

# Living Saviour Lutheran Church

## Policy and Procedure Manual

**Title:** Child Protection Policy

**Policy:** It is the Policy of Living Saviour Lutheran Church (LSLC) to promote safe activities for child and youth through the implementation of volunteer/staff background checks and child protection guidelines designed to nurture a healthy and productive environment for all child and youth ministries.

### Procedure:

- All volunteers/staff working with children, youth and/or nursery will complete the NC Synod Safe Gathering on-line Application at: <https://safegatherings.com/app/get-started>.
- Volunteers/staff must successfully complete the background check and reference check through the Safe Gathering Website.
- Volunteers/staff must successfully complete the Safe Gathering on-line abuse and neglect training.
- Certification through the Safe Gathering Website is valid for up to 3 years, at which time recertification is required to continue volunteer work.
- All volunteers who successfully complete the certification process may submit their \$35 certification fee for reimbursement through the LSLC reimbursement process (attach copy of certification and receipt to receive reimbursement).
- Volunteers/staff must also review the LSLC Specific Guidelines for Safe Gatherings (See Appendix One) and sign the last page of Appendix One verifying they have reviewed the guidelines and will comply with them. Specific safety guidelines are outlined for the following activities in Appendix One:
  - On-Site Activities
  - Nursery Guidelines
  - Transporting Youth/Children
  - Off-Site Activities
  - Overnight Activities
  - Emergency Guidelines

Signed forms will be kept on file in the Church Office.

- Event Leaders (Sunday school leaders/Nursery School Leader/Youth Leader for any on-site event or off-site event) are responsible for ensuring all volunteers are certified and knowledgeable of the child safety guidelines particular to their event and that child participants have health forms and permission slips on file.

- Parents or Guardians of children participating in youth ministries will complete a Health form for their child annually in September or upon enrollment. The health form is valid for one year (see Appendix 2 for Health Form).
- Parents or Guardians of children participating in regular on-site youth activities (ie Sunday school, bells, etc) will complete an annual permission slip verifying they support their child's participation in on-site youth ministries (See Appendix 2 for Permission Slip).
- Off-site activities and overnight activities also require a separate permission slip indicating the specific activity signed by the parent/guardian (see Appendix 2 for Permission Slip). Indicate on the Permission Slip that the purpose is for a one time activity by checking the appropriate box.
- Volunteer Leaders must have hardcopy or electronic access to Health Forms and Permission slips for all off-site activities.
  
- In order to ensure a smooth transition to this revised Child Protection Policy:
  - Implementation of this policy will begin effective July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017. Any volunteers that have already been approved by the LSLC's current child protection policy will be "grandfathered" in and have until January 1, 2018 to complete the Safe Gathering Certification Process.
  - All new volunteer applications from July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017 forward must be processed through the Safe Gathering certification process.

## **Appendix One: Guidelines**

- **On-Site Activities**
- **Nursery Guidelines**
- **Transporting Youth/Children\***
- **Off-Site Activities**
- **Overnight Activities**
- **Emergency Guidelines**

\*Youth/Children refers to all individuals under the age of 18 years old.

### **A. On-Site Activities**

The following general guidelines apply to all on-site activities:

- Two unrelated adult leaders should be present at all on-site activities for youth/children.
- In the event two adult leaders are not present (ie a Sunday School Class), activities will take place in a room with windows in the door, an open door, or visibility to others that are not physically present in the room.
- An adult leader should always avoid being alone in a closed room with an unrelated child.
- Adult leaders must be familiar with any significant health issues of children under their supervision (ie peanut allergies, asthma etc) as outlined on the child's health form.
- In all activities (on-site or off-site) adult leaders will address and intervene in any instances of bullying, hazing, pranks, explicit sexual language, discriminatory jokes or inappropriate behavior.
- At the conclusion of the event, children should be released to the parent or guardian who brought them to the event unless other prior arrangements have been made.
- Any room where children may be gathered may be entered at any time without prior notice by another adult volunteer or staff member.

### **B. Nursery Guidelines\***

\*The nursery serves infants under 5 years of age.

- Two adult leaders (aged 18 or over) should be present in the nursery whenever one or more infant is under their supervision.
- Volunteers under the age of 18 must be supervised by an adult volunteer or staff member 18 years of age or older.
- Nursery activities should take place in a room with windows in the door, or visibility to others that are not physically present in the room.

- An adult volunteer/staff should always avoid being alone in a closed room with an unrelated child.
- Infants should be released to the parent or guardian who originally brought them to the nursery unless other prior arrangements have been made.
- A parent or guardian should complete an annual health form and permission slip for children that will be using the nursery.
- Nursery volunteers need to be familiar with any pertinent health issues of infants under their supervision and have direct contact with the parent/guardian in the event of an emergency.
- Volunteers in the nursery may provide simple redirection of children as needed. However nursery volunteers/staff will contact the parent/guardian of the child for pick-up if the child cannot be safely managed in the nursery setting.
- Any toileting and diapering needs will be done by the paid LSLC Nursery Attendant staff member.

## **C. Transporting Youth/Children**

- In most instances, families are encouraged to transport their own child to church related activities. However, in certain instances (ie service projects, retreats, etc) carpooling may be necessary.
- All adult volunteers who transport youth must be 21 years of age or older, have a valid unrestricted driver's license and be certified as an adult volunteer through the Safe Gatherings Website.
- Adult volunteers who transport children need to provide a copy of their driver's license and insurance information to the church secretary, to be kept on file in the church office.
- Adult leaders who transport children must have contact information of the parents/guardian of the children they are transporting available to them in the event of an emergency and have hard copy or electronic access to Health Forms of children under their supervision in the event of an emergency.
- All children transported by adult leaders need to wear seat belts and/or ride in a legally compliant child safety seat.
- An adult volunteer transporting children should never be alone in the vehicle with an unrelated child.
- Any off-site activities require that all child/youth participants have a permission slip signed by a parent or guardian.
- Youth guests are welcome, but must have a health form and permission slip on file prior to the event.

## **D. Off-Site Activities**

- The adult leader in charge of the event is responsible for ensuring all youth participating in the activity have a health form and event- specific permission slip on file.
- The adult leader in charge of the event needs to be familiar with any health issues of youth participating in the event and have access to health forms for all participating youth, so this information is available in the event of an emergency.
- The adult leader in charge of the event is responsible for ensuring all adult volunteers have been certified through the Safe Gatherings Website and are familiar with the LSLC Child Protection Guidelines specific to the activity.
- All off-site activities require a minimum of two certified adult volunteers.
- If youth will be carpooling to the activity, all guidelines relating to transporting youth/children apply.
- Volunteers and staff members will observe the “two person/open door rule” at all times, which requires volunteers or staff members working with children or youth to be accompanied by another person or be in visual access of others when working with a child. Providers should have no one-on-one contact with children or youth in a private setting.
- Always travel in groups of three or more.
- No youth shall leave the large group without asking and receiving permission from an adult chaperone.
- Supervision of children or youth should continue until all participants have been picked up from the activity. Participants should not be left alone at the church or elsewhere following an activity.

## **E. Overnight Activities**

- The adult leader in charge of the event is responsible for ensuring all youth participating in the activity have a health form and event specific permission slip on file.
- The adult leader in charge of the event needs to be familiar with any health issues of youth participating in the event and have access to health forms for all participating youth, so this information is available in the event of an emergency.
- The adult leader in charge of the event is responsible for ensuring all adult volunteers have been certified through the Safe Gatherings Website and are familiar with the LSLC Child Protection Guidelines specific to the activity.
- All overnight activities require a minimum of two adult certified volunteers.
- If youth will be carpooling to the activity, all guidelines relating to transporting youth/children apply.
- Adult volunteers participating in overnight activities must be 21 years of age or older.

- Volunteers and Staff Members will observe the “two person/open door rule” at all times, which requires volunteers or staff members working with children or youth to be accompanied by another person or be in visual access of others when working with a child. Providers should have no one-on-one contact with children or youth in a private setting.
- Always travel in groups of three or more.
- No youth shall leave the large group without asking and receiving permission from an adult chaperone.
- Adult leaders are not allowed to room with unrelated youth.
- If it is necessary to check on youth in sleeping quarters (ie morning wake-up, etc), adult volunteers should do so in pairs, only entering the room if absolutely necessary.
- Supervision of children or youth should continue until all participants have been picked up from the event. Participants should not be left alone at the church or elsewhere following an event.

## **F. Emergency Guidelines**

In the event of an emergency, the highest person available on the chain of command or other appointed personnel will:

- Check the area and make sure to direct the group to a safe area to wait for an “all clear” signal. In the safe area, leave the group under the supervision of another LSLC adult volunteer.
- Call 911 to request the proper help and instructions:
  - State the nature of the emergency; stay connected.
  - Specify the location of the emergency
  - Dispatch someone to a safe, visible area to guide emergency personnel to the site of the emergency.
- Give emergency treatment to injured individuals. Don’t give first aid beyond your training.
- Using Health Form information, contact parents/guardians or emergency contacts to inform them of the incident. Share any relevant health information (allergies, medications, medical conditions, insurance information) with emergency personnel treating effected participants.
- Attain a list of witnesses. Include names, addresses and telephone numbers.
- Contact the Pastor and the Council President to report the event.
- Complete LSLC’s “Accident Report Form” as soon as you are able to document the event.
- In the event of a traffic accident: Get name, phone number, driver’s license number, license plate number and insurance of other parties involved in the accident. Take pictures of vehicles involved and the accident scene. Follow other Emergency Guidelines as stated above.

# Commitment to Guidelines and Procedures

**After reading the Child Protection Policy and Procedure and the Guidelines above, sign and date below and turn in this sheet to office staff.**

I have read and understood Living Saviour Lutheran Church's Child Protection Policy and Procedure Manual and Guidelines for Working with Children. I agree to follow the procedure and guidelines and to work to ensure the safety of our children and youth in all church sponsored activities. I have completed the Safe Gatherings Certification process. I have never been charged, convicted of, or pleaded guilty to a crime, including but not limited to drug and/or alcohol related charges, child abuse, or other crimes of violence, e.g. domestic violence.

Print your full legal name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix Two: Forms**

- **Health Form**
- **Permission Slip**
  - **Annual and One-time (off-site and overnight activities)**



## Living Saviour Lutheran Church Health Form and Consent to Seek Treatment

Name of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name of Parent/Legal Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to Participant: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Cell Phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_  
 State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Business Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_  
 State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Work Phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Work Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
 If person named above is not available in the event of an emergency, please notify:  
 Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

### Health History

Please provide any relevant health history/conditions that Church staff/volunteers may need to know about participant:

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Does the participant have any known allergies? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

If yes, allergy to: \_\_\_\_\_ Medications: \_\_\_\_\_

Procedure for exposure: \_\_\_\_\_

Is the participant currently taking any medication for a long term condition? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

If so, please list medication(s) below(attach additional info as needed):

Medication	Dose	Frequency	Reason

**Please attach a photocopy of both sides of your current insurance card.**

### Consent to Seek Treatment:

I hereby indemnify and hold Living Saviour Lutheran Church harmless from and against any liabilities that may be incurred during church related youth activities (including travel to and from events). I also authorize, in the event I cannot be personally contacted, Living Saviour Church and/or its agent to authorize any medical treatment in connection with any incident or similar emergency.

To the best of my knowledge, the information provided on this form is accurate and current. I will advise the church immediately if any of the information on this form changes.

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Living Saviour Lutheran Church**  
**Permission Slip (Annual and One-Time)**

**Name of Participating Child:** \_\_\_\_\_

This is a permission slip for (check one):

\_\_\_\_\_ Ongoing on-site church activity (ie Sunday school, bells, etc). Form completed once annually.

\_\_\_\_\_ A one- time off-site or overnight church activity that requires a separate permission slip.

To be completed by Church Staff/Volunteer:

If a one-time activity:

Specify Activity (Description): \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) of Activity: \_\_\_\_\_ Departure Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Return Time: \_\_\_\_\_

**Child/Youth Covenant:**

I have carefully read this agreement. I understand that my behavior and attitude affects the whole group. I will participate in all activities and treat other participants, volunteers and leaders with respect. I will act in an appropriate manner and be a good representative of Living Saviour Lutheran Church. I will follow instructions of adult leaders and follow the program schedule. I will maintain the buddy-system at all times and I will let the adult leaders know where I am. I will not take part in using any alcohol, controlled substances, flammables, weapons or sexual misconduct. I understand that breaking any of this covenant will result in a call to my parents/guardians and a meeting of LSLC staff and advisors will determine a course of action, such as not being allowed to stay at the activity and my parents having to come and take me home at their expense.

Participant's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian Consent:**

I give my child permission to participate in the above indicated activity(ies). I understand that my child will be participating in activities that are grounded in Christian education, and the purpose of this activity aligns with ELCA's mission for youth ministries.

I hereby hold the above church and its employees, volunteers, representatives, and assigns harmless of any and all liability of whatever nature which may arise out of or result from participation.

I have carefully read the above agreement and the Covenant and understand its contents.

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix Three: Abuse Awareness/Prevention/Reporting

As outlined in the Safe Gatherings training module, child abuse can take many forms including: Physical Abuse, Emotional Abuse, Sexual Abuse and Abuse by Neglect (see the Safe Gatherings Training for additional information). All adult volunteers/staff are required to complete this training.

At LSLC, we are committed to safeguarding children through: promoting **Awareness** of the problem of child abuse; implementing guidelines to **Prevent** the likelihood of abuse; outlining **Reporting** guidelines when abuse is suspected and by Responding to abuse allegations by **Supporting** and protecting children where concerns of possible abuse arise.

When a child discloses a concern of abuse to an adult, the adult should:

- Listen carefully to what the child says without displaying shock or disbelief
- Accept what is being said
- Allow the child to speak freely
- Reassure the child but do not make promises, which may not be possible to keep
- Do not promise confidentiality-it may well be necessary to inform Social Services
- Reassure the child that it is not his or her fault
- Stress that it is right to tell
- Listen; do not ask direct or leading questions
- Do not criticize the perpetrator-the child may still love him or her
- Explain what you have to do next
- Thank him or her in confiding in you

When abuse is suspected, the incident should be immediately reported to:

1. The Pastor of LSLC
2. The President of the Church Council
3. Mecklenburg County DSS  
Child Protective Services  
24-Hour Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline  
(704) 336-CARE (2273)

In addition, the following record keeping guidelines will be maintained:

- Individuals receiving the disclosure will make notes of the discussion with quotes as they are recalled.

- Dates and times of the alleged abuse and the time of the conversation should be noted
- Notes should be factual and precise.
- All documentation must be maintained in a confidential file.
- Any observed marks or injuries on the child should be noted.
- All Child Protection files are marked “Strictly Confidential” and will kept separate from other Church records.
- Access to files is limited to the Pastor, and key staff directly involved in the investigation. Parents do not have access to Child Protection files.
- The Church will maintain Child Protection files for seven years.