

General Purpose Statement

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

Definitions

For purposes of this policy, the terms “child,” “children,” “student,” “students,” “teenage,” “teenager” or “teenagers” include all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years. The terms “adult” or “adults” include all persons equal to and over the age of eighteen (18) years. The terms “worker” or “workers” include both paid persons (staff members) and unpaid persons (volunteers) who work with children. The terms “parent” or “parents” refers to the individual(s) responsible for the child/children, which may be a parent, guardian, or designated relative or caregiver.

Selection of Workers

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

Staff Member Workers

- **Application and Interview Process**

All applicants seeking to work with children will follow the church’s application and interview process for that position, which will include providing information as to previous employment and volunteer experience, as well as previous experience working with children.

- **Reference Checks**

Before an applicant is permitted to work with children, at least two of the applicant’s references will be checked. These references should be of an institutional nature 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 by Faith Lutheran Church.

Staff Member and Volunteer Workers

- **Criminal Background Check**

A national criminal background check is required for all staff members (regardless of position) and for any adult volunteers who will be working with children involved in our sponsored programs and activities. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Adult volunteers who will be involved in our nursery, children’s ministry (e.g., Sunday School, Vacation Bible School), confirmation and/or youth programs; and
- Adult volunteers who will be involved in on-site or off-site daytime, evening or overnight activities with children, such as retreats, lock-ins, camps, and mission trips.



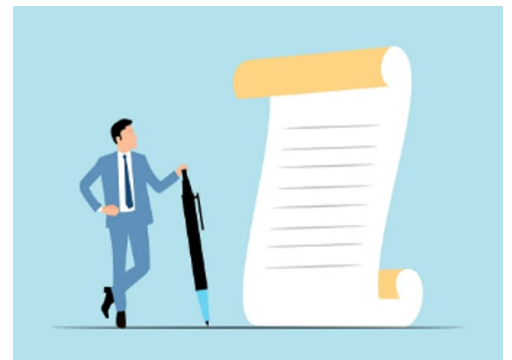
Prospective workers will give on-line permission allowing Faith Lutheran Church to run the background check. If an individual does not give permission to run a background check, s/he will be unable to work with children.

Disqualifying offenses that will keep an individual from working with children include convictions for an offense involving children and/or for offenses involving violence, dishonesty, illegal substances, indecency and any conduct contrary to our mission. Any other offenses deemed to be disqualifying will be determined by the Senior Pastor and Director of Children, Youth and Family Ministries on a case-by-case basis considering all the surrounding circumstances.

The background check authorization and results will be maintained in confidence by Faith Lutheran Church. The background check is typically re-run once every three (3) years for volunteers.

- **Onboarding and Acknowledgment Form**

Prior to being allowed to work with children, the Child Protection Policy will be provided to all prospective workers. All prospective workers must sign an Acknowledgment Form affirming that s/he has read, understood, and will abide by our Child Protection Policy (for volunteers under the age of 18, a parent will sign the Acknowledgment Form). The Acknowledgment Form will be maintained in confidence by Faith Lutheran Church. All Faith Lutheran Church staff members must sign the Acknowledgment Form, regardless of whether or not the position responsibilities include directly working with children.



The Child Protection Policy may be updated from time to time, and each worker is responsible for complying with any updates. The most current version of the Child Protection Policy is located at <https://faithfl.org/welcome/safety/>. If significant updates are made to the Child Protection Policy, we will redistribute the policy to all workers to ensure s/he understands their responsibilities for maintaining a safe, secure and healthy environment for the children participating in our sponsored programs and activities.

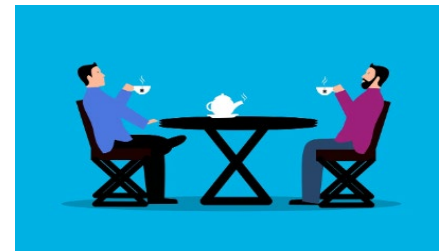
Adult Volunteer Workers

- **Involvement in Congregation and/or LADC**

Prior to being allowed to work with children, all adult volunteers must be known to and/or have been involved in the life of the Faith Lutheran Church congregation or Lakes Area Discovery Center (a tenant of Faith Lutheran Church) before beginning a volunteer assignment.

- **Informal Conversation**

Prior to being allowed to work with children, all adult volunteers must have an informal conversation with an authorized Faith Lutheran Church staff member, such as the Senior Pastor or Director of Children, Youth and Family Ministries. The purpose of this conversation is for the staff member to identify any potential red flags or concerns.



Faith Lutheran Church, in its sole discretion, may decline to allow a specific adult(s) from volunteering to work with children.

Teenage Volunteer Workers

We recognize that there may be times when it is necessary or desirable for teenagers who are themselves under age 18 to assist in caring for children during our sponsored programs or activities. Prior to being allowed to work with children, the following guidelines apply to teenage volunteer workers:

- Must have either completed a confirmation registration form, been through the confirmation program, or, similar to adult volunteer workers, be known to and/or have been involved in the life of the Faith Lutheran Church congregation or Lakes Area Discovery Center before beginning a volunteer assignment;
- Must have a parent sign the Acknowledgment Form referenced above affirming that the parent has read and understood the Child Protection Policy and that the parent agrees that their child is expected to abide by the Child Protection Policy; and
- Must have an informal conversation with the Senior Pastor or Director of Children, Youth and Family Ministries for the same purposes as described above for adult volunteer workers.



Faith Lutheran Church, in its sole discretion, may decline to allow a specific teenager(s) from volunteering to work with children.

While not always practically feasible, the church strives to maintain worker levels so that a teenage volunteer will be under the supervision of an adult worker and will not be left alone with children.

Check-in/Check-out Procedure

For children in fourth grade and below, a security check-in/check-out procedure will be followed.

Never Alone Guidelines

While not always practically feasible, we strive to maintain worker levels so that one adult worker is not alone with one unrelated child during our sponsored programs and activities. We also strive to maintain classroom levels so that when only one adult teacher is in a classroom, there are no fewer than three students with the adult teacher.

However, in certain limited circumstances, an adult may be alone with an unrelated child on our premises, such as during a threatening situation, or if the child is ill, or if the child is in a counseling session with the Senior Pastor.

Open Door Guidelines

For our sponsored programs and activities, classroom doors should remain open unless there is a window in the door or a side window beside it. Generally, doors should not be locked while persons are inside the room, however, doors should be closed and locked in the event it is necessary to protect the children in the room from an immediate, severe security risk (e.g., an unwelcome intruder).



Restroom Guidelines

While children are under worker supervision at Faith Lutheran Church, the following restroom guidelines apply:

- For children below kindergarten, the worker should escort a group of children to the restroom. They should always go in a group, never taking a child to the restroom alone. The worker should check the restroom first to make sure that it is empty and then allow the children inside. The worker should then remain outside the restroom door and escort the children back to the classroom. If a child is taking longer than seems necessary, the worker should open the restroom door and call the child's name. If a child requires assistance, the worker should prop open the restroom door and leave the stall door open as they assist the child.
- For children in kindergarten or higher, they may use the restroom without adult supervision but should always go to the restroom with a buddy.

For the protection of all, workers should *never* be alone with a child in a restroom with the door closed and never be in a closed restroom stall with a child. Parents are strongly encouraged to have their children visit the restroom prior to each class.

Sick Child Guidelines

It is our desire to provide a healthy environment for all the children at Faith 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

Any child who is observed by our workers to be ill will be separated from other children and the parent(s) will be contacted to request that the child be picked up for the day.

Medications Policy

It is the policy of Faith 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 sick child guidelines.



For children participating in our sponsored programs and activities, a registration form is completed which includes a health questionnaire section, and, when needed and as authorized by a parent, children are responsible for administering their own prescription or non-prescription medication.

However, an exception to the medications policy may be granted to parents of children with potentially life-threatening conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, or severe allergic reactions) to enable a worker to administer prescription or non-prescription medications to children participating in on-site or off-site church-sponsored programs or activities. Parents of such children should address their situation with the Director of Children, Youth and Family Ministries to develop and agree upon a plan of action.

Discipline Policy

It is the policy of Faith Lutheran Church not to administer corporal punishment, even if parents have suggested or given permission for it. There should be no spanking, grabbing, hitting, or other physical discipline of children. Workers should consult a Faith staff member if assistance is needed with disciplinary issues. If the staff member initially consulted is not the Senior Pastor or the Director of Children, Youth and Family Ministries, the staff member consulted must escalate the matter to either one of those individuals for resolution.

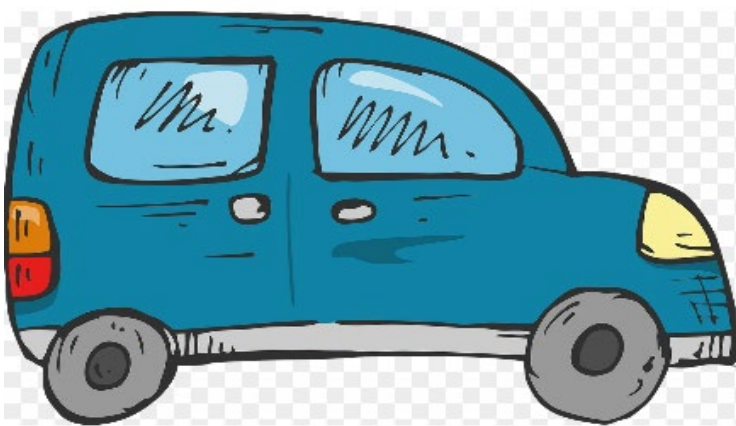
Accidental Injuries to Children

If a child is injured while participating in our sponsored program or activity, the following steps will be followed:

- For minor injuries, scrapes, and bruises, workers will provide first aid (Band-Aids, etc.) as appropriate and will notify the child's parent(s) of the injury at the time the child is picked up from our care.
- For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple first aid, the parent(s) will immediately be summoned in addition to the Director of Children, Youth and Family Ministries. If warranted by circumstances, an ambulance will be called.

Transportation

Faith Lutheran Church will not arrange for student transportation for events or activities that are not church-sponsored programs and activities. If workers choose to give rides to students for non-sponsored events or activities, it is at their risk and liability.



Any worker who is going to provide student transportation for church-sponsored programs and activities must furnish to Faith Lutheran Church a copy of a valid driver's license that is in good standing. Any worker with a criminal offense of operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol, cannabis, or other drugs (e.g., driving while impaired, driving while intoxicated, driving under the influence, etc.) will be prohibited from providing student transportation for Faith Lutheran Church sponsored programs or activities. Faith Lutheran Church reserves the right to re-check for a valid driver's license at any time.

If a worker anticipates s/he may offer to provide student transportation for church-sponsored programs or activities in the future, the worker should provide a copy of his/her driver's license to Faith Lutheran Church when submitting the signed Child Protection Policy Acknowledgement Form, or at any time thereafter.

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, but is not limited to, the following:

- **Physical abuse** – any physical injury or threats of harm to a child that is not accidental, such as beating, striking, shaking, burns, cutting, 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, including activities such as fondling, exhibitionism, intercourse, incest, pornography, or exploiting a child for prostitution
- **Malicious punishment** – any punishment of a child that consists of intentional, unreasonable, or excessive force/discipline
- **Child endangerment** – recklessly causing or permitting a child to be in a situation likely to cause substantial harm to their physical, mental, or emotional health
- **Mental injury** – any substantial impairment to a child’s psychological capacity or emotional stability
- **Neglect** – depriving a child of his/her essential needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter, clothing, medical care, or supervision

Reporting

IF ANYONE IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER, DIAL 911.

NOTHING IN THIS POLICY SHALL BE CONSTRUED AS PROHIBITING ANY STAFF MEMBER, VOLUNTEER, CHURCH MEMBER, CONTRACTOR OR GUEST FROM CONTACTING THE POLICE OR SHERIFF DIRECTLY.

Minnesota state law (the Minnesota Maltreatment of Minors Act) requires allegations of harassment or misconduct involving child abuse (*i.e.*, a child whose health or welfare may be jeopardized through physical, sexual or mental injury or neglect) to be reported immediately.

The person receiving a report of, becoming aware of, or observing suspected abuse, injury or neglect of a child, whether that individual is a mandatory reporter or not, will be responsible for **immediately** reporting it to the appropriate agency(ies):

- Washington County - Community Services - Child Protection @ 651.430.6457 (8:00 AM - 4:30 PM, Mon-Fri) or Crisis Response @ 651.275.7400 (after 4:30 PM Mon-Fri and Sa-Su)
- and/or
- Forest Lake Police Department @ 651.439.9381 (24 hours)
- and/or
- Washington County Sheriff’s Office @ 651.439.9381 (24 hours)

Staff members and volunteers at Faith Lutheran Church who work with children are considered **mandatory reporters** of child abuse and neglect under Minnesota state law.



Procedures

If an incident of child abuse is alleged to have occurred at Faith Lutheran Church or during our sponsored programs or activities, the following procedures shall be followed:

1. The person receiving a report of, becoming aware of, or observing suspected abuse, injury or neglect of a child will be responsible for immediately reporting it to the appropriate agency(ies). Faith Lutheran Church will fully cooperate with the investigation of the incident by civil authorities.
2. The person reporting the suspected child abuse to the appropriate agency(ies) will promptly contact and inform the Senior Pastor and/or Director of Children, Youth and Family Ministries. Faith Lutheran Church will keep a record of each such external report made of suspected child abuse.
3. Either the Senior Pastor or the Director of Children, Youth and Family Ministries will promptly notify the parent(s) of the child of the suspected child abuse.
4. If the alleged perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct is a worker (staff member or volunteer), the worker will immediately be prohibited from working with children pending an investigation. If the alleged perpetrator is a staff member, Faith Lutheran Church will follow its staff handbook policy as to potential disciplinary procedures, up to and including termination. If the alleged perpetrator is a volunteer, then the Senior Pastor and/or Director of Children, Youth and Family Ministries will determine the next steps. If the alleged perpetrator is someone other than a worker, such as a church member, contractor, or guest, the Senior Pastor and/or Church Council will determine next steps.
5. In addition to the external report to the appropriate agency(ies), we will follow the "Internal Reporting" policy and procedures as described in the Faith Lutheran Church Harassment Policy found at <https://faithfl.org/welcome/safety/>.
6. Our insurance company will be notified.
7. A pastoral visit will be arranged for those who desire it.

Incident Report

A staff member of Faith Lutheran Church will complete a Child Protection Incident Report under the following circumstances:



- A child becomes ill or receives an injury that requires treatment from a medical professional;
- A child receives a severe bump or blow to the head or other visible injury regardless of treatment provided;
- A child is transported by ambulance from our facility (or another location for off-site sponsored programs or activities);
- An unusual or unexpected incident occurs that jeopardizes the safety of a child, such as a child left unattended, there is a vehicle accident (with or without injuries), or a child is exposed to a threatening person or situation; or
- There is an allegation or reasonable suspicion of abuse of a child.

Questions and Contact Information

For questions regarding this Child Protection Policy, contact:

- Brett Sterling, the Director of Children, Youth and Family Ministries at bretts@faithfl.org or 651.464.3323;
or
- Pastor John Klawiter, the Senior Pastor, at johnklawiter.elca@gmail.com or 651.399.5184;
or
- Faith Lutheran Church at info@faithfl.org or 651.464.3323.



***SPECIAL NOTE:** Where this policy refers to the Director of Children, Youth and Family Ministries, if s/he is not available, consult with the Senior Pastor or another pastoral or administrative staff member of Faith Lutheran Church.*