

## **Harassment and Sexual Abuse Policy**

Illinois Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, in keeping with Friends historical spiritual concern for equality and justice and responding to the dignity of all children of God, is committed to providing an environment free from sexual abuse, discrimination and harassment. Sexual abuse of a minor or other coercive sexual conduct will not be tolerated. Harassment includes demeaning actions, words, jokes, comments, or bullying behavior based on an individual's gender, sexual orientation, abilities, race, ethnicity, appearance, or age. Harassment or sexual abuse will not be tolerated at Illinois Yearly Meeting annual sessions, Continuing Committee sessions or any other ILYM sponsored activity.

### **Sexual Abuse of a Minor**

It is the spiritual responsibility of Illinois Yearly Meeting to protect all children participating in any ILYM activity. Any adult who is required by the laws of the state to report alleged sexual abuse of a minor (anyone under 18 years) to legal authorities should abide by the law. ILYM has the expectation that any adult who becomes aware of sexual abuse of a minor will report it to the Harassment Review Committee for help in reporting to legal authorities.\*

### **Harassment**

Harassment, whether overt or subtle, is demeaning and oppressive, and Illinois Yearly Meeting will investigate any allegations of it thoroughly and fairly. This will be carried out by the Harassment Review Committee of the yearly meeting. The Harassment Review Committee will be responsible to investigate any alleged harassment at ILYM Annual sessions, Continuing Committee sessions, or any other ILYM sponsored activity.

Friends who have experienced harassment are always welcome to contact any member of the Harassment Review Committee for support. The Harassment Review Committee will help any F(f)riend process the experience and how the individual wishes to move forward. If a F(f)riend who has been harassed wishes to observe the practice of Gospel Order as described in (Matthew 18:15-16)\*\* , the Harassment Review Committee will provide any support requested. Anyone who witnesses a situation involving discrimination or harassment, but who is unwilling or unable to resolve it, is likewise encouraged to report what they have witnessed to the Harassment Review Committee.

The Harassment Review Committee will be made up of the Presiding Clerk, the Clerk of Ministry and Advancement or their designee, another member of Ministry and Advancement, the Field Secretary, and one at large Friend appointed by the Presiding Clerk. If any of the people in those roles is directly involved in the actions that led to the investigation, that person(s) will be

excluded from the Harassment Review Committee for the purpose of that particular investigation. In such cases, the remaining persons will carry out the investigation.

The Clerk of Ministry and Advancement and the Presiding Clerk will appoint Friends to the committee a month before the Annual Sessions. Members of the Harassment Review Committee will be announced in the advance documents of the Yearly Meeting Sessions and included in the minute book. Those members will serve for one year, from the convening of one Yearly Meeting Session to the next. An allegation can be brought to any member of the committee. Complaints will be handled promptly and confidentially.

\*Illinois Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline – 1 800 252-2873  
Of Illinois Department of Child and Family Services

Indiana Child Abuse and Neglect hotline – 1 800 800-5556  
Of Indiana Department of Child Services

Iowa Child Abuse Hotline – 1 800 362-2178  
Of Iowa Department of Human Services

Missouri Child Abuse/Neglect hotline – 1 800 392-3738  
Of Missouri Department of Social Services

Wisconsin Department of Children and Families – contact county where child lives –  
Check [www.dcf.wisconsin.gov](http://www.dcf.wisconsin.gov)

If there is an Illinois Yearly Meeting sponsored activity in another state, the leaders are responsible for obtaining, in advance, the appropriate child abuse contact information.

Cases involving other criminal sexual action require contacting local law enforcement officials.

\*\*Matthew 18:15-16 New Revised Standard Version

15 - If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. 16 – But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses.

(6/23/17)