

Patapsco Friends Meeting (PFM) First Day School Safety Policies

Definitions

- For purposes of this policy, the terms “child”, “young Friend” “children” include all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years.
- RE, Religious Education, and First Day School may be used interchangeably.

PFM’s First Day School Philosophy

The PFM Religious Education Committee oversees the First Day School through prayer, thought, and action regarding the programs and activities for children. The programs and activities are meant to support young Friends, teachers and parents to:

- guide the children of the Meeting in discovery of, and their experience of, their Inner Light
- encourage a personal experience of God
- be sure each child in Meeting feels respected, loved and part of the Meeting
- help each child in Meeting develop a system of values

We seek to provide a respectful, safe, and secure environment for the children who participate in our programs and activities.

Adult Oversight of First Day School Program

First Day School classes will have at least 1 teacher assigned for each Sunday RE time slot and group. To ensure appropriate care of our children, the RE Committee members will be allowed to drop in on an unscheduled basis to offer help and to be sure that our children are safe. If there is only one RE teacher for a particular day and if that teacher feels uncomfortable being the only adult there for any reason, that teacher should come and ask the RE Committee clerk or any other RE member for assistance. If this isn’t possible, the teacher may interrupt the Meeting for Worship with a brief request for a volunteer to assist (either a family member or another Meeting participant who has passed a background check).

Open Door Policy

Classroom doors may need to be kept closed so not to disturb Meeting for Worship. However, RE teachers will understand that the RE Committee members, parents or others from the Meeting may come in at any time. The Open Door Policy means that anything happening during Religious Education periods is expected to be observable and open to all. Doors should never be locked during Patapsco Meeting activities while persons are inside the room.

Health & Injuries

Sick Child Policy

It is our desire to provide a healthy and safe environment for all of the children at Patapsco Friends Meeting. Parents are encouraged to be considerate of other children when deciding whether to place a child under our care. In general, children with the following symptoms will not be permitted in PFM activities:

- Fever, diarrhea, or vomiting within the last 48 hours
- Green or yellow runny nose
- Eye or skin infections
- Other symptoms of communicable or infectious disease

Children who are observed by our RE teachers or leaders to be ill will be separated from other children. The parent/guardian will be contacted. And told that their child (and any siblings) must be picked up ASP.

Medications Policy

It is the policy of PFM not to administer either prescription or non-prescription medications to the children under our care. Medications should be administered by a parent at home. Parents are reminded of our sick child policy.

Exceptions to the medications policy may be granted to parents of children with potentially life threatening conditions (such as asthma or severe allergic reactions). Parents of such children should address their situation with the Religious Education Clerk to develop a plan of action.

Discipline Policy

It is the policy of PFM not to administer corporal punishment, even if parents have suggested or given permission for it. There will be no spanking, hitting, or other physical discipline of children. Workers should consult with the Religious Education Clerk or parents if assistance is needed with disciplinary issues. (Since 1993, Maryland law prohibits corporal punishment. No exceptions.)

Accidental Injuries to Children

In the event that a child or youth is injured while under our care, the following steps should be followed:

- For minor injuries, scrapes, and bruises, workers will provide First Aid (Band-Aids, etc.) as appropriate and will notify the child's parent or guardian of the injury at the time the child is picked up from our care. First Aid Kit is located in classroom closet for younger children. And a traveling First Aid Kit will go with a Teacher or Leader when children go outdoors for an activity.
- For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple First Aid, the parent and/or guardian will immediately be informed. Medical assistance will be sought, and if warranted, an ambulance will be called.
- Once the child has received appropriate medical attention, a report will be completed in the case of injuries requiring treatment by a medical professional. The report will then be given to the Clerk(s) of the RE Committee and Meeting Clerk(s). The Report will be archived in a secure folder on PFM's Drive.

Responding to Allegations of Child Abuse

For purposes of this policy, "child abuse" is any action (or lack of action) that endangers or harms a child's physical, psychological/ emotional health, and development. Child abuse occurs in different ways and includes the following:

- Physical abuse – any physical injury to a child that is not accidental, such as beating, shaking, burns, and biting.
- Emotional abuse – emotional injury when the child is not nurtured or provided with love and security, such as an environment of constant criticism, belittling and persistent teasing.
- Sexual abuse – any sexual activity between a child and an adult or between a child and another child at least four years older than the victim, including activities such as fondling, exhibitionism,

intercourse, incest, and pornography.

- Neglect – depriving a child of his or her essential needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter, and medical care.

Religious Education teachers or leaders may have the opportunity to become aware of abuse or neglect of the children under their care. In the event that an individual involved in the care of children at Patapsco Meeting becomes aware of suspected abuse or neglect of a child under his/her care, this should be reported immediately to the Religious Education Clerk or PFM Clerk for further action including reporting to authorities as may be mandated by state law. (Summary of Maryland State Law for Report Abuse – Attachment B). The incident report form or the report of suspected child abuse and neglect should be completed and given to the Patapsco Clerk. Friends should refrain from spreading information about the incident or suspected child abuse until the case has been resolved.

In the event that an incident of abuse or neglect is determined to have occurred at this Meeting or during our sponsored programs or activities, the following procedure shall be followed:

1. The parent or guardian of the child will be notified.
2. The RE teacher or leader alleged to be the perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct will immediately be placed on leave from working with children pending an investigation.
3. Should verbal, physical or inappropriate sexual contact occur between children, the RE Clerk(s), Meeting Clerk(s), M&C committee member, children involved, parents of the children and the Teacher will meet before the next First Day School session.
4. After input from all above, the incident and the solution will be documented for PFM drive. A copy will be provided to all at this meeting.
5. Civil authorities will be notified, and the Meeting will comply with the state's requirements regarding mandatory reporting of abuse as the law then exists (see attachment D for a summary of relative Maryland law). The Meeting will fully cooperate with the investigation of the incident by civil authorities.
6. Our insurance company will be notified, and we will complete an incident report. Any documents received relating to the incident and/or allegations will immediately be forwarded to the insurance company.

[Insurance contact is on last page of document before the forms]

PFM Youth Safety Policies (*Revised 2/17/2025*)

7. The Clerk of the Meeting or his/her designee will be our spokesperson to the media concerning incidents of abuse or neglect unless he or she is alleged to be involved. We will seek the advice of legal counsel before responding to media inquiries or releasing information to the Meeting members/attendees. All other representatives of the Meeting should refrain from speaking to the media.
8. A pastoral visit from the Meeting Clerk or members of the Ministry and Care Committee and/or Religious Education Clerk(s) will be arranged for those who desire it.
9. Any person who is not found innocent of the alleged abuse or misconduct will be removed from his/her position working with children or youth.

Selecting Adult RE Teachers and Activity Leaders

All persons who work with the children participating in our programs and activities will be approved by the RE Committee. This screening includes the following:

a. Six Month Rule

Adults who work with our children should be involved with PFM for a minimum of six (6) months. This time of interaction between newcomers and the RE Committee allows us to have a better knowledge of all those who will be with our children. An exception will be made if a Member or long-standing Attender vouches for the Adult.

b. Personal Meeting/Interview/Attendance at an RE Meeting

Before an adult works with our children, a face-to-face meeting/interview will be held with the adult to discuss/explain the “job” and his/her suitability or readiness for the position and to acquaint the person with the resources of the Meeting.

c. Criminal Background Check

All those who are to work with children at PFM will be asked to sign an authorization form allowing the Meeting to run a national criminal background check (attachment A) and give this to the Clerk of RE, who will initiate the background checks. The results of these background checks will be held on file. If an individual declines to sign the authorization form, she/he will be unable to work with children at PFM. The Clerk of the RE Committee will initiate the background check. To serve as the Clerk of the RE Committee, the RE Clerk(s) must also pass this background check

What constitutes a disqualifying offense that will keep an individual from working with children will be determined by Religious Education Clerk and the PFM Clerk on a case-by-case basis in light of all the surrounding circumstances. Generally, convictions for an offense involving children and/or for offenses involving violence, dishonesty, illegal substances, indecency and any conduct contrary to our mission will preclude someone from being permitted to work with children. Failure to disclose a criminal conviction to the RE Committee will also be a disqualifying event.

Any background check results will be maintained in confidence on file by the PFM Clerk or Assistant Clerk and RE Clerk(s) . Completed criminal background check documents should not be transmitted via email but only by hard copy or on the secure encrypted website of Single Source. Only the Patapsco Meeting Clerk, the Assistant Clerk, and the RE Clerk(s) (s) will have access to any criminal background check document, in addition to the person whose background it is.

Teenage RE Assistants

We recognize that there may be times when it is necessary or desirable for youth/babysitters (paid or volunteer) who are themselves under age 18 to assist in caring for children during programs or activities.

The following guidelines apply to teenage workers:

- Must be at least age 13
- Must be known by and vouched for by a members of the Meeting.
- There must be a 2 year difference between the teenager and the oldest child.
- Must be checked on regularly by an adult.

Orientation & Training of RE Teachers, Assistants (Adult and Teen)

- Patapsco Friends Meeting will provide an orientation on this Youth Safety Policy for all RE teachers and activity leaders, including teen assistants. Parents will receive a copy when their child/ren start attending First Day School.
- RE Committee will schedule First Aid Training and CPR for children for Teachers and Assistants. Should be scheduled regularly.

[Credits: Some material for this policy was extracted from the Guide One sample youth safety procedure. And BYM Youth Safety Procedure]

PFM Insurance contact as of fall 2024:

Kera Day

Account Executive, Commercial Lines

World Insurance Associates LLC

p: 301-855-9393 x443

keraday@worldinsurance.com

www.worldinsurance.com

PATAPSCO FRIENDS MEETING
Youth Safety Procedure

ATTACHMENT A. AUTHORIZATION FOR BACKGROUND CHECK.

BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION CONSENT

I, _____ (applicant complete name), hereby authorize PATAPSCO FRIENDS MEETING and/or its agents to make an independent investigation of my background, references, character, past employment, education, criminal, or police records, including those maintained by both public and private organizations and all public records for the purpose of confirming the information contained on my Application and/or obtaining other information, which may be material to my qualifications as a volunteer or for employment now, and if applicable, during the tenure of my volunteering or employment with Patapsco Friends Meeting.

I release Patapsco Friends Meeting and/or its agents and any person or entity, which provides information pursuant to this authorization, from any and all liabilities, claims, or lawsuits in regards to the information obtained from any and all of the above referenced sources used.

Full Name (Printed): _____

Maiden name or other names used: _____

Present street address: _____

City/State: _____ Zip: _____

How long? _____

Former street address: _____

City/State: _____ Zip: _____

How long? _____

Date of birth: _____ Social Security: _____

Driver's license: _____ State of license: _____

Today's Date: _____

Signature _____

PATAPSCO FRIENDS MEETING

Youth Safety Procedure

ATTACHMENT B. SUMMARY: MARYLAND LAW FOR REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

Child Abuse: In Maryland Code, child abuse laws can be found both in the Family Law Article at Sections 5- 701ff as well as in many places throughout the Criminal Law Article such as at Sections 3-601-602, 3-301ff and 11-207ff. You will find that when child abuse is discussed it is generally in reference to the laws found in the Family Law Article. In this section, child abuse is generally defined as injury to a child in which the child's health or welfare is harmed or put at substantial risk of being harmed, physically, emotionally, sexually or via neglect by the actions or failures to act of a parent or person with temporary or permanent responsibility for the child. Individuals who cause similar harms to a child with no legal responsibility for the child would be charged under the criminal statutes.

Reporters: Maryland law identifies those who are legally required to report suspected child abuse and neglect. These mandatory reporters are: health practitioner, police officer, educator, human services worker. Recently Maryland passed a new law which states that "a report is required when a person has reason to believe that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect." There is an exception for ministers of an established church of any denomination who are not required to report if the disclosure was made under circumstances in which the minister is bound to maintain confidentiality. While this new law broadens the arena of who shall report suspected child abuse and neglect, the mandatory reporter sections in this law were maintained. Only time will tell how and to what extent Maryland will enforce this new provision.

When & Where to Report: A report must be made when a mandatory reporter or other individual has reason to believe that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect. A report shall be made orally as soon as possible, and followed up with a written report within 48 hours thereafter. Reports should be made to the local department of social services in the location in which the abuse alleged occurred or to the local police. Maryland State provides a form to use for the written report.

Past Abuse: The mandatory reporting requirements do not change if the abuse was alleged to have taken place some time ago, even years ago, and without regard for whether the alleged victim is now an adult or the alleged abuser is no longer living.

Immunity: Under Maryland law, reporters are immune to prosecution for making the report so long as the report was made in good faith.

Credit: BYM Youth Safety Procedure