

All employees and volunteers who work with children and youth go through a screening process and adhere to specific procedures. We observe these procedures at Faith, not because we suspect misconduct by our staff and volunteers, but because we recognize that churches have become the last open door through which even child predators may enter without question.

THE CERTIFICATION PROCESS AT FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH, BLOOMINGTON, INDIANA

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CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES



*"They were bringing even infants to Him that He might touch them. And when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them to Him, saying, **'Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.'**" Luke 18:15-17*

Some procedures are different for the church and the preschool.

In those cases, these abbreviations are used:

FLCM = Faith Lutheran Church Ministries

PS/CC = PreSchool and Child Care

Section 1: Overview

Commitment of the People of Faith

We are committed to provide a loving, secure and safe environment for every child who participates in our Christian education programs and many uses of our facilities. This set of materials applies to the programs of our congregation that serve children and youth under age 18, including Faith Lutheran Preschool and Christian Childcare program. We are motivated because we are entrusted with the spiritual, educational and moral development of our children and youth.

Why we have adopted this plan

Unintentional accidents, incidents involving poor judgment, child abuse and/or sexual misconduct can tear the fabric of relationships within the Church. These acts, whether intentional or accidental, can damage the mission of the Church. We endeavor to prevent such incidences, injuries and occurrences and have formed this clear plan of action should an incident occur or an allegation be made.

Guiding Principles

These four **guiding principles** explain the basic teaching, direction and goals for this policy for our church and are based on the Word of God.

1. All persons, male and female, adult and child, are equal in God's sight.

There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. Galatians 3:28

2. The human body is good, including human sexuality (I Cor. 3:16; 6:19).

Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies. I Corinthians 6:19-20

3. One result of the fall of the human race into sin is the evil of abuse.

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. Romans 3:23-24

4. Through Christ, God restores people to wholeness and to participation in the Body of Christ.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. I John 1:9

Insurance companies have determined these risk factors make the church setting vulnerable to accidents and incidents.

1. It is a community of trust.
2. There is often ignorance of facts.
3. There are usually few safeguards.
4. There are a number of opportunities to be in contact with children and youth.
5. There is easy access to children and youth.
6. There is a constant need for workers and volunteers.
7. Turnover among volunteers and workers is high.
8. Facilities in some churches are not always open to public viewing.
9. As accountability decreases, risk increases.
10. Risk increases when there is an imbalance of power and control, such as age, size, position and authority.

Definition of Terms Relating to Child Protection at Faith Lutheran Church

- **Church personnel** – any volunteer, employee, church worker or pastor working in or on behalf of the congregation of Faith Lutheran Church, Bloomington, Indiana
- **Child abuse** - a legal classification describing various maltreatments of children - includes any intentional act by an adult or even another child that harms, or threatens to harm, a child's physical, mental or emotional health
- **FLCM/Ministry volunteer, Level 1** – any teacher or church personnel working as lead teacher with children/youth - screening involves background check, references and personal interview
- **Ministry volunteer Level 2 (Assistant)** – No staff or volunteer under age 18 may work independently with minors without supervision - some screening is done but without background check
- **Minor** – any person under the age of 18
- **Supervisory role** – any adult in charge of a specified event or activity

Section 2: The Certification Process

Step 1: Apply

Complete the two-sided Application Form. Sign and date the application. Note that it includes giving Faith leaders authorization to conduct a personal background check. Return it to the church or school office. A member of the Children's Ministry Team or the Preschool staff will contact you to complete the process.

Step 2: Background Check

FLCM: Faith congregation contracts with an on-line service called *Protect My Ministry* to conduct basic background checks on all applicants.

PS/CC: The Preschool and child care staff use an FSSA service required by the state through *Morphotrust*. All results remain confidential. You will be informed of the results after we receive them.

Step 3: Read

Read this document to grasp the intent and procedures of this program.

Step 4: Quiz

Complete the 10-question quiz that is included in this packet. The purposes are to guide your reading and to assure the staff that you have read the documents. Complete this quiz before you take it with you to the interview.

Step 5: Interview

FLCM: Candidates will have a structured interview with two members of Faith. This is an informal conversation of about 20 minutes that gives us an opportunity to learn more about you and your passion for working with children or youth and provides you the opportunity to ask us questions about the ministries at Faith.

PS/CC: Candidates are first interviewed by the Director. A second interview may be done with another staff member to see if the candidate would be a good aid for a particular teacher or class.

Section 3: Commitments & Expectations

Guidelines to be followed by all who work with children and teens (anyone under the age of 18) in programs and events at our church or sponsored by a ministry team off campus

What the congregation commits to do

Applications welcome

FLCM: The congregation invites written applications from adults who have been members of Faith at least six months and are interested in working with children and youth.

PS/CC: The School Board and Director invite applications for employment from anyone with the credentials for the position that is to be filled.

Background checks

The congregation and school will conduct a simple background check on every applicant, volunteer and employee 18 & older who desires to work with minors. There is no cost to the applicant for this background check.

People to conduct interviews

The congregation and school staff will supply the needed people to conduct the interviews.

Confidentiality

Documentation of the interview and the background check will be stored in a confidential manner.

Parent Forms

FLCM: The congregation will provide Parent Consent Forms to ensure that we have personal contact and medical information. One form per child will cover all church activities for a year.

PS/CC: The Preschool staff will provide forms needed to assure the children are safe.

Photo Waiver Option

Parents are to be given an opportunity on the "Parent Consent Form" to decline having their children photographed for use in church publications, website or bulletin board displays. Program leaders and Preschool staff are expected to know and honor those choices.

Two-Deep Leadership

There are to be at least two children's workers/volunteers present in all classes, clubs, child-care or activities involving children. Also, any off-campus activities require at least two adult workers to be present, ideally both male and female especially with students beyond grade six. The leaders of this congregation will strive to fill all those positions.

Doors and windows

All classes will be visible to the general public through doors with windows. Doors without windows shall remain open.

What the parents are to do

FLCM: This section applies only to the activities of the church.

PS/CC: The Preschool Parent Handbook documents all expectations for preschool families.

Constant supervision

All children should be properly supervised when present in the building. Parents are responsible until they deliver their child to a volunteer or staff leader. Children are not to be left unattended or allowed to wander the building or grounds without proper adult supervision. If children are brought to the church while parents are meeting or volunteering nearby, it is the parent's duty to examine the space before leaving to be sure it is ready for the next church use.

Parent Consent Forms

Parents are to complete or update one consent form per child during each program year.

Parents to pick up children

Parents should meet their children, under grade 7, in the classroom or location of the activity or event. Workers should not leave children unattended in a classroom. If a parent has not arrived within a reasonable time after the class or event, children should be taken to the church office or other public area where an adult will assume responsibility for the child until the parent arrives.

Off-Campus transportation

Transportation to and from events away from the church is the responsibility of the families. During events, drivers should avoid dropping off or picking up minors without being accompanied by another adult. The Parish Planning Council shall set standards for who is permitted to drive during events. Any deviations should have the prior consent of the parent and be reported to the next person in the line of responsibility.

Off-campus permission

All special events, outings, field trips, parties, extra-curricular activities and any off-campus activities require parental permission slips if the parent is not also participating. Signed permission slips must be gathered by the adult worker coordinating the activity.

Observing Classrooms Welcomed

Parents are welcome to observe their child in any class or activity. As a courtesy to our teachers and workers, we ask that parents inform the teacher of their desire to observe prior to the beginning of the class session. Parents should not disrupt or interfere with the class in any way.

Report a Potential Problem

If a children's worker acts inappropriately or endangers a child in any way, the church office should be contacted immediately. All reports of alleged inappropriate behavior or abuse will be taken seriously, thoroughly investigated, and referred to the proper authorities. Necessary action will be taken to ensure the safety of all children who participate in our programs or use Faith's facilities.

Child care

When childcare is provided, an identification system shall be used for children under six (ID, clipboard sign-out, or pager, etc.) that links the child with the parent. Parents are asked to utilize the "check-in/check-out system" in place. Providing childcare assistance requires two workers at all times of operation.

What the volunteers/staff are to do

Constant supervision

All children should be properly supervised when present in the building or on a church-sponsored activity away from the building. Workers should not leave children unattended or let them wander the building or grounds without proper adult supervision.

Lights ON

When a classroom is in use, one light must remain on at all times.

Visibility

Interactions with young learners or participants must be visible. Most classroom doors have windows so someone can see in. If you are in a room without a windowed door, the door is to stay open.

No Secrets

There are to be no “secret” activities or organizations. None will be recognized by Faith Lutheran Church, Bloomington.

Restroom routine

A worker must accompany all children through age 4 to the restroom. Workers should enter the restroom stall only if a child requires assistance.

Professional posture

Always maintain a professional posture in dealing with youth, avoiding emotional attachment and being aware of the powerful attraction of adults in positions of authority and trust.

Recognize attraction

If you recognize personal or physical attraction developing, refer the youth to another qualified adult.

Duty to Report

If a children’s worker believes that a child is in an unsafe or abusive home environment or suspects a child is in danger in any way, s/he should report it immediately to a pastor or the program director.

Incident Reporting

Church personnel in supervisory roles shall document any incidents that could be perceived as an accident, sexual misconduct or child abuse. Documentation is to be written and should include times, dates, circumstances, witnesses and any other such information as might be helpful in a follow-up investigation.

What the volunteers/staff are NOT to do

Classroom management

Never treat children roughly. Do not yell at them, intimidate them, threaten them, grab their arm firmly, shake them, sit them in a chair forcibly or strike them. Not only are those behaviors inappropriate for the atmosphere we wish to create at Faith Lutheran Church, but they will open the worker and the church to possible legal action.

Speech

Only topics and vocabulary that could be used comfortably in the presence of parents should be spoken with children or youth.

Dress, attire

Apparel worn in the presence of children or youth should always be the same as what would be worn comfortably in the presence of their parents. At no time should attire be suggestive or possibly embarrassing to the casual observer.

Alcohol (except communion wine)

Alcohol and drugs should never be physically present nor used by adult supervisors during any activity that includes children or youth. In no case shall alcoholic beverages or drugs of any kind be offered to any child or youth under age 21. No adult should be under the influence of alcohol or drugs while working with minors.

Closeness

Forcing a child to sit on one’s lap or planting a friendly kiss is totally inappropriate.

Physical contact

All workers are to use mature good judgment when having physical contact with our children. At no time should you pat children or teens on the bottom or touch them in any way that would seem intimate, threatening or frightening. Use fist-bumps or high-fives. If a situation suggests a hug might be comforting, always ask, "May I give you a hug?"

Section 4: Specifics of Sexual Abuse

Child Sexual abuse definitions

Child Abuse: any intentional act by an adult (or another child) that harms or threatens to harm a child's physical, mental or emotional health

Abuser: any person (even other children or youth) who endangers, injures or misuses a child/youth

Child Sexual Abuse: sexual contact between a child and an adult (or between a child and older child or more powerful person) or use of a child for sexual gratification

Sexual abuse: physical, verbal or visual intimidation or abuse

Estimated incidences of child sexual abuse

- ⇒ 1 in 3 girls will be sexually abused before 18 years of age.
- ⇒ 1 in 7 boys will be sexually abused before 18 years of age.
- ⇒ Male abuser who targets girls will have an average of 52 victims prior to prosecution.
- ⇒ Male abuser who targets boys will have an average of 150 victims prior to prosecution.
- ⇒ 66% of victims don't tell until adulthood, if ever.
- ⇒ 60 million sexual abuse survivors in the United States

Impact of sexual abuse on victims

- ⇒ Sexual abuse creates long-term symptoms with devastating impact. Defense mechanisms may include denial, repression or rationalizations.
- ⇒ Victims may experience shame, self-blame, loneliness, guilt, worthlessness, poor self-esteem or feeling unlovable.
- ⇒ All victims experience a loss of trust in adults and authority figures.
- ⇒ Certain behaviors can indicate sexual abuse in a child, such as eating disorders, self-mutilations, hiding behaviors, decline in grades or enthusiasm for activities, learning difficulties, withdrawal from typical childhood activities, use of drugs or alcohol, bed-wetting, nightmares or rebellion.

Recognizing a child molester

Molesters can be either male or female. Almost 90% of sexual abuse comes from someone children know and trust.

Here are three more warning signs:

1. Some abusers *prefer* a child with a *particular age and sex* of preference.
Example: preference for 8 to 10 year old boys.
2. Sexual abusers will go wherever they have *access to children*.
Examples: schools, child-care centers churches, scouting
3. Some molesters are attracted to the young, undeveloped, hairless bodies.
Example: preference for *both male and female children* based on *body type* rather than sex or age

Common Molester Characteristics

No one can spot abusers by how they look or what they wear; most look like you and me. These characteristics have been observed by those who study these issues:

Common **Male** Molester Characteristics:

- ✓ Likely to have a poor self-image.
- ✓ Rarely a team player
- ✓ Poor self-discipline and impulse control
- ✓ Moves frequently and abruptly
- ✓ Has unstable work history
- ✓ Prefers interaction with children over interactions with adults
- ✓ Chooses hobbies which attract

Common **Female** Molester Characteristics:

- ✓ Illogical or bazaar thinking patterns
- ✓ Unemployed or underemployed
- ✓ Easily angered
- ✓ Socially isolated
- ✓ Married when a teenager
- ✓ Raised in a strict home
- ✓ Blames child for sexual activity
- ✓ Caregiver for abused children

The “grooming” process

The preferential abuser will gain access through deception and a process called **grooming**. These are the four steps commonly attempted prior to the actual abuse:

1. Gain access to the child
2. Select the child
3. Introduce nudity and sexual touch
4. Keep the victim silent

These are some common **grooming** behaviors. A single one of these behaviors may not indicate that a child is being groomed for sexual abuse. If two or more of these behaviors occur, however, observe the situation more closely to see if a problem may exist.

1. Gift giving
2. ‘Kid magnet’ activities (video games etc.)
3. Repeated time alone with same child
4. Touchy with children ... pushing boundaries
5. Playful but inappropriate touching
6. Justifying and rationalizing rule-breaking
7. Breaking the rules (i.e. porn, tobacco, beer)
8. Sexual joking or sexual discussion

Recognizing warning signs and symptoms of the victim

Physical signs may include having torn or bloody underclothing, an STD, experiencing pain, swelling, bleeding, discharge or itching in the genital area, frequent urination, pregnancy, unexplained sore throat, yeast or urinary tract infections.

Behavioral signs may include verbal disclosures, regressive behaviors, avoiding undressing, wearing extra layers of clothing, difficulties sitting or walking, running away from home, suicide attempts, unusual changes in bathing or grooming practices, drop of interest in school or childhood activities, increased interest in sexual matters, display of sexually seductive behaviors, disinterest in spending time with adult or older friend, nightmares or aggression.

Your responsibility to report

Under Indiana law any individual who has a reason to believe a child is a victim of abuse or neglect has the duty to make a report; therefore, each citizen of Indiana is considered a “mandated reporter.” While reporting child abuse is everyone’s responsibility, Indiana law requires some in certain occupations to do so. These professional reporters are staff members in a medical or other public or private institution, school, facility, or agency. These reporters are legally obligated to report alleged child abuse or neglect.

Everyone has an important role and responsibility to prevent child abuse and neglect. Children need everyone to stand up for their safety when they may be in harm's way or when families in crisis or turmoil need support from those close to them. By contacting the Indiana Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline if you suspect a child is a victim of abuse or neglect, you can play your part to protect a child and/or make it possible for a family in crisis to get the help and support they need.

What to do if a child reports abuse to you or you suspect abuse or neglect

Molesters use secrecy, shame and/or threats to keep victims from telling: Children share only part of their abuse story to see how the adult will respond. Never agree to keep sexual abuse a secret.

- ✓ Listen and respond calmly.
- ✓ Be patient.
- ✓ Tell the child that you believe him or her and that it was not his or her fault.
- ✓ Do not interrogate child by asking details or ask shaming questions

If you have reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect, it is your responsibility to pass on that information to one of our pastors or the program director of your activity. Follow these two steps:

1. **REPORT ORALLY-** Report your suspicion immediately and confidentially to a pastor or program director.
2. **DOCUMENT IN WRITING** - Then, before anything else, complete a “Report of Suspected Incident of Child Abuse”. This is available in the “CPP” binder located in both the church office and the kitchen. You will complete the top part of the form; submit it to a pastor or program director who then will complete the remainder of the form and be responsible for any follow-up. He or she will determine whether to report this further to authorities.

Agencies that can help or advise

The Indiana Department of Child Services, Region 13

Location: 1717 West Third St., Bloomington

Telephone: 812-336-6351

Fax Number: 812-333-1671

Office Hours: 8AM-4:30PM

Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline: 1-800-800-5556

Hotline Hours: 24 Hours, 7 days a week

Childhelp: Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuse

National Child Abuse Hotline: **1-800-4-A-Child** [1-800-422-4453]

Hotline Hours: 24 Hours, 7 days a week

<https://www.childhelp.org/hotline>

Childhelp counselors can assist you by providing options based on the situation you describe.

They cannot tell you what to do or guarantee that a specific outcome will occur

Section 5: Response Plan

According to Indiana State Law, those having cause to suspect that a minor, seen in the course of volunteer or professional responsibility (including church professionals) has been, or will be, the victim of abuse or neglect, must report the case immediately (not more than 24 hours after the cause) by telephone or personal visit to the local county child welfare agency, the office of the county sheriff or the city police department.

Concern for the alleged victim, good judgment and open communication are the standards surrounding the reporting of an alleged case of emotional, physical or sexual abuse. Keep calm, stay with the participant and know that you don't have to deal with the victim or information alone. All incidents must be reported within 24 hours of occurrence to a member of the Investigative Resource Team. Any person who reports an incident in good faith is immune from either civil or criminal liability. All reports are treated with confidentiality by the authorities. **Do not contact law enforcement agencies yourself – this is the role of the Investigative Resource Team.**

Investigative Resource Team

In order to better manage the flow of information, gain access to potential sources of information and analyze and document information concerning an allegation of child abuse or sexual misconduct, the investigation will be conducted by the resource team. The team shall consist of one or more of the pastors, Chairman and/or Vice-chairman of the congregation, a representative of the Spiritual Care ministry team leader and leaders of any other Ministry Teams impacted by the situation. This group may add to its number such other individuals as it shall deem helpful in its work. When an incident of any sort occurs during the course of a church sponsored activity, it is the policy of Faith Lutheran Church to take the following steps:

1. Respond promptly to any injury, whether due to an accident or interpersonal activity.
2. Assess whether medical assistance is required.
3. Notify the parents or guardians, if at all possible.
4. Complete an *Incident Report Form* immediately and file it with your supervisor or the Resource Team. All forms are in a Child Protection Procedures binder in both the church office and the kitchen.
5. Complete a *Suspected Abuse Form* and file it with the Team if there is evidence of sexual, physical, or emotional abuse. While child abuse *must* be reported to the authorities, the flow of information is best managed by the Investigative Resource Team.
6. Respond promptly to any allegations of abuse or misconduct where there is reason to believe such abuse has occurred. Notify proper authorities immediately.

7. The Resource Team will interview all involved parties and seek to establish the facts in order to determine the next course of action.
8. Relieve the alleged offender immediately of any duties and refer the person for appropriate medical/psychological evaluation and intervention if such allegations are supported by sufficient evidence.
9. Comply fully with the obligations of civil law as regards reporting of the incident and cooperating with the investigation.
10. Reach out to the victims and their families and communicate our sincere commitment to their spiritual and emotional well-being.
11. Deal as openly as possible with the members of the congregation and the community, within the confines of respect for the privacy of the individuals involved.
12. Consider seeking outside assistance (i.e. legal counsel, psychologists, medical experts, etc.) for the Investigative Resource Team to aid its investigation and follow-up.

Should the Investigative Resource Team determine that the reported conduct does not fall within the above stated definitions of child abuse or sexual misconduct but does potentially represent unprofessional or inappropriate conduct or conduct leading to an impression of impropriety, the individual may be served with a warning to guard against further incident. The individual or family bringing the accusation should be thoroughly informed of the team's findings and follow-up actions.

Handling Media Inquiries – Suggested Brief Statements

- **We will designate one spokesperson** who alone will communicate all messages. This person should be an experienced communicator who can deliver a statement clearly, without embellishing.
- **We will respond with something other than “no comment.”** A brief statement like this will be issued: *“The safety and well-being of our youth are extremely important to our ministry. We are cooperating with the authorities in their investigation, and any comments made before the investigation is complete would be premature.”*
- **We will avoid holding news conferences.** Deliver your statement and do not deviate from it. If reporters ask for further comment, gently direct them to ask the appropriate authorities investigating the incident.

“The staff of Faith Lutheran Church and its Preschool and Christian Child Care is committed to dealing openly with any such incident. In light of the permanent harm that can result from any allegations, even if they ultimately prove to be unfounded, the church and its staff will respect the strict confidentiality and privacy of all persons who are involved in the matter.”

“Keep watch over yourselves and over all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has given you charge, as shepherds of the church of the Lord.” – Acts 20:28 NIV

Summary Review

DO

- supervise program participants at all times
- watch for ***grooming*** behaviors
- avoid false allegations
- avoid inappropriate physical touching

- avoid unmonitored one-on-one
- notify pastor or program director as soon as you have suspicions

DO NOT

- promise to keep a secret
- give individual gifts or special privileges
- allow risky sleeping arrangements
- physically discipline a child
- wear suggestive or revealing clothing
- ever disclose any related information to anyone

CONFIDENTIAL

Do NOT share the information with your friends, family or anyone else.