

Policy on Child Abuse Prevention

Southeastern Yearly Meeting (SEYM) will take all reasonable precautions to insure the safety of the children and youth at our Gatherings and conferences. To that end, we will provide appropriate screening of all staff and volunteers working with children and young people. It has been, and continues to be, the policy of SEYM to have two adult Youth Care Workers present at all times.

It is the policy of SEYM to follow the procedures outlined below. This policy and these procedures apply to everyone who works with children and young people under the age of 18, whether paid, compensated by work grants or fee waivers, or volunteer, who are working with SEYM youth at Yearly Meeting, as Friendly Adult Presences or presenters at SEYM events, or providing child care at Interim Business Meetings. In the procedures below, we refer to these people as “Youth and child care workers.” “SEYM staff” refers to the paid employee(s) of SEYM.

1. All potential youth and child care workers shall provide three references, including at least one who has direct experience of the person’s work with children and at least one who is a professional or institutional reference, rather than a personal one. Family members should not be used as references. References will be checked, and written records of reference calls kept on file. Reference checks will be repeated every 4 to 6 years for continuing workers.
2. All youth and child care workers (other than paid [local] babysitters) who will serve full time (that is, for the length of the event and not for just one day or as a lend a hand volunteer), must be active in a monthly meeting for at least six months prior to being hired. This shall be verified with the meeting clerk. Verification will be repeated every 2 to 4 years for continuing workers.
3. All workers who will have supervisory roles, or who will have overnight responsibility for children or young people, or who may be alone with young people, will consent, in writing, to a criminal and/or child abuse background check. The checks may be performed by SEYM staff in national and state databases. These checks will be repeated every five years for continuing workers.
4. All information from references, monthly meetings, and background checks will be held in the strictest of confidence. Files will be maintained on appointed staff for up to 20 years (until the youngest child is majority plus 2 years) in a secure file. Access to these files will be limited to the greatest extent practical. These files are the property of SEYM. Upon written request to the SEYM clerk, workers shall have access to their files except for letters of reference, which are confidential and not available to the worker. The file is not available to others outside of SEYM.
5. Workers who have not undergone the more thorough screening, including “walk in” volunteers, will be supervised at all times. Under no circumstances will these workers be left alone with a child other than their own.
6. Should SEYM staff have a question or concern about information revealed during the hiring procedures, they must consult in confidence with the Personnel Committee whose decisions shall be final.
7. SEYM will provide abuse prevention training for those in leadership roles. This training may be mandatory for workers in certain positions.
8. Detailed procedures, restrictions and guidelines will be developed and explained to all youth and childcare workers.
9. Any allegations of abuse will be taken seriously. All such allegations are to be reported immediately to the SEYM clerk or designee. Additional procedures will be developed to protect and care for the victim(s) of abuse, the alleged perpetrator(s), and others close to both. Our existing guidelines and procedures for Sexual Harassment should form a good basis for these procedures. In addition, SEYM shall comply with all government regulations for reporting abuse.