

## **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 (workers) from false accusations.

## **Definitions**

For purposes of this policy, the terms “child” or “children” include all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years

For purposes of this policy, the term “worker” includes any persons (paid staff or unpaid volunteer) involved in a day care or school, in overnight activities involving minors, in counseling of minors, or in one-on-one mentoring of minors.

An occasional worker includes anyone who works with children/youth infrequently. Occasional workers qualify if they complete step (a) under “Selection of Workers.” An occasional worker must always work in conjunction with a regular (or high risk) worker.

A regular worker includes anyone who works with children/youth on a weekly or monthly basis. Regular workers qualify if they complete steps (a), (b), and (c) under “Selection of Workers.”

A high risk worker includes anyone who:

- a) Works with infants weekly; *or*
- b) Supervises off-campus or overnight activities; *or*
- c) Ever has one-on-one situations alone with children/youth.

High risk workers qualify if they complete steps (a), (b), (c), and (d) under “Selection of Workers.”

## **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. Teenagers need not go through the screening process if they are assisting under the direct supervision of an adult (who has been screened). However, teenagers who will assist in caring for children without the direct supervision of an adult should go through the screening process.

## **Selection of Workers**

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

a) **Screening Form** (all workers)

All persons seeking to work with children must complete and sign a Confidential Child Protection Screening Form (included in this policy and available from the church office). This form will request basic information from the applicant and will inquire into previous experience with children, previous church affiliation, reference and employment information, as well as disclosure of any previous criminal convictions. The screening form will be reviewed by the Pastor and Board of Elders.

b) **Personal Interview** (regular and high risk workers)

Upon completion of the Screening Form, a face-to-face interview may be scheduled with the applicant to discuss his/her suitability for the position.

c) **Reference Checks** (regular and high risk workers)

Before a regular or high risk 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 whenever 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 church.

d) **Criminal Background Check** (high risk workers)

A national criminal background check is required for all workers or volunteers in high risk positions as defined above, and the church typically covers the cost for this. Before a background check is run, prospective workers will be asked to sign an authorization (part of the Screening Form) allowing the church to run the check. If an individual declines to sign the authorization, s/he will be unable to work with children. A disqualifying offense that will keep an individual from working with children will be determined by the Board of Elders 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 children. Failure to disclose a criminal conviction on the Screening Form will also be a disqualifying event.

**Satisfactory completion of screening** requires:

- a) No known history or criminal record of or relating to child abuse or molestation or other findings of a criminal record involving injury to another; and
- b) Positive references; and
- c) Experience working with children or satisfactory demonstration of ability to learn and understand the position for which the individual applied.

**Unsatisfactory completion of screening** and exclusion from service with children or youth includes:

- a) Prior history, conviction, Alford plea (nolo contendere), or guilty plea for child abuse or molestation; or
- b) Other findings of a criminal record; or
- c) Negative personal reference or interview: (evaluation on a case-by-case basis, with additional references, interview or follow-up information sought to confirm or disprove suspicions as necessary).

All documentation relating to this screening process, including the Screening Form and the background check results, will be maintained in confidence on file at the church, accessible only to the Pastor and Head Elder. They will keep other ministry leaders informed of the suitability of persons desiring to work with children.

## **Team Approach**

It is our goal that a minimum of two adult workers will be in attendance at all times when children are being supervised during our programs and activities. Some youth classes may have only one adult teacher in attendance during the class session; in these instances, doors to the classroom should remain open. In a counseling situation, another adult should be nearby if possible. If a situation arises while children are being picked up or dropped off that an adult is alone with a child, they should wait outside the building (or immediately by the door during inclement weather).

## **Parental/Guardian Permission**

Any time a worker/volunteer is required to be alone with a child or youth, parental/guardian permission should be obtained. If contact with a parent/guardian cannot be made, another adult should be notified. Parental/guardian permission forms will be made available enabling parents/guardians to approve their child being alone with a teacher or leader.

## **Check-in/Check-out Procedure**

For children below third grade, a security check-in/check-out procedure will be followed for events such as VBS. The child will be signed in by a parent or guardian, designating the person who will sign out the child.

## **Transportation**

Transportation to and from events is the responsibility of the families. Carpooling is allowed, but parents should have a signed Transportation Permission Form on file at the church. As stated above, we do not allow a minor to be alone with an adult, and this also applies to transportation for church activities, aside from families transporting their own children.

## **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 with the Pastor if assistance is needed with disciplinary issues.

## **Restroom Guidelines**

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 of 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 mucus/discharge from nose;
- Eye or skin infections; and/or
- 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 Pastor or activity leader to develop a plan of action.

## Accidental Injuries to Children

In the event that 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.

## 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 the following:

- **Physical abuse** – any physical injury to a child that is not accidental, such as beating, shaking, burns, 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 at least four years older than the victim, including activities such as fondling, exhibitionism, intercourse, incest, and pornography.
- **Neglect** – depriving a child of his or her essential needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter, and medical care.

Childcare workers may have the opportunity to become aware of abuse or neglect of the children under our care. In the event that an individual involved in the care of children at this church becomes aware of suspected abuse or neglect of a child under his/her care, this **should be reported immediately to the Pastor or Board of Elders** for further action, including reporting to authorities as may be mandated by state law. Further details regarding mandated reporting may be found at:

<https://www.illinois.gov/dcfs/safekids/reporting/>

In the event that an incident of abuse or neglect is alleged to have occurred at this church or during our sponsored programs or activities, the following procedure shall be followed:

1. The parent or guardian of the child will be notified.
2. The worker or church member alleged to be the perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct will immediately be placed on leave pending an investigation and instructed to remain away from the premises during the investigation. He or she should be instructed to have no contact with the victim or with witnesses.
3. All allegations of abuse should be reported to the civil authorities, and the church will comply with Illinois requirements regarding mandatory reporting of abuse as the law then exists. The church will fully cooperate with the investigation of the incident by civil authorities.
4. The Elders will designate a spokesperson to the media concerning incidents of abuse or neglect. The advice of legal counsel will be sought before responding to media inquiries or releasing information about the situation to the congregation. All other representatives of the organization should refrain from speaking to the media.
5. A pastoral visit will be arranged for those who desire it. This should be for the purpose of providing pastoral support during the time of crisis and not for the purpose of investigating the incident or influencing the investigation.
6. Any person who is not found innocent of the alleged abuse or misconduct will be removed from their position working with children or youth.

# Confidential Child Protection Screening Form

Faith Lutheran Church, Monticello, Illinois

Print Name: Last	First	Middle
Print other names used (include maiden name, aliases, and nicknames)		
Address		
City/State/Zip		
Telephone Number: <input type="checkbox"/> Cell <input type="checkbox"/> Home <input type="checkbox"/> Work	Are you a member of Faith Lutheran Church? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If no, what church do you attend?	
Please list all present or previous work involving children either paid or unpaid. Identify the institution and type of work. Also indicate any specialized training (e.g. CPR, first aid, lifeguarding, etc.). Use the back if needed.		

Please provide the name and phone number of three individuals who are not related to you. These references should be able to describe you in a way that is relevant to your involvement in child and youth ministries.

Name	Relationship to you	Phone Number

Are you 18 years of age or older? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Complete this section only if 18 or older.	Date of birth (month/day/year) / /	Place of birth (city/state)
Driver's License Number	License Type & State	Social Security Number
Please list traffic violations you have had:		
Have you ever been convicted of or pled guilty or no contest to a charge of sexual or physical abuse of a minor? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	If yes, please explain.	

By signing below:

- I certify that all of the information I have provided in the process of submitting this form is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.
- I voluntarily and knowingly authorize any person named herein as a contact to give Faith Lutheran Church any information they may have regarding my character and fitness for working with children and fully release and discharge all such contacts from liability for information provided.
- I have read the Child Protection Policy of Faith Lutheran Church, Monticello, Illinois. I understand what is expected of me, and I agree to comply with the policy and its procedures.
- **(Only if 18 or older):** I authorize Faith Lutheran Church, Monticello, Illinois to conduct a background check on me. I hereby request the Illinois State Police Department to release any information which pertains to any record of convictions contained in its files or in any criminal file maintained on me whether local, state, or national. I hereby release said police department from any and all liability resulting from such disclosure.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_