

## CHILD SAFE GUIDELINES

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

### DEFINITIONS

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

### SELECTION OF WORKERS

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

a. Six Month Rule

No applicant will be considered for any position involving contact with youth until he/she has been a member at Emmanuel for a minimum of six (6) months. This time of interaction between our leadership and the applicant allows for better evaluation of their suitability for working with youth.

b. Personal Interview /Age

A face-to-face interview may be scheduled with the applicant to discuss his/her suitability for the position. The minimum age for paid staff or volunteers working with youth is 21. Exceptions may be made to this requirement on a case by case basis. The minimum age for drivers of a vehicle is 25.

c. Reference Checks

Before an applicant is permitted to work with youth, at least two of the applicants' references will be checked. These references should be of an institutional nature if possible as opposed to personal or family references, preferably from organizations where the applicant has worked with children in the past. Documentation of the reference checks will be maintained in confidence on file at Emmanuel.

d. Criminal Background Check

A national criminal background check is required for all staff (regardless of position) and for all volunteers involved with youth in any way.

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 youth.

What constitutes a disqualifying offense that will keep an individual from working with youth will be determined by the Pastor and Church Council President 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 youth. Failure to disclose a criminal conviction on the authorization form will also be a disqualifying event.

The background check authorization form and results will be maintained in confidence on file at Emmanuel.

## TWO ADULT RULE

It is our requirement that a minimum of two adult sponsors will be in attendance at all times when youth are being supervised during our programs and activities both onsite and offsite. Some youth classes may have only one adult teacher in attendance during the class session; in these instances, doors to the classroom should have a window or remain open. Doors should never be locked while persons are inside the room.

We do not allow minors to be alone with one adult on our premises or in any sponsored activity unless in a counseling situation.

## Under Age 21 Workers

We recognize there may be times when it is necessary or desirable for babysitters (paid or volunteer) who are themselves under age 21 to assist in caring for youth during programs or activities. The following guidelines apply to these workers:

- Must be at least age 14
- Must be screened as specified above.
- Must be under the supervision of an adult and there must be two workers present at all times.