



## Child Safety Manual

Practices and Policies  
(Approved Jan 2018)

*Your children - our children - are very important to us* and we wish to ensure both that they grow in their life of faith in Christ and that they are kept safe from harm whenever possible. It is St. Luke's Lutheran Church's responsibility to do what we can to prevent and avoid potential problems or injuries. It is also our responsibility to be ready and prepared whenever accidents of any kind may occur.

We also desire to express our thanks and confidence in our staff and volunteers, and respect them by providing them training and guidelines regarding topics as reporting accidents, discipline, safe practices, as well as peace of mind and protection in return for their sharing their gifts, their time, and their love with our children.

With these goals in mind St. Luke's Lutheran Church has prepared of a set of policies and procedures for children's safety and participation in the family and ministry of the congregation.



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Appendix 1: Statement of Safe Driving Conditions

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## **Related Forms:**

#1 Youth/Child Contact Info, General Consent, Medical Authorization & Release Form

#2 Youth/Child Special Event Consent, Medical Authorization & Release Form

## **INTRODUCTION**

Please review and become familiar with these policies and practices for protecting all our children.

Your assistance as parents is crucial, in three ways:

- 1) By helping your children know that they are important to us*
- 2) By helping your children understand that their cooperation in following age appropriate practices is also very important*
- 3) By following these policies and practices yourself whenever you are volunteering or working with our youth and children.*

These policies and practices will be shared with and be part of the training for St. Luke's Lutheran Church's staff and volunteer workers in all ministries that involve children. They will also have additional training and materials, regarding such topics as emergency plans, communications and discipline, reporting accidents or suspicions of abuse, etc. As a parent you are welcome to review all these materials as well.

## **I. DEFINITIONS**

- A. Staff: an employee of St. Luke's Lutheran Church who receives remuneration for work performed.
- B. Volunteer: any person who voluntarily performs work for the Church without any expectation of remuneration.
- C. Worker: generically refers to a staff member or volunteer.
- D. Teacher: a staff member or volunteer who leads a children's event or activity.
- E. Adult: a person who is 18 years of age or older.
- F. Child or Children: any person under the age of 18, or mentally or physically challenged adult, who is involved in the education, nursery or youth activities of the church.
- G. Child Abuse: harm or threatened harm to a child's health or welfare which occurs through non-accidental physical or mental injury, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or maltreatment. *(as defined in North Carolina Public Act 238 of 1975, commonly called "The Child Protection Law")*

Categories of such abuse might include, but not be limited to:

- 1. Physical Injuries
  - a. Bruises
  - b. Scrapes or scratches in the skin
  - c. Lacerations or cuts
  - d. Burns and scalds
  - e. Fractures
  - f. Head and brain injuries
  - g. Internal injuries

2. Sexual Abuse
  - a. Sexual contact or penetration
  - b. Verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature
  - c. Written comments of a sexual nature
  
3. Emotional Abuse - Adult behavior which leads to psychological rather than physical harm.
  - a. Excessive yelling
  - b. Ridicule
  - c. Excessive teasing
  - d. Intimidation
  - e. Isolation and neglect

H. Child Neglect: harm to a child's health or welfare which occurs through negligent treatment or lack of intervention. In the Church setting, such neglect might involve, but not be limited to:

1. Failure to provide proper supervision.
2. Serving foods to a child when the child is allergic to elements in that food and such allergy has been made known in writing.
3. Failure to protect child from harassment from other children.
4. Failure to protect a child from self-induced harm.

## **II. PROTECTIVE PROCEDURES**

Adults working with children and youth are to maintain appropriate adult/youth/child boundaries in all interactions with them. In addition, adults are to model Christian principles of adult/child/youth relationships at all times. The following are some examples for adults to use in relating to minors when working or volunteering in church:

1. Listen carefully to children/youth and show interest in what they have to say.
  2. Be consistent and fair with all children/youth.
  3. Be giving and flexible, keep a good sense of humor and enjoy the children/youth. Smile often.
  4. Focus on positive behaviors and praise the children/youth for that behavior.
  5. Set clear limits that can be managed by adults and understood by the children/youth.
  6. Use appropriate, positive, steps when discipline is needed. Focus on the behavior, not the person.
  7. Pray for our children/youth that they may grow in faith in God, respect for each other, and God's creation.
- A. Whenever disciplinary action takes place, the worker should always let the child know that he/she is loved and that Jesus continues to love him/her. The director in charge, or a designated alternate, will be on site at all times during supervised activities and events.
- B. Any worker who has concerns about the safety, welfare or health of children being cared for at St. Luke's Lutheran Church's should notify a staff member as soon as possible after such concern occurs.

C. In case of counseling, lessons or other inherently one-on-one situations: ensure that the child's parent or legal guardian is aware and consents.

D. Emergency Procedures

1. Fire Emergency

**S**ave those in immediate danger

**A**larm - pull fire alarm and call 911

**V**entilation - close doors/ventilation to the area

**E**xtinguish fire with extinguisher if able/exit the building

2. Fire Alarm

a. One worker will count children and lead them to designated exits, as shown on the map posted in each classroom, and gather them in the area designated away from the building.

b. A second worker will check the classroom for stragglers, close windows and doors, then exit the building.

c. One worker will count heads when group is gathered in designated area away from the building and take attendance.

d. Another worker will double check classrooms and bathrooms before exiting the building.

e. Children and adults may re-enter the building when the "all clear" is signaled.

3. Tornado Warning (tornado has been sighted)

a. Persons should immediately move from the classroom, work area, or office to a place of greater safety, closing and securing doors upon leaving. Move to inner hallways and restrooms or other areas that are free from exterior windows and glass.

b. When possible, use heavy furniture, such as a desk, as a shield from falling and flying debris.

c. Always remain in place of shelter until the "all-clear" message is signaled.

#### 4. Medical Emergency

- a. Designate someone to call 911, then ask for anyone trained in CPR/First Aid to assist until help arrives. Contact director or supervisor.
- b. Minor medical situations. A First Aid kit is available in the kitchen.
  - i. Use Universal Precautions - wear gloves when in contact with any body fluids.
  - ii. No medications are to be given to minors with-out parental/guardian consent.
  - iii. Notify parents of all injuries and Pastor of injuries that necessitate medical attention beyond first aid.

#### E. Field Trips and Special Events

1. Adult/child ratio for off-campus activities will be no less than one adult to 15 children or youth.
2. At least two workers over the age of 24 who are not members of the same family should chaperone each outing. For overnight lodging, two adult workers of the same sex (but not of the same family) shall supervise each gender group or room.
3. A written consent and medical release form from the parent or guardian will be required for each child participating in an off-campus activity.
4. The buddy system (two or three persons) will be employed for restroom breaks when directed by supervising adult leader. When necessary, an adult leader will accompany groups to the bathroom.
5. Drivers must sign a “Statement of Safe Driving Conditions” before being allowed to transport children or youth (Appendix 1). Statement to include that all drivers must have or agree to the following:
  - a. Valid driver’s license
  - b. Good driving record
  - c. Vehicle insurance
  - d. Vehicle in good operating condition



- e. All vehicle occupants wear seatbelts
  - f. Car seat used when required by law
  - g. Agree not to have firearms in the vehicle while driving for a field trip.
6. The possession or consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs, or possession of weapons is prohibited during all Church-sponsored activities.
  7. Use of tobacco products is prohibited by those under the age of 18. Smoking by adults in the presence of children is prohibited.

### **III. WORKER SELECTION**

All adults who work with children/youth are expected to have a commitment to Jesus Christ and the church.

#### **A. General Criteria**

1. Persons who have been convicted of either sexual or physical abuse of children may not serve on the staff or as a volunteer in any Church-sponsored activity or program for children. They may volunteer in areas not involving children.
2. Volunteers working with children and youth must have been regularly attending St. Luke's Lutheran Church for six months or with the Pastor's permission and work under the supervision of a staff member.
3. All volunteers and staff must complete and sign an application for children and youth work
4. References will be checked.
5. Volunteers and staff will be interviewed by the pastor or leader of the program in which they work.
6. A criminal background check will be conducted on paid staff, and may be required and conducted on volunteers.

B. Numbers 2, 5 and 6 may not apply to occasional volunteers at the sole discretion of the pastor. All such waivers shall be documented to council and/or council chairperson

C. Staff - Newly hired staff may be excluded from number two,

but all other criteria apply.

## **IV. RESPONSE TO SUSPECTED ABUSE**

- A. Ensure the safety of the child.
- B. Immediately report suspected abuse to a staff member.
- C. If suspicion of abuse is brought to the attention of a staff member, an expeditious investigation will be conducted, the scope of which will be determined by the facts and circumstances of the specific case. If, after the investigation is completed, there is cause to suspect there has been abuse, police will immediately be notified. If the police have been contacted, they will assume responsibility for the investigation from this point. Within 72 hours of any investigation or report of suspected abuse, the staff member shall follow up with a written report. In most cases teachers, caregivers and clergy are required by law to report suspicions of abuse. The congregation will cooperate fully with the governmental agencies investigating the matter.
- D. St. Luke's Lutheran Church will endeavor to provide pastoral care to the victim and/or abuser.

## **V. POLICY ADOPTION, TRAINING & CHANGES**

### **A. Adoption**

1. Approval of this Policy Manual will be by vote of St. Luke's Lutheran Church Council.
2. The Policies in this manual shall become effective on the first day of the month following its approval by Congregation Council of St. Luke's Lutheran Church.

### **B. Training**

1. All workers will be informed of and will be given a copy of this Manual.
2. All workers must receive training in which this Manual

is reviewed. Retraining shall be conducted periodically and whenever changes have been made to this manual.

3. Documentation of those attending training will be kept in the church office.

### C. Changes

1. Policy changes to this Manual must be approved by the Congregation Council.
2. Such Policy changes will be presented at the next regularly scheduled annual congregational meeting for the purpose of keeping the congregation informed of its contents.

Appendix 1



**Safe Driving  
Commitment**

**For Youth Fieldtrips**

**Effective for 12 months from  
the date of signature.**

I hereby confirm that I currently have all of the following:

1. A valid driver's license
2. A good driving record
3. Vehicle insurance as required by law
4. A vehicle in good operating condition

I hereby promise that on this field trip:

1. All vehicle occupants will wear seatbelts.
2. Car seats will be used when required by law.
3. I will operate my vehicle in accordance with common standards of safe and courteous driving.
4. I will comply with state traffic laws.
5. I will not possess or transport firearms..

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Teenagers do not drive other youth/children, other than siblings, without prior written permission by parents of all children in the car and abiding by the appropriate drivers license & age restrictions of the State of North Carolina.

## Appendix 2



### **Children & Youth**

### **PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. Complete and sign a copy of the Youth/Child Contact Info, General Consent, Medical Authorization & Release Form. These forms will be valid for a year. Any changes in medical condition, emergency contact information and insurance is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to complete a new form.
2. Parents are responsible for supervising all children under the age of 18 both before and after activities.
3. Parents will be notified of any behavior problems and will be responsible for working with volunteers/staff in regards to these behavior problems.
4. No medications will be given to minors without parental consent. Parents must inform St Luke's Lutheran Church in writing of all medications, dosage and schedule, or release St. Luke's Lutheran Church for youth that are to be authorized to self-medicate.
5. Parents must inform St. Luke's Lutheran Church in writing of all food or environmental allergies that child may have so that exposure to these elements can be prevented.