



# KidSafe Guidelines

2025-2026

**Our proactive approach  
to keeping kids safe!**

# Did you know...?

Statistically, 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys will be victims of abuse. In 2013 in PA, there were approximately 27,000 suspected child abuse reports and approximately 3,500 of those resulted in substantiated reports.

As we know, abuse happens in all different kinds of families. The effects of abuse/trauma have significant psychological, physiological, and sociological effects. And as followers of Christ we want to advocate for families in need. In Proverbs 31:8-9 we read, “Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.”

We highly value safety of children here at LEFC! This means we have a process for screening people who serve with children, along with complying with PA laws. Our KidSafe process has three main components:

- the design
- screening/qualifications/eligibility
- expectations

## Designed to help us...

- Protect children in our care from people who may seek to harm them.
- Protect those who serve in our ministries against unwarranted, false accusations and litigation.
- Ensure that we follow established reporting procedures of suspected abuse.

We value safety for all children. We value everyone who serves in ministry with children. We want everyone serving to have support and partnership as they serve. This is why we serve in teams of at least two people in our classrooms.

## Screening, Qualifications, and Eligibility

### Screening

Everyone serving with children completes a KidSafe Application including obtaining PA clearances [PA clearances are required to be updated every 5 years]. If a person has lived in PA for 10 years or more, they are required to sign a waiver. If a person has NOT lived in PA for 10 years or more, an FBI fingerprint clearance is required.



People who serve as Junior Shepherds (under 18 years old) are required to complete a Jr. Shepherd KidSafe application.

If a person is new or unknown to our church family, the person is interviewed by a Kids Ministry staff member.

### **Qualifications**

- A personal relationship with Jesus Christ and passion to invest in children's lives, helping them to know, love and follow Jesus!
- LEFC prohibits anyone who may pose a threat to minors from working with children.
- At minimum, no history of arrests or convictions for any sex related crimes, crimes of violence, or crimes involving child abuse or endangerment.

### **Eligibility**

A person is eligible to serve upon completion of our KidSafe process, which includes:

- 1) agreeing to follow and comply with our KidSafe guidelines
- 2) agreeing with the policies and procedures outlined in our Kids Ministry Handbook
- 3) attending LEFC for at least 6 months

For non-Sunday ministries, there are occasions where people who serve with and care for children are paid and may attend another church. In these situations, a person is not required to attend LEFC; however, all other parts of the process are required.

## **Expectations for All Serving in Ministry With Kids**

As a person who serves in ministry with children at LEFC, we expect you to:

- Read and follow our KidSafe Guidelines outlined below here
- Read and follow our policies and procedures outlined in our Kids Ministry Handbook
- Understand that since you serve with children, you are considered a mandated reporter [if you are 18 or older] in the state of Pennsylvania

# KidSafe Guidelines

## For ALL people serving in Ministry with kids (Adults and Juniors)

Matthew 19:13 says, “Then people brought the little children to Jesus for Him to place His hands on them and pray for them.”

Good touches are an important part of demonstrating our love and concern for children in our ministries. However, we expect the following limits to be followed to ensure safety and well-being for all the children.

### Appropriate

- Brief hugs or side hugs
- Pats on the shoulder or back
- Handshakes
- High-fives, hand slapping and fist taps
- Verbal praise
- Touching hands, faces, shoulders and arms of children or youth
- Arm around shoulders
- Holding hands while walking with small children
- Sitting beside small children
- Kneeling or bending down for hugs with small children
- Holding hands during group prayer

### Inappropriate

- Lengthy embraces
- Kisses
- Holding children in 1st – 4th grades
- Touching bottoms, chests, or genital areas other than for appropriate diapering or toileting of infants and toddlers (please refrain from even a “gentle tap” on the child’s hand in keeping it out of diaper area)
- Showing affection in isolated areas or rooms
- Touching knees or legs
- Wrestling or tickling children
- Piggyback rides
- Any type of massage given by a child to an adult or by an adult to a child
- Any form of unwanted affection
- Comments or compliments (spoken, written, or electronic) that relate to physique or body development
- Giving gifts or money to individual children
- Any kind of physical force or coercion used for correcting a child’s behavior
- Note: group emails to children are acceptable; correspondence with an individual child is not permitted [emailing, texting, etc.]

# LEFC Kids Handbook

The Handbook, along with other Children's Ministry resources, can be accessed on the church website at <https://www.lefc.net/kids/serving>.

## Mandated Reporter

As someone who serves in ministry with children at LEFC, you are a mandated reporter [if you are 18 or older]. This means that if you suspect abuse, you are required to report it.

The types of things that should be reported and the definitions and indications of abuse are outlined for you here, as well as procedures for a report. Our Kids Ministry Staff is available to assist you with any questions or support needed in making a report.

### Types of Things to Be Reported

- If you witness someone abusing a child
- If a child tells you that he/she has been abused
- If you observe evidence of abuse

### Definitions and Indicators of Child Abuse

As someone who serves in ministry with children at LEFC, you are a mandated reporter [if you are 18 or older]. This means that if you suspect abuse, you are required to report it.

The types of things that should be reported and the definitions and indications of abuse are outlined for you here, as well as procedures for a report. Our Kids Ministry Staff is available to assist you with any questions or support needed in making a report.

**Bodily Injury (Physical)**: causing bodily injury to a child through any recent act or failure to act

- Substantial pain
- Injury where their ability to function is reduced either temporarily or permanently
- Likelihood of bodily injury
- Fabricating, feigning or intentionally exaggerating or inducing medical symptoms or disease

## Physical Indicators

- Unexplained injuries
- Unbelievable or inconsistent explanations of injuries
- Multiple bruises in various stages of healing
- Bruises located on faces, ears, necks, buttocks, backs, chests, thighs, back of legs, and genitalia
- Bruises that resemble objects such as hand, fist, belt buckle, or rope
- Injuries that are inconsistent with a child's age/developmental level
- Burns

## Behavioral Indicators

- Fear of going home
- Extreme apprehensiveness/vigilance
- Pronounced aggression or passivity
- Flinches easily or avoids being touched
- Play includes abusive behavior or talk
- Unable to recall how injuries occurred or account of injuries inconsistent with the nature of the injuries
- Fear of parent or caregiver

**Serious Mental Injury:** causing or substantially contributing to serious mental injury to a child through any act or failure to act or a series of such acts or failures to act

- Involves a diagnosis by a doctor or licensed psychologist
- Seriously interferes with a child's ability to accomplish age appropriate developmental and social tasks

## Physical Indicators

- Frequent psychosomatic complaints (nausea, stomachache, headache, etc.)
- Bed-wetting
- Self-harm
- Speech disorders

## Behavioral Indicators

- Expressing feelings of inadequacy
- Fearful of trying new things
- Overly compliant
- Poor peer relationships
- Excessive dependence on adults
- Habit disorders (sucking, rocking, etc.)
- Eating disorders

**Sexual Abuse:** causing sexual abuse or exploitation of a child through any act or failure to act

- Causing a child to engage in or to assist another individual to engage in sexually explicit conduct or conversation.
- Taking sexualized pictures or video

### **Physical Indicators**

- Sleep disturbances
- Bedwetting
- Pain or irritation in genital/anal area
- Difficulty walking or sitting
- Difficulty urinating
- Pregnancy
- Positive testing for STDs or HIV
- Excessive or injurious masturbation

### **Behavioral Indicators**

- Sexually promiscuous
- Developmental age-inappropriate sexual play and/or drawings
- Cruelty to others
- Cruelty to animals
- Fire setting
- Anxious
- Withdrawn

**Serious Physical Neglect:** causing serious physical neglect of a child

- Endangering a child's well-being,
- Threatening a child's well being
- causing bodily injury or impairing a child's health development or functioning due to: repeated, prolonged or egregious failure to supervise a child, considering a child's age and development
- failing to provide a child with adequate essential food, clothing, shelter or medical care

## Physical Indicators

- Lack of adequate medical and dental care
- Often hungry
- Lack of shelter
- Child's weight is significantly lower than what is normal for his/her age and gender
- Developmental delays
- Persistent (untreated) conditions (e.g. head lice, diaper rash)
- Exposure to hazards (e.g. illegal drugs, rodent/insect infestation, mold)
- Clothing that is dirty, inappropriate for the weather, too small or too large

## Behavioral Indicators

- Not registered in school
- Inadequate or inappropriate supervision
- Poor impulse control
- Frequently fatigued
- Parentified behaviors
- Delinquent behaviors
- Mistrusting

## Procedures for Reporting Abuse or Injury

- Call CHILDLINE if you have “reasonable suspicion” that a child has been abused. Reasonable suspicion is based on more than a hunch. It’s a determination based on circumstances, observations, familiarity, and feelings about the incident.
- If a teen and/or helper who is under the age of 18 has “reasonable suspicion” of abuse, they are expected to tell an adult helper who then would be responsible to make a report.
- Report/Call immediately: 1 (800) 932-0313.
- CHILDLINE will complete the report and determine who responds to the report. The response to a report may involve the county Children and Youth agency where the child lives and/or the local police.



- Children and Youth agencies will determine if an alleged report will receive services from CPS (Child Protective Services) or GPS (General Protective Services).
- After calling CHILDLINE, the adult should explain the report made to the appropriate ministry staff member. Every effort will be made to assist the family following the guidelines of Matthew 18:15-20.
- All cases should be handled in a quiet and confidential manner. A reporter is protected from liability if a report is made in “good faith”. The reporter remains confidential.
- The reporter has the right to receive information about the final status of the report.
- If proven that someone willfully failed to report, they could face legal penalties.