

**Davidson Friends Meeting
Child Protection Policy
(Approved 10/11/2015)**

General Purpose Statement

The Davidson Friends Meeting seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for the children who participate in our programs and activities. By implementing the below practices, our goal is to protect the children of the Davidson Friends Meeting from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also protecting our paid and unpaid workers from false accusations.

Definitions

For purposes of this policy, the terms “child” or “children” include all persons under the age of eighteen (18) year. The term “worker” includes both paid and volunteer persons who work with children.

Selection of Workers

Davidson Friends Members and Attenders may volunteer for the First Day School (FDS) and childcare programs. The FDS Committee can decline offers to volunteer with the children. All paid workers who desire to work with the children participating in our programs and activities will be screened. This screening includes the following:

a) Written Application

All persons seeking to work with children must complete and sign a written application in a form to be supplied by us. The application will request basic information from the applicant and will inquire into previous experience with children, reference and employment information, as well as disclosure of any previous criminal convictions. The application form will be maintained in confidence on file with the Clerk of the Meeting.

b) Personal Interview

Upon completion of the application, a face-to-face interview will be conducted with the applicant to discuss his/her suitability for the position. The completion of the application and the face-to-face interview may occur at the same meeting.

c) Reference Checks

Before an applicant is permitted to work with children, at least two of the applicants' references will be checked. References from family members will not be acceptable. References will preferably come from organizations or individuals where the applicant has worked with children in the past. Documentation of the reference checks will be maintained in confidence on file with the Clerk of the Meeting.

d) Criminal Background Check

A national criminal background check is required for all paid and unpaid workers in our FDS and child care programs except:

- Meeting members and attenders;
- Childcare providers referred to the FDS committee by Meeting members or attenders;
- Family members of Meeting members or attenders;
- Davidson College students.

Before running a background check, prospective workers will be asked to sign an authorization form allowing the FDS Committee to run the check. If an individual declines to sign the authorization form, s/he will be unable to work with children.

What constitutes a disqualifying offense that will keep an individual from working with children will be determined by the FDS Committee 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 on the application form will also be a disqualifying event.

The background check authorization form and results will be maintained in confidence by the Clerk of the Meeting.

Two Adult Rule

It is our goal that a minimum of two adult workers will be in attendance at all times when children are being supervised during our programs and activities. Some youth classes may have only one adult teacher in attendance during the class session.

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 or 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.

Childcare workers may have the opportunity to become aware of abuse or neglect of the children under our care. In the event that an individual involved in the care of children at the Davidson Friends Meeting becomes aware of suspected abuse or neglect of a child under his/her care, this should be reported immediately to the Convener of the First Day School Committee and the Clerk of the Meeting for further action including reporting to authorities as may be mandated by state law.

In the event that an incident of abuse or neglect is alleged to have occurred at the Davidson Friends 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 worker alleged to be the perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct will immediately be placed on leave from working with children pending an investigation and instructed to remain away from the premises during the investigation.
3. 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. The Meeting will fully cooperate with the investigation of the incident by civil authorities.
4. 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.
5. The Clerk of the Meeting 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. All other representatives of the Meeting should refrain from speaking to the media.
6. A pastoral visit will be arranged for those who desire it.
7. Any person who is not found innocent of the alleged abuse or misconduct will be removed from their position working with children or youth.

Open Door Policy

Classroom doors have glass windows. The glass in the classroom doors should never be covered during Meeting activities involving children. Doors should never be locked while persons are inside the room.

Teenage Workers

We recognize that there may be times when it is necessary or desirable for 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 14
- Must be screened as specified above.

Medications Policy

It is the policy of the Davidson Friends Meeting not to administer either prescription or non-prescription medications to the children under our care. Medications should be administered by a parent at home.

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 First Day School teacher to develop a plan of action.

Discipline Policy

It is the policy of the Davidson Friends Meeting not to administer corporal punishment, even if parents have suggested or given permission for it. There should be no spanking, grabbing, hitting, or other physical discipline of children. Workers should consult with the other FDS teacher, the parent, a member of the First Day School Committee or the Clerk of the Meeting if assistance is needed with disciplinary issues.

Restroom Guidelines

Children five years of age and younger should use the bathroom adjacent to the First Day School classrooms. The workers should check the bathroom first to make sure that it is empty, and then allow the child inside. The workers should then remain outside the bathroom door and escort the child back to the classroom. If a child is taking longer than seems necessary, the worker should call the child's name. If a child requires assistance, the workers should open the door and leave the bathroom door ajar, as they assist the child.

Children over five years of age may be excused from the classroom to use the bathroom adjacent to the classroom as needed. No adult accompaniment is necessary.

For the protection of all, workers should never be alone with a child in a bathroom with the door closed. Parents are strongly encouraged to have their children visit the bathroom prior to each class.

Accidental Injuries to Children

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

1. 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.
2. For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple First Aid using the supplies stored in the bathroom adjacent to the classrooms, the parent and/or guardian will immediately be summoned in addition to another adult in the Meeting House. If warranted by circumstances, an ambulance will be called.

3. Once the child has received appropriate medical attention, an incident report will be completed in the case of injuries requiring treatment by a medical professional.

Training

The child protection policy will be posted on the Meeting website and on the classroom wall in each classroom. FDS workers (paid and unpaid) are expected to read the document.