



Revisions to the Model Policy for the Protection and Safe Treatment of Minors

In May of 2019, New Jersey extended the time victims of child sexual abuse could sue their abusers until the child turned 55 or within seven years of their realization that the abuse caused them harm. In December 2019, the MEL posted a model Policy for the Protection and Safe Treatment of Minors to assist members. The MEL also created training resources for leaders and employees of public entities. Since that time, and in response to input and questions from members, the MEL updated its model policy to include new research and clarifications. The updated [model Policy for the Protection and Safe Treatment of Minors](#) is now posted on the MEL Safety Institute website.

The revisions to the original model policy include clarification on the following:

- a. The addition of two new appendices: *Appendix C – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) (pages 24-29)* and *Appendix D – List of Qualified Vendors for Background Checks (page 30)*.
- b. A provision to reinforce that the form and content of the model policy may be modified so long as your legal counsel approves it. (Page 3)
- c. The specific background check requirements necessary for employees and volunteers working with children. (Pages 9-11)
- d. Revision to the vetting process for employees and volunteers to include background checks by third-party firms in addition to fingerprint checks. (Page 11).
- e. Revision to the background check process for minors. (Page 10)
- f. Modification to the section dealing with training for volunteer coaches. (Page 11)
- g. Clarification on the required training programs for officials, department heads, supervisors, employees, and volunteers. (Pages 17-18)
- h. More information on “dual reporting” of suspected abuse. (Page 18)

While the NJ MEL recommends that you adopt the revised policy, public entities that have already adopted the original policy and do not wish to make changes are not required to make the changes, as long as your legal counsel concurs.

If your municipal entity adopted the *NJ MEL Model Personnel and Procedures Manual* in either 2020 or 2021, it contained the old version of the policy. If you wish to incorporate the new revised policy for the Protection and Safe Treatment of Minors, you can delete the current policy that has been included on the following pages and replace it with the new model policy:

- a. Model Personnel and Procedures Manual (NON-CIVIL SERVICE JURISDICTION) – pages 59-77
- b. Model Personnel and Procedures Manual (CIVIL SERVICE JURISDICTION) – pages 61-78

Please note, no changes are necessary to the “**Employee Handbook**” since the model policy is only included by reference.

Feel free to contact the Office of the Safety Director with questions or concerns.