

General Purpose Statement

Faith Lutheran Church seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for the children who participate in our 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” 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:

- **Six Month Rule**

All adult volunteers serving with children or youth must have been involved in the life of our congregation for at least six months before beginning a volunteer assignment.
- **On-Line Application and Policy Consent**

All persons seeking to work with children must complete an on-line application and review and accept our Child Protection Policy. The application will request basic information from the applicant and will inquire into employment and volunteer information, previous experience with children, as well as disclosure of any previous criminal convictions. The application will be maintained in confidence by Faith Lutheran Church.
- **Reference Checks**

Before an applicant is permitted to work with children, at least two of the applicants’ 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.
- **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 Nursery, Children’s ministry, Confirmation and Youth Programs;
 - Those who will be involved in overnight activities with children;
 - Those counseling children;
 - Those involved in one-on-one mentorship of children; and
 - Those having occasional one-on-one contact with children (such as vehicle drivers).



Prospective workers will give on-line permission allowing Faith Lutheran Church to run the 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 disqualifying offenses will be determined by supervising staff on a case-by-case basis considering all the surrounding circumstances. Failure to disclose a criminal conviction on the application form will also be a disqualifying event.

The background check authorization and results will be maintained in confidence by Faith Lutheran Church.

- **Teenage Workers**

We recognize that there may be times when it is necessary or desirable for babysitters (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:

- Must have completed a Confirmation registration form, been through the Confirmation program, or completed a youth volunteer application.
- Must be under the supervision of an adult and must never be left alone with children.

Check-in/Check-out Procedure

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

Never Alone Rule

It is our goal that one adult worker is never alone with one minor during our programs and activities. When only one adult teacher is in a classroom, there should be no fewer than three students with the adult teacher. We do not allow minors to be alone with one adult on our premises or in any sponsored activity unless in a counseling situation.



Open Door Policy

Classroom doors should remain open 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.

Restroom Guidelines

While children and youth are under volunteer or staff supervision, the following restroom guidelines apply:

For children below second grade, workers should escort a group of children to the bathroom. They should always go in a group, 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.

Children in second grade or higher may use the bathroom without adult supervision but should always go to the bathroom with a buddy.

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.

Sick Child Policy

It is our desire to provide a healthy and safe 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

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

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 policy.

Exceptions to the medications policy may be granted to 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 Director of Children, Youth and Families to develop a plan of action. Exceptions to the medications policy are in place for retreats, lock-ins, camps, and mission trips.



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.

Accidental Injuries to Children

If 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.

Transportation

The church will not arrange for student transportation outside of special events or activities. If volunteers choose to give rides to students, it is at their risk and liability.



Training

Faith Lutheran Church will provide training on this child protection policy to all new childcare workers and will strive to provide opportunities for additional training classes or on-line training on an annual basis. All workers are strongly encouraged to attend or complete annual training.

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 physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect and endangerment.

Reporting

IF ANYONE IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER, DIAL 911.

NOTHING IN THE POLICY SHALL BE CONSTRUED AS PROHIBITING THE EMPLOYEE, 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 a child whose health or welfare may be jeopardized through physical abuse, neglect or sexual abuse to be reported immediately.

The person receiving a report or noticing an injury to 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 651.291.6795 (after 4:30 PM Mon-Fri and Sa-Su) and/or the Forest Lake Police Department @ 651.439.9381 and/or Washington County Sheriff's Office @ 651.439.9381 (7:30 AM – 4:30 PM, Mon-Fri). Volunteers and staff at Faith Lutheran Church who work with children are considered mandatory reporters of child abuse and neglect by Minnesota law.

Documentation

The person reporting the suspected child abuse to the appropriate agency(ies) must also promptly contact and inform the senior pastor or business administrator so Faith may keep a record of each such external report made.

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 parent or guardian of the child will be notified.
2. The person receiving a report or noticing an injury to 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.
3. 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.
4. Our insurance company will be notified, and we will complete an incident report.
5. We will follow the "Internal Reporting" policy as described in the Faith Lutheran Church Harassment Policy found on www.faithfl.org/resources/reporting-misconduct.
6. A pastoral visit will be arranged for those who desire it.