**Mindfulness Community of Puget Sound**

**Child Safety and Supervision Policies and Procedures**

(Approved March 5, 2018)

**Introduction:**

The Mindfulness Community of Puget Sound (MCPS) places the highest priority on the safety, well-being and supervision of the children and young adults participating in the life of our community and attending our events.

**Policy:**

TheMindfulness Community of Puget Sound (MCPS) does not condone or tolerate any child abuse (as described in **WAC 388-15-009) (Appendix A)** during any organization sponsored activity or activity related to the business of the organization, whether such activities occur on the MCPS premises or elsewhere. This applies to officers, directors, contractors, members, volunteers, staff (if any), agents of the organization or participants in an activity (the total list hereafter referenced as “Representatives”). This includes when a perpetrator is a minor but is 3 years or older than the child allegedly harmed.

**Definitions:**

**Child Abuse**: When a person intentionally harms a minor physically, psychologically, sexually, or by acts of neglect, the crime is known as child abuse.

**Minor**: A “minor” is any individual under the age of eighteen (18) or whose mental capacity is that of an individual under the age of eighteen (18).

**Representatives**: Officers, directors, contractors, members, volunteers, staff (if any), agents of the organization or participants in an activity (the total list hereafter referenced as “Representatives”).

**Responsible Board Member**: An officer of the Board of Directors will be assigned each year to be responsible for assuring that procedures stated herein are followed. If the Responsible Board Member is unavailable, either the Board President, Secretary, Treasurer, or Membership Coordinator should be contacted (in that order).

**Procedures:**

**Publication of policies and procedures:** The MCPS Board of Directors will annually review and acknowledge reading this document. All Representatives (as defined above) will be notified of this document and given access to it (whether in hard-copy or web-link) at least once annually. In addition, all Event Coordinators will be responsible for announcing these policies and procedures at events, making a copy available for participants to review and making available the name and contact information for the Responsible Board Member.

**Parental responsibility:** Parents are responsible for supervision of their children, or for providing permission for another to supervise their children, during MCPS-sponsored events. Parental permission must be granted in writing on the Medical Consent and Permission for Supervision form (attached to this policy) prior to the start of the event.

MCPS does not provide full-time child care and parents and/or legal guardians must be present at events their children are attending. (The Board may consider waivers of the parental attendance policy for children 14 and older on a case-by-case basis.)

**Criminal Background Checks:** Those volunteering to supervise children at MCPS-sponsored events must be willing to undergo criminal background checks. Parents have the right to ask if such a background checks have been conducted on persons supervising or leading events for children. For periods of residence in Washington state background checks can be conducted online at: <https://watch.wsp.wa.gov/>

Criminal background checks for periods of residency in other states may be conducted at the discretion of the Board. The Board will keep a confidential file of background check results.

**Supervision of minors**: When minors are being supervised during MCPS-sponsored events or business:

* For all children 4 years of age and younger, at least one parent (or guardian) of the minor will be present at all times.
* At all times there will be at least two adult volunteers to supervise the children/youth program for an MCPS event.
* Parental permission will be given on the form attached to this document (or another with equivalent information) prior to the beginning of an MCPS event with a children/youth program.
* Such forms may be completed, filed and held until revoked by the parent.

**Responsibility for compliance:** An officer of the Board of Directors will be assigned each year to be responsible for assuring that procedures stated herein are followed. Contact information for this Board member will be listed in organization materials for events involving children.

**Reporting of incidents of possible child abuse:** Representatives aware of an incident are asked to immediately notify the Event Coordinator who will contact the responsible Board member. If the Event Coordinator is a person involved in the incident, then the notification of an incident should go directly to the responsible Board member. If the Responsible Board Member is unavailable or is a person involved in the incident, then the notification of an incident should go directly to the Board President, Secretary, Treasurer or Membership Coordinator (in that order).

**Responses to reports received:**

**When the Responsible Board Member receives information about an incident involving a minor/s they shall immediately:**

* Prohibit contact of the accused individual with the minor/s involved and all other minors in attendance at the event.
* Immediately notify the minor’s family and/or emergency contact.
* Ensure that the minor/s involved are provided with support and, if needed, appropriate medical care.
* Reconnect the minor/s with their parents/guardians.
* In the event that a parent/guardian is involved in the incident, the Responsible Board member will consult with a MCPS member or other person with a graduate degree in counseling or social work to ascertain next steps (**Appendix B**).
* Limit discussion of the event to those most immediately involved, those responsible for supervision of the children, the Responsible Board Member, the Event Coordinator, and, as appropriate, the professionals consulted.
* Document conversations with: the minor/s involved, the supervisors, the accused, and witnesses. (The accused should be given an opportunity to explain the situation).

**If there is a reasonable suspicion of child abuse, the Responsible Board Member shall:**

* Notify Washington State’s toll-free, 24 hour, 7 day-a-week hotline that will connect directly to the appropriate local office to report suspected child abuse or neglect.(**Hotline** - call **1-866- ENDHARM** (1-866-363-4276).
* Prohibit the accused from attending MCPS-sponsored events until further notice.
* Notify the Board, in closed session, of the general outlines of the incident and steps taken.
* Limit discussion of the event to those most immediately involved, those responsible for supervision of the children, the Responsible Board Member, the Event Coordinator, and, as appropriate, the professionals consulted.

**As appropriate, the Responsible Board Member shall:**

* Recommend/implement further investigation of the incident working with: MCPS members with graduate degrees in counseling or social work, legal counsel and/or representatives of MCPS insurer as deemed necessary.
* Review and implement measures as described in “Making Your Church Safe From Child Abuse,” Cobble, et al, 2003, or equivalent.
* Continue to limit discussion of the incident and follow-up to those most immediately involved, those responsible for supervision of the children, the Responsible Board Member, the Event Coordinator, and, as appropriate, the professionals consulted.
* Continue to inform the Board, in closed session, of the general outlines of the incident and steps taken.

**Mandated Reporters:** It is understood that some MCPS members may be mandated reporters, legally required to report suspected child abuse and neglect to authorities due to their profession. A mandated reporter may feel obligated to make a report even if the Responsible Board Member does not reach that conclusion. In such a case, both the Mandated Reporter and the Responsible Board Member should report this situation to the Board President expeditiously.

**Prompt Action and Documentation:** Each of the steps taken in response to an incident of child abuse will be conducted as expeditiously as possible and documented. Each document will be signed and dated. The MCPS Board will maintain a confidential file of all incident reports whether accidental or non-accidental.

**The Board can take additional steps deemed necessary to protect the safety and well-being of minors and ensure adequate supervision of minors at MCPS events.**

**Annually, all Mindfulness Community of Puget Sound Board Members will review and acknowledge reading this document.**

**Name** **Title** **Date**

**Name** **Title** **Date**

**Medical Consent and Permission for Supervision**

I understand that I am responsible to assist with the care of my children by personally assuring that supervision is safe and appropriate for my child. I give my permission for my child, , to be supervised by adults volunteering to work with children at an MCPS event. I also give permission for them to receive emergent medical and dental treatment as needed. I understand efforts will be taken to contact us or other relatives as appropriate for major decisions, but failure to contact does not preclude providing care as medically indicated.

Signed,

Signature Date

Printed name

## Medical Information:

Date of Birth: Allergies:

Medications being taken:

Health Insurance (Company name, patient or consumer number):

Personal Physician: Phone:

**Contact Information:**

1st Parent name and contact number:

2nd Parent name and contact number:

**INCIDENT REPORT FORM (for both Accidental and Non-Accidental Injury)**

Reason for Report

Date of Incident: Event:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) and Age(s) of Minor(s) involved:

Quote the child’s (children’s) words verbatim:

Briefly describe what happened:

What action was taken?

Has the incident been resolved? Yes No. Explain:

Were there any witnesses?

Signatures of witnesses (if possible):

Report submitted by:

Report Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX A (attached)**

**WAC 388-15-009**

**APPENDIX B (created 3/15/18)**

**List of MCPS Members with Expertise in Child Safety:**

Mary Schlichter JD, 14 years of experience in social work and child safety

Sol Riou MSW, LICSW

Cristina Mullen MSW, LICSW

Lisa Kelly JD and Professor of Law with expertise in child safety law