

# **CHILD/YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY**

Kimball Memorial Lutheran Church

Kannapolis, NC 28081

April 2, 2019

## **OVERVIEW**

Kimball Memorial Lutheran Church seeks to provide a safe, supportive, and Christian environment for all people. For our church community we look to provide a loving and Christ centered environment. This policy was adopted in order to provide a safe and secure environment for the children and youth of Kimball Lutheran Church.

## **GOALS**

The goals of the Child/Youth Policy are the following:

- To provide a safe and loving environment for children and youth.
- To care for children/youth within our congregational community.
- To care for leaders, staff, teachers, and volunteers as well as congregational families.

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

The Congregation Council, staff and members of Kimball Memorial Lutheran Church recognize that children and youth are entrusted to the care of adults during congregational programs and activities both on and off of the church's property. KMLC is committed to providing a safe and caring environment in which children can and are encouraged to participate.

## **POLICY REQUIREMENTS**

- I. Selection/Screening of Adult Leaders and Volunteers.
  1. Prior to working with children or youth volunteers will need to complete:
    - a. Safe Gathering Training- provided by the NC Synod office at <https://safegatherings.com/>
  2. All screening forms shall be kept in a confidential file in the rostered leader's office.
  3. After successful screening, the following guidelines apply to all adults/ college students volunteering with youth and children.
    - a. Adults who have been convicted of any crime related to physical, sexual or verbal abuse or have any felony conviction will not be permitted to work in any program for children/youth.
    - b. Adults who are subsequently arrested for any of the above (noted in I.3.a) will immediately have their right to work in any program for youth/children suspended.
    - c. Adults who are subsequently convicted of any of the above (noted in I.3.a) will have their rights to work in any youth or child program permanently revoked.
    - d. Any adults/college students who work with children/youth are expected to know and abide by all policies and procedures of the church.
- II. Children and Youth Parental Release Forms

The church will provide a parental release form that is a release and liability waiver (this form will be on file in the Minister of Faith Formation's office). This form will give rostered leaders at Kimball the permission to transport, administer medical aid and will contain a liability release.

**Never Alone Rule:** Our goal is to never be alone with children/youth and one adult. As circumstances exist where this could happen, prior authorization between the legal parent/guardian will be made with youth ministry staff or rostered leader (s) in the congregation. This form will serve as a blanket authorization form to cover any and all occurrences. Instances where the safety of the child is at risk, such as a medical emergency, a child may be transported alone without prior parental authorization.

### III. Adult / Child Interaction

The disturbing and traumatic rise of physical and sexual abuse of children has claimed the attention of our nation and our society. The following policies reflect Kimball Lutheran's commitment to providing protective care of all children, youth and adults who participate in church sponsored activities.

Inappropriate and prohibited actions when serving in ministry with children and youth include the following:

#### *Terms Defined*

1. Physical abuse – physical injury inflicted by an adult on child/youth by other than accidental means.
2. Sexual abuse – employing, using, persuading, inducing, enticing or coercing any minor to engage in any sexual act, or any inappropriate touching of a youth by an adult leader or volunteer.
3. Verbal abuse – inappropriate verbal conduct directed towards children/youth.
4. Physical discipline – The use of physical force to discipline a child/youth unless they are in immediate physical danger/harm.

#### *Policies and Procedures for reporting and responding to alleged incidents of child abuse.*

1. Incidents of child sexual, verbal, and/or physical abuse or reasonably suspected cases of abuse should be reported within a 24 hour period, by law to the local authorities and to the rostered leader on staff. Reports should be made orally and confirmed in writing.
2. Incidents/allegations shall be reported to the designated Pastor or rostered leader, or to the designated council person who shall make an appropriate report to the liability insurer for the church and legal counsel.
3. Parents/guardian of a victim shall be notified by the appropriate rostered leader or by another person designated by the rostered leader.
4. The safety and security of the child/youth must be safeguarded before the person accused of abuse is confronted.
5. All reports of actual or suspected abuse shall be taken seriously but shall not be judged pre-maturely. Adults are encouraged to be sensitive to the potential for child abuse and to appearances of such behavior(s). They should not hesitate to caution others that activities they observe are or may appear to be inappropriate. Those reporting are expected to maintain confidentiality.
6. Persons accused must be treated with dignity and support; however, such persons shall be immediately relieved of further responsibilities involving youth/children until investigation is completed and allegations are cleared or

substantiated. All reasonable steps shall be taken to preserve the confidentiality of the accused by church personnel.

7. The Senior Pastor, Deacon and/or legal representative of the church shall be the sole spokesperson for the church insofar as media inquiries are concerned. Confidentiality of all persons involved shall be safeguarded.
8. Incidents of child abuse involving the pastors and rostered leaders as stated in procedures above #1 shall be reported to the president of the Congregation Council. He/she shall immediately notify the Office of the Bishop of the North Carolina Synod of the alleged charges and the legal authorities. The Office of the Bishop/Legal authorities will be responsible for processing allegations against any rostered person.
9. Should false allegations be made, all possible efforts shall be made to correct any damage done to the one(s) falsely accused.

- IV. Screening process for called/employed staff shall be covered under the employee handbook as well as with Safe Gathering Training: <https://safegatherings.com/>

#### EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Kimball Lutheran will provide training opportunities for all those working with children and youth through Safe Gatherings.

REQUEST FOR CRIMINAL RECORDS CHECK / AUTHORIZATION-

I hereby give Kimball Lutheran Church the right to make a thorough check through Safe Gatherings through the NC Synod to research my background. I understand that Kimball Memorial Lutheran Church and the NC Lutheran Synod to use Safe Gatherings Training to perform a background check. I specifically authorize this check and that background check will include:

- Motor Vehicle Report
- County Seat Felony & Misdemeanor
- National Crime
- Social Security Verification

This may also include: Credit Report, Education, Facebook or other social media sites, federal felony/misdemeanor and former employment.

*Please include the following identification:*

Date of Birth:	
Social Security #:	
Driver's License Number and State:	
Current Street Address:	
City, State, Zip	
Telephone:	
Education:	

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

***This information will remain tracked through the KMLC Safe Gathering Admin page as well as printed and stored with KMLC Employee Record.***