

Child Safety Policy, Approved February 10, 2013

The Burlington Friends Meeting takes responsibility for providing a diverse, enriching, and multi-generational experience for our children. In creating and sustaining this programming, many Friends are required to nurture both the program as well as our children as they grow. To support this program and ensure the overall safety and well-being of our children, we have developed the following policy to establish baseline expectations for both the environment and those adults assisting with the First Day program.

Part of a comprehensive Quaker children's religious education program is teaching, fostering, and encouraging positive peer interactions. While this document is aimed at giving guidance to the behavior of adults, equal consideration and careful attention will be paid to how children interact with one another. Teaching children in this instance would include modeling healthy communication, actions, and problem solving.

- At the rise of Meeting, the supervision of the children is returned to their parents/ caregivers and the larger Meeting community.
- All classes (or larger classrooms) will have a minimum of two adults (or an adult with a responsible teenager) present in the room for the duration of the class and/or until each child has been reunited with their parent(s).
 - If a second adult is not available, the door to the classroom space will be left open.
 - One adult may work with a group of older middle school or high school young people as long as they are not alone with a single child.
- If inappropriate behavior (as defined below*) is observed or reported to the Children's Religious Education Committee (CREC) (by a child, parent, or other adult present), it will immediately be addressed and documented. This will include speaking to that adult at the time of the incident (which may include asking them to remove themselves from the presence of the children) as well notifying the child's parent, the CREC Clerk(s), the Ministry and Counsel (M&C) Clerk(s) and the Presiding Clerk of the Meeting.
- The Presiding Clerk will promptly call a meeting with the Clerk(s) of the CREC and the Clerk(s) of M&C to discuss any further action that may be required. After due consideration, this convened group may ask the individual to no longer have contact with the children or to assist with the First Day program. If an adult's behavior rises to the level of being a reportable offense under Vermont's Child Abuse Reporting Statute, the Presiding Clerk and/or a mandated reporter who is a member of the convened group, will contact the State Department of Child and Family Services.
- Most situations will not merit a report of any kind being made. If this is the case, then an individual who feels wrongly sanctioned, may ask for a clearness committee (to include at least one member of the original response). However, until that committee has found clarity, the initial request to cease interacting with the children will be honored. The members

of the clearness committee shall maintain the standards of the Burlington Friends Meeting Confidentiality Policy.

It should be noted that larger Meetings have discussed and implemented a formal screening process for any adult working with children. BFM has agreed that this additional step is not necessary for our small First Day School program at this time.

- **For the purposes of this policy, inappropriate behavior is defined in three ways:*
- *Physically inappropriate behavior includes hitting, shoving, etc.*
- *Emotionally inappropriate behavior includes name calling, swearing, or language that is not developmentally appropriate for the age of the child or children being addressed.*
- *Sexually inappropriate behavior includes sexualized language, touch, or removing clothing inappropriately.*