

# [REDACTED] Lutheran Church

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
www.[REDACTED].org

## Child Protection Policy

*Whereas*, we live in a fallen world where the problem of abuse of children and youth is prevalent; and

*Whereas*, we at [REDACTED], as a loving and caring Christian response, want to provide a safe environment for the children and youth that attend [REDACTED] and its programs.

*Be it further resolved* that [REDACTED] supports this policy with periodic review and updates and with a training program on a regular basis.

***"...We might humble ourselves before our God and ask him for a safe journey for us and our children..."***

*- Ezra 8:21b NIV<sup>6</sup>*

***"Keep watch over yourselves and over all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has given you charge, as shepherds of the church of the Lord."***

*- Acts 20:28 NIV<sup>6</sup>*

## General Purpose Statement

██████████ Lutheran Church seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for the children who participate in our programs and activities. By implementing the practices below, our goal is to protect the children of ██████████ Lutheran Church from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also protecting our staff and volunteers (workers) from false accusations.

## Definitions

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

## Selection of Workers

All persons who desire to work with the children participating in our programs and activities will be screened. This screening includes the following:

a) **Six Month Rule**

No applicant or volunteer will be considered for any position involving contact with minors until she/he has been involved with ██████████ Lutheran Church for a minimum of six (6) months. This time of interaction between our leadership and the applicant allows for better evaluation and suitability of the applicant for working with children. (May be waived under special circumstances authorized by the Board of Directors of ██████ LC)

b) **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, including previous church experience, reference and employment information, as well as disclosure of any previous criminal convictions. The application form will be maintained in strict confidence and kept on file at ██████████ Lutheran Church.

c) **Personal Interview**

Upon completion of the application, a personal interview to discuss the individual's suitability for the position will be scheduled with the applicant, the Director of the ministry and two members of that ministry who are familiar with the Child Protection Policy of ██████ LC.

d) **Reference Checks**

Before an applicant is permitted to work with children, at least two of the applicants' references will be checked. The references should be of a professional nature and, if applicable, from organizations where the applicant has worked with children in the past. Personal references may also be submitted. Documentation of the reference checks will be checked and maintained in strict confidence and kept on file at ██████ LC.

e) **Criminal Background Check**

A national criminal background check is required for all employees (regardless of position) and for the following categories of volunteers:

- Those who will be involved in our Youth & Children ministries, Sunday school, VBS, school/preschool/daycare center, or any other child orientated activities.

- Those who will be involved in overnight activities with children;
- Those counseling children;
- Those involved in one-on-one mentorship of children;
- Those having occasional one-on-one contact with children (such as, church sponsored athletic team coaches and vehicle drivers).

Before a background check is run, prospective workers will be asked to sign an authorization form allowing the church to run the check. If an individual declines to sign the authorization form, she/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 Board of Directors of [REDACTED] LC and the Pastor 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 strict confidence and kept on file at [REDACTED] Lutheran Church.

- f) **Final Decision**  
is predicated on completion of a positive background check, reference checks, and successful completion of above requirements.

## 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. If classes have only one adult teacher in attendance during the class session doors to the classroom should remain open and there should be no fewer than two students with the adult teacher. The exception to the “open door” rule is if a minor is in a counseling situation with prior parental approval sign off.

## 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 inappropriate touching, 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 [REDACTED] Lutheran Church becomes aware of suspected abuse or neglect of a child, from any source, under his/her care, this should be reported immediately to a Board Member or Deacon 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 [REDACTED] Lutheran Church 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 [REDACTED] Lutheran Church will comply with the state's requirements regarding mandatory reporting of abuse as the law then exists. [REDACTED] Lutheran Church will fully cooperate with the investigation of the incident by civil authorities.
4. Our insurance company & Legal Counsel 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 [REDACTED] LC Board of Directors shall select a spokesperson who will be responsible for addressing the media concerning any incidents of abuse or neglect. We will seek the advice of legal counsel before responding to media inquiries or releasing information to the congregation. All other representatives of the church 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.

## **Regarding Child Safety**

### **Open Door Policy**

Classroom doors should remain open, whenever possible, unless there is a window in the door or a side window beside it. Doors should never be locked while persons are inside the room.

### **Teenage Workers/Youth Assistants**

We recognize that there may be times when it is necessary or desirable for Youth/Day Care assistants (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:

- Minimum Age: Adult staff may specify a minimum age requirement for Youth/Day Care Assistants in an event-by-event basis.
- Screening/Background checks for Youth/Day Care Assistants under the age of 18 are waived.
- Should be under the supervision of an adult and should not be left alone with children.

## **Check-in/Check-out Procedure**

For children below sixth grade, a security check-in/check-out procedure will be followed. The child will be signed in by a designated parent or guardian. The same parent or guardian must sign out the child from our care. In the event that the same parent or guardian is unable to sign out the child," the Child Care Leader will be responsible for confirming & securing approval for the release of the child to a new parent or guardian.

## **Illness Policy**

It is our desire to provide a healthy and safe environment for all of the children at [REDACTED] Lutheran Church. 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 should NOT be dropped off:

- 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 workers to be ill will be separated from other children and the parent or guardian will be contacted to request that the child be picked up for the day.

## **Medications Policy** (see attached Medical Release Form)

It is the policy of [REDACTED] Lutheran Church 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 Illness Policy.

Exceptions to the medications policy may be granted by 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 Child Care Leader to develop a plan of action which may include a signed Medical release form on file with the both [REDACTED] Lutheran church & the Child Care Leader.

## **Discipline Policy**

It is the policy of [REDACTED] Lutheran Church not to administer corporal punishment, even if parents have suggested or given permission for such action. No spanking, grabbing, hitting, or other physical discipline of children is permitted. Workers should consult with the Ministry leader, a Board Member or Deacon if assistance is needed with disciplinary issues.

## **Parental Authorization Trip Policy** (See attached Trip Authorization form)

This form must be completed, signed and submitted to the Leader prior to any off sight event.

## **Safety Policy**

All items purchased, including toys, should be screened to be age appropriate and meet National Safety standards.

All items utilized in Child/Youth programs, including toys, hard surface furniture, electronics, cribs, etc., need to be properly sanitized after each use.

All Child/Youth activities must have proper safety equipment relative to the activity.

Leaders must have Trip Authorization form & Medical release form in their possession.

## **Restroom Guidelines**

Children five years of age and younger should use a classroom bathroom if one is available. If a classroom bathroom is not available, workers should escort a group of children to the hallway bathroom, never taking a child to the bathroom alone. The workers should check the bathroom first to make sure that it is empty, and then allow the children inside. The workers should then remain outside the bathroom door and escort the children back to the classroom. If a child is taking longer than seems necessary, the worker should open the bathroom door and call the child's name. If a child requires assistance, the workers should prop open the bathroom door, and leave the stall door open as they assist the child.

For children over the age of five, at least one adult male should take boys to the restroom and at least one adult female should take girls. The worker should check the bathroom first to make sure that the bathroom is empty, and then allow the children inside. The worker should then remain outside the bathroom door and escort the children back to the classroom.

For the protection of all, workers should *never* be alone with a child in a bathroom with the door closed and never be in a closed bathroom stall with a child. 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, the parent and/or guardian will immediately be summoned in addition to the worker's supervisor. 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.
4. ■■■LC will notify our insurance company of any injury requiring treatment by a medical professional.
5. Child/Youth Medical consent form must be available to Child/Youth Leaders.

## Training

██████████ Lutheran Church will provide training on this child protection policy to all who are working with children under the age of 18. ██████████ Lutheran Church will strive to provide opportunities for additional training classes or events on an annual basis. All workers are required to attend these training events. All workers must sign and date this policy confirming that they have read, and understood the Child Protection Policy.

Name (print) \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(sign) \_\_\_\_\_

FINAL DRAFT 1.15.2016