

Cincinnati Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends
ABUSE, NEGLECT, & EXPLOITATION POLICY GUIDELINES

POLICY (APPROVED 02/08/2004)

The Cincinnati Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends herein confirms its Quaker tenets that recognize that "God is within" each member, at tender, and guest and therefore the Meeting shall act accordingly within those tenets, within policies and guidelines adopted and approved by the Meeting, and within all legal and civil requirements to provide a safe and spiritually nurturing environment, with a particular emphasis on children, youth, and those who may be vulnerable to abuse, neglect or exploitation.

It shall be the policy of the Meeting that all shall be treated with respect, loyalty, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity and consideration, in the manner of Friends.

All Meeting paid personnel and volunteers shall maintain the integrity of the spiritual relationship at all times by adopting and adhering to the following guidelines related to abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

GUIDELINES

- All paid personnel shall be required to complete an application for employment, as adopted by the Meeting, including any criminal convictions, and shall provide references. Prior to employment, successful applicants shall complete and sign the Background Inquiry Authorization and successfully pass a background inquiry, including criminal background checks by the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation (OBCII) (including fingerprinting), and shall provide character and professional references, academic or educational records, and past employment history.

- All paid personnel and volunteers shall be required to notify the Clerk of Ministry & Counsel immediately upon being convicted of any crimes/offenses.

- Volunteers shall read, sign and date the Volunteer Agreement form, as adopted by the Meeting, prior to any volunteer service other than a one-time event, activity, or occasion. The Meeting may, at its discretion, require background inquiries, including successful completion of a background check by OBCII, for any volunteer position.

- Volunteers may not begin service, other than a one-time or occasional event or activity, until such time as they have been a member or attender of the Meeting for a period not less than six months.

- Volunteers working with children and youth, as well as paid personnel working with children and youth, shall participate in ongoing training related to child abuse and neglect. The Education Committee shall be responsible, along with Ministry & Counsel, for developing and/or scheduling such training, and shall be responsible for assuring that volunteers complete the required training. Copies of training materials, sign-in sheets, and other relevant materials shall be maintained in permanent records in the office.

- The Meeting recommends that volunteers working with children and youth do not work with an individual child or youth in situations where they cannot be observed by others. This includes transporting children and youth to and from meetings and activities.

- Any member, attender, or guest who witnesses a child or youth or other member, attender, or guest being abused within the Meeting or Meeting-related activities or events, shall report the

incident or concern immediately to the pastoral minister, who shall report the incident or concern to the Clerk of Ministry & Counsel and Presiding Clerk. Should the incident or concern involve the pastoral minister, it shall be reported immediately to the Clerk of Ministry & Counsel and Presiding Clerk.

- Any member, attender or guest who witnesses a child or youth or other member, attender, or guest being abused or who has cause to believe that a child or youth is being abused outside of the Meeting environment shall be encouraged to report the concern immediately to the pastoral minister or Presiding Clerk or Clerk of Ministry & Counsel. This includes allegations or suspicions of abuse and neglect by family members upon their own family members.

- The Meeting shall provide copies of guidelines to volunteers working with children and youth.

- The Meeting shall include child abuse and neglect educational materials in the office for review and use by all members, attenders, and guests.

- A copy of the Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation Policy and Guidelines shall be posted in areas where children are involved in spiritual education and other activities. A copy shall also be included in the Meeting's Handbook.

THE MEETING SHALL ADHERE TO THE FOLLOWING CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLAN:

- Concerns or incidents related to abuse and neglect of children and youth shall be reported upon occurrence to the pastor of the Meeting, unless the concern or incident involves the pastoral minister. At such time, the concern or incident shall be reported to the parents, Presiding Clerk of the Meeting and the Clerk of Ministry & Counsel.

- The pastoral minister and/or Presiding Clerk or Clerk of Ministry & Counsel shall be responsible for documenting concerns or incidents and shall take appropriate action to address such, including, but not limited to, calling an emergency meeting of Ministry & Counsel, as well as reporting the concerns or incidents to parents and appropriate law enforcement and child protection officials, as warranted.

- Documented abuse in any form (physical or verbal) by any paid personnel of the Meeting may be grounds for immediate dismissal. Documented abuse in any form (physical or verbal) by any volunteer may result in immediate suspension of the volunteer's activities with children and youth and shall require action as identified by Ministry & Counsel.

- Ministry & Counsel shall address the concern or incident, if founded, with the congregation and shall develop safeguards against a recurrence of such concern or incident.