concern identified. The Convenor and other committee member will bring the matter to the C & Y Committee for review, with a recommendation regarding next steps.

Safety practices and behavior guidelines for KAPs.

1. For their safety, and for the safety of the youth, KAPs should avoid being alone with a youth in an area that is isolated from other members of the group.
2. All participants at a gathering have a right to set their physical boundaries, to say no to unwelcome touch, and should respect the boundaries of others in the community. In

general, KAPs should not initiate physical contact with youth and should limit the amount and length of such contact. Adults who express a lot of affection towards young people need to be mindful of how much their own needs are being met by their contact with middle school or high school-aged young people. KAPs must be mindful of the power that they have in relation to young people, and be careful to use their power in constructive ways.

3. When a young person is upset or there is a need for a private conversation, we expect that this will occur within sight or earshot of other members of the community. Unless the matter is urgent and it is not practical to do so, the KAP should inform the Coordinator of the need for a private conversation and the Coordinator should determine whether they or another adult should also be present.
4. KAPs should not be in the position of reprimanding youth. If a situation has occurred about which the KAP is concerned and feels there is a need for limit-setting of some type the KAP should bring this to the attention of the Coordinator.
5. KAPs should be mindful that they are an adult role model for youth under their care. As such they should refrain from the following:
 - ✓ Engaging in sexual or derogatory humor and violent, disrespectful, or dangerous behavior.
 - ✓ Taking showers in the presence of younger Friends in a communal (no stalls) situation.
 - ✓ Engaging in physical discipline of a young person in their care. KAPs will not abuse minors in any way, including but not limited to physical abuse, verbal/mental abuse, emotional abuse, and sexual abuse of any kind.
 - ✓ Providing alcoholic beverages, tobacco, drugs, contraband, pornography or suggestive material, or anything that is prohibited by law, to youth.
6. If a KAP recognizes inappropriate contact or an inappropriate relationship developing between a minor and another KAP, he or she will intervene if necessary and report the incident to the Coordinator. Similarly if a young person reports to the KAP that they have been sexually harassed or abused or subject to other behaviors prohibited by these guidelines the KAP will report this to the Coordinator. The Coordinators are mandatory reporters of abuse and will determine the appropriate next steps.

Attachment 1

**Northern Yearly Meeting
Kindly Adult Presence (KAP) Reference Check
Overnight KAPs**

Name of KAP: _____

Name of reference person: _____

1. How do you know the applicant? For how long have you known them?
2. What is your knowledge of this person's work with middle-schoolers/high schoolers?
3. How would you describe the applicant's manner of interacting with this age group? E.g., Are they able to be open to their thoughts/ideas without being argumentative?
4. How would you describe the applicant's ability to relate to adults who will be leading activities? E.g., Are they able to complement the Coordinator's role without "taking over"?
5. Is this person reliable and dependable?
6. Do you feel comfortable with this person being alone with middle schoolers/high schoolers or a small group of youth for a short period of time?
7. Do you have any concerns I should know about or plan for in order to support the applicant in their work with youth?
8. Do you recommend this person to work with middle schoolers/high schoolers?
9. Any additional comments?

Completed by: _____ Date: _____

**Northern Yearly Meeting
Kindly Adult Presence (KAP) Reference Check
For Daytime-Only KAPs**

Name of KAP: _____

Name of reference person: _____

1. How do you know the applicant? For how long have you known them?
2. What is your knowledge of this person's work with middle schoolers/high schoolers?
3. How would you describe the applicant's manner of interacting with this age group? E.g., Are they able to be open to their thoughts/ideas without being argumentative?
4. How would you describe the applicant's ability to relate to adults who will be leading activities? E.g., Are they able to complement the Coordinator's role without "taking over".
5. Is this person reliable and dependable?
6. Do you have any concerns I should know about or plan for in order to support the applicant in their work with children?
7. Do you recommend this person to work with middle schoolers/high schoolers?
8. Any additional comments?

Completed by: _____ Date: _____

Northern Yearly Meeting Children and Youth Committee Grade/Age Policy for Youth Retreats

Middle School Retreats are designed for youth in Grades 6, 7 and 8 (generally 11-13/14 years). High School Retreats are designed for youth in Grades 9, 10, 11 and 12 (14-18 years). Our default would be to assign youth by their grade level but age may come into account as noted below.

Experience has shown that retreats work best when attendees are all of a similar age. It is highly recommended that children attend the appropriate retreat for their grade. However, we are willing to make exceptions when it is determined that the change would be in the best interest of the youth, and we are comfortable that the change would not have adverse effects on the group they are joining.

When is the change in the best interest of the youth? Here are examples of circumstances when NYM would consider making a change:

1. At their Monthly Meeting or in their school the youth regularly participates with the group they are asking to join at the NYM level. This often happens when the Monthly Meeting has a small number of youth and their First Day School classes cover a wide range of ages. If a youth is regularly participating with other ages at their Monthly Meeting, we would want to support those bonds at the NYM level.
2. The youth has developed strong attachments with other youth a year younger or older than they are at other NYM events. They have no strong attachments to other youth in their age group. We would want to support those strong attachments at our NYM events.
3. The requesting youth is not developmentally ready to participate in the older group.

What are possible adverse effects to the group that we need to avoid?

1. Sometimes the requesting youth is younger, and while they enjoy participating with the older youth, their presence keeps the group from addressing topics or having interactions that would be appropriate for the older youth but are not appropriate for the younger youth. There is already quite a bit of developmental difference between sixth graders and eighth graders, and between ninth graders and twelfth graders, that we try to address in our programs. Stretching those differences even further can make it difficult to meet the needs of the older youth. We do not want to put the older youth in a 'baby-sitting' role. The program should meet their personal needs at their level.
2. When a youth who is not developmentally ready joins an older group they are uncomfortable and their unhappiness hurts others' ability to fully enjoy and develop community during the weekend.
3. Whenever a younger child is allowed to move to an older age group, there are always questions, and often hurt feelings, from the youth of similar age who are not allowed to make the same change. There must be clear reasons for the change (see #1 - #3 Circumstances above), and these reasons must be explained to everyone in the group so the move is seen as fair to all.

When it is felt that a change of age groups could be in the best interest of a youth, the following process should be used to request, test and discern permission to make the change:

1. The youth requesting the change, and their parent or caregiver, should each write a letter to the affected NYM Coordinator(s) explaining why they are requesting the exception. If it is a fifth grader asking to attend the Middle School program, then the NYM Middle School Coordinator should receive the letters. If it is an eighth grader wanting to attend the High School program or an older youth wanting to attend the MS program, then both the NYM High School Coordinator and the NYM Middle School Coordinator should receive the letters. The letters should be received no less than two weeks prior to the retreat for which the request is being made, however it would be ideal for more time to be allowed so that all the steps below can be completed.
2. The NYM Coordinator(s) should check with the leaders of the First Day School program or another appropriate adult in the requester's Monthly Meeting and get their input on the appropriateness of the move.
3. Based on the information in the letters and the recommendation of the Monthly Meeting, the NYM Coordinator(s) can decide on whether or not it is appropriate to allow the requester to attend one youth event on a trial basis. The purpose of the trial is to give the Coordinator a chance to see if the requestor fits in with the new group, and to be sure there are no detrimental effects on our ability to serve the developmental needs of the primary group.
4. If based on the results of the trial event, the NYM Coordinator(s) thinks it is appropriate for the requestor to continue in the new group they will inform the youth, the parents/guardians, the NYM Children and Youth Committee and the other youth in the affected programs. It is assumed that the youth will stay with this group for future retreats and at NYM Annual Sessions.
5. If based on the results of the trial event, the NYM Coordinator(s) thinks it is not appropriate for the requestor to continue in the new group on an on-going basis they will explain to the youth their concern and provide an opportunity for response. However, the Coordinator(s)' decision is final. The Coordinator(s) will inform the NYM Children and Youth Committee of their decision and the NYM Children and Youth Committee will communicate the decision to the parent/guardian. Their decision will be shared with the requesting youth, their parents or guardians, all of the other youth in the affected program(s) (at the discretion of the Coordinators), and the NYM Children and Youth Committee.
6. The NYM Children and Youth Committee stands ready to support the Coordinator(s) with any parts of this process they would like help with.

**Approved by Children and Youth Committee
September 2016**

Guidelines for Virtual Meetings: May 2020

Northern Yearly Meeting

The NYM Children and Youth Committee has considered best practices and recommendations related to virtual meetings involving youth. The Covid-19 pandemic has led to widespread use of virtual technologies for meeting with our youth. However, it is likely that now that this bridge has been crossed NYM in particular, but also local Meetings/Worship Groups, may want to continue using virtual meetings to stay connected with our far-flung youth. Therefore we are offering the following for consideration. We welcome feedback and input so that together we can improve our practices.

Use of Kindly Adult Presences (KAPs)

KAPs are an important part of our youth programs. KAPs help provide additional role models, bring in additional perspectives and knowledge, and can help in responding to situations that come up during virtual meetings, as they do during in-person meetings. Where breakout sessions are used and could benefit from the presence of an adult to facilitate or monitor the conversation, there continues to be a need for KAPs.

KAPs also help insure that at least two adults are present during programming. While virtual meetings using Zoom or similar technologies remove some child safety concerns, there is still potential for actual harm or accusations that could be damaging to individuals and the program. The most significant risk, as is the case for in-person events, is the potential for one youth to be online with one adult. While it is much easier, and involves less immediate risk, for youth to leave such encounters, one can imagine that youth who like an adult program leader might stay online and be unaware that they are being “groomed” during this encounter. More explicit types of sexual activities are possible online as well. The Committee recognizes that there are mitigating factors, the main one being that parents are often around the house when such meetings are taking place and while they may not be directly participating their “antenna” may be raised and sensitive to encounters that do not seem appropriate.

While providing adult supervision is necessary, youth also have unsupervised free time during in-person retreats when they may gather in and around the Meetinghouse. However, adult leaders and KAPs are still “around” and have the potential to “look in” at any point.

Therefore, to address supervision, support and safety the NYM Children and Youth Committee believes the following policies are appropriate for virtual retreats and meetings:

- We should utilize KAPs for all the positive reasons that we currently do so as well as for youth safety reasons. The number of KAPs should be appropriate for the activities that are going on during any virtual session. If there is going to be discussion of a retreat theme and the group will break out into smaller groups, the Coordinator should consider whether it is important to have an adult in each of these breakout groups. Sometimes such breakouts may not require an adult presence (e.g. a 15-20 minute breakout for small group scavenger hunts).
- KAPs are subject to the same screening process as for in person events.
- Limited free time is appropriate, generally no more than 30 minutes. At the end of such free time the Coordinator should check in and close the meeting. Youth may choose to reconvene on their own time through their own online accounts for additional interaction.

- Parents are informed of the online meeting schedules and plans, including plans for ‘free time’, so they may be aware of their youth’s participation and monitor as they feel appropriate to the needs of their child.

Virtual Meeting Technology Parameters

Online meeting programs have many features. Consideration of how these features can promote safe online behavior include. Examples from Zoom include the following:

- ‘Cannot join before host’ means that youth are not “unsupervised” during this time.
- ‘Waiting room on’ ensures that adults can monitor who is entering the meeting.
- ‘Removed participants cannot rejoin’ can reduce disruptive behavior.
- ‘Muted on entry’ reduces disruption if people join after programming begins.
- ‘Participant whiteboard off’ reduces disruption.
- ‘Disabling screen share’ reduces disruption and exposure to inappropriate materials.
- ‘Only host can share screen’ reduces inappropriate screen sharing by youth.
- ‘Chat function off’ or ‘Public chat only’ reduces the likelihood that youth are distracted by private side conversations (some of which could be annoying or feel like harassment).
- ‘Virtual background off’ reduces distractions.

Of course there are times when functions such as whiteboard, screening sharing and chatting can be used as part of activities for youth and would be enabled. The age of the youth is also a consideration in whether these functions can be enabled without excessive disruption.

Many of these practical, specific guidelines are borrowed from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, Guidance and Practices for Online Youth Gatherings: https://www.pym.org/religious-education/guidance-and-practices-for-online-youth-gatherings/?fbclid=IwAR1-FCon6-xNJeJarXZnMmeVAFniY_51tb_Raho2IB8O7PwLPmfmbiwH6cQ

Darkness to Light offers this guidance for teachers on safe digital learning: <https://www.d2l.org/safe-digital-learning-plans/>

Access to Email

Use of online meetings may mean that adults working with youth have access to their email accounts. To the degree that this function can be centralized it will limit access to these accounts. In any case, parents should be knowledgeable about what information is being shared about their children. Best practice is never texting/emailing students one-on-one. Instead, use an NYM or Meeting communication platform where someone can send an email through the group list without having access to individual emails. If you must send a text/email, send a group text/email or include parents or another adults in the communication.

Resource for Parents

Parents may wish to review this fact sheet on digital safety: <https://www.d2l.org/digital-safety-parents/>