

Guidelines for Ministry to Minors

Faith Lutheran Church seeks to honor God and our commitment to educating children and youth. Our congregation has resolved to provide a secure, safe, nurturing environment for the instruction and participation of children and youth. Leadership in the children and youth ministries of Faith Lutheran Church is responsible for sharing the following guidelines with personnel and monitoring their compliance. These guidelines are to be followed by every individual who serves in our ministry to minors.

Acceptance of Workers for Service

All workers are subject to **Faith Safe Initiative Screening** process to permit service in children and youth ministries. Adult workers may be required to complete additional on-line training on child safety and abuse prevention. **Faith Safe Initiative Screening** process for each worker will be repeated every three years.

- All adult and non-member minor children's program workers must complete and sign a **Faith Safe Initiative Screening** form and be approved before working with children and youth.
- **No** worker will be accepted who has any prior conviction of sexual misconduct, child abuse, criminal conduct involving distribution of illegal drugs or alcohol to minors, battery, assault or any other condition that may be determined to be detrimental to the safety and welfare of a minor.
- **All workers must report any arrests.** Failure to accurately and fully disclose requested information or to falsify the information may result in disqualification of service in children and youth ministry.
- **No** adult worker shall be allowed independent direct interaction with children and youth until said person has been known to the Pastor or to the staff person responsible for the ministry.
- Abuse of minors is not to be tolerated. Workers suspected of child abuse will be immediately suspended from involvement with minors. All workers must report to the Pastor or Director of Christian Education if they are aware of any incidents or accusations related to child abuse, sexual misconduct or violent behavior raised concerning their conduct.

Guiding Principles for Risk Management

There are four principles that should guide decisions and actions by individuals in supervisory roles regarding appropriate risk management:

- **Principle 1 - As risk increases, supervision should also increase.** Therefore, more supervision is required for a youth overnight lock-in than a Sunday School class.
- **Principle 2 - Risk increases as isolation increases.** Therefore, care must be taken in such things as when and where an activity is held, and whether doors are open or closed.
- **Principle 3 - Risk increases as accountability decreases.** Therefore, workers should be screened and must obtain approval in advance before service in support of any activity.
- **Principle 4 - Risk increases when there is an imbalance of power and control (age, size, position, authority).** Therefore, care must be taken to maintain a proper age balance between children. Approximately 25% of abuse cases are children molesting children. There is an especially high risk when there is a difference of 5 years or more among children's ages.

Guidelines for Ministry to Minors (continued)**Supervision of Minors**

1. All children should be properly supervised when present in the building. Parents and workers should not leave children unattended or let them wander the building without proper adult supervision.
2. As a general objective, there will be at least two adult workers present or available nearby in all ministry activities involving minors. The level of supervision and number of adult workers present or available nearby may vary based upon the ages and type of specific ministry activity. Activities involving children through age 4 require at least two workers, of which one is an adult. Off-campus activities require at least two adult workers or an adult worker and parent to be present. Ministries involving confirmed youth of the congregation may be conducted with a single adult worker and application of the "Rule of 3" as described in the following **Procedures with Minors**.
3. All off-campus activities involving the transportation of a minor by a designated worker associated with the activity require parental permission. The responsible staff member will ensure that parental permission for providing transportation has been provided. Parental permission provided by a physical or electronic document or message is preferred, however direct verbal permission is also acceptable. The staff member responsible for an off-campus activity may at their discretion request parental permission for any other reason not specified.
4. Workers must report to the professional supervisory staff when there is suspicion or observation that a minor with whom they have had contact in their working capacity has been subjected to abuse or neglect. This includes any incident of suspected child abuse that takes place at Faith Lutheran Church.
5. Personnel in supervisory roles shall document any incidents which could be perceived as sexual misconduct or child abuse, being sure to record times, dates, circumstances, witnesses and any other such information as might be helpful in a follow-up investigation. The documentation of incidents will be filed and maintained in the Director of Christian Education's office and the Safety in Ministry Team will be notified.

Procedures with Minors

1. At the time of registration, parents will be given an opportunity to decline having their child photographed for use in publications or displays.
2. One light must remain on at all times in a room and a clear view of classroom interior must be maintained.
3. The "Rule of 3" should be followed whenever possible. This rule involves the concept of maintaining a minimum of three individuals within a room or confined area at any time. This may include the presence of at least two minors and one adult or at least two adults and one minor within the area.
 - If conditions arise which preclude compliance with this rule, workers shall consider and take available reasonable action to minimize the perception of isolation with the minor. This may include, but is not limited to, opening a door or relocating to a more conspicuous area where others would be more likely to hear or observe conduct, or contacting another adult worker to make them aware of the condition.

Guidelines for Ministry to Minors (continued)

- This rule does not apply when it is necessary to accompany young children to the restroom or under conditions where emergency aid is needed.
 - In the event of providing pastoral care or counseling when it might be necessary for a professional staff member to meet alone with a student to protect confidentiality, the staff member must notify and arrange for at least one other adult worker or parent to be nearby in the building.
4. Parents should meet their children in the classroom, parking lot, or location of the activity or event. Workers should not leave small children unattended. If a parent has not arrived within 15 minutes after the class or event, actions may be taken to seek assistance from any available staff member or adult worker. Children should be taken to the church office when office staff is present or may be relocated to a conspicuous area while assistance is sought.
 - Attempt to contact the responsible parent(s) or emergency contact(s) to determine availability of transportation. If contact with a responsible parent or emergency contact is ultimately unsuccessful in securing transportation, seek recommended actions from the responsible staff member.
 - A determination to provide transportation shall only be made by the responsible staff member. If such a determination is made, the minor should be accompanied by another adult.
 - As dictated by the circumstances, police assistance may ultimately be sought by contacting the Brown County Sheriff's Office non-emergency number at **920-391-7450**.
 5. The responsible staff member will ensure the following standards for who is permitted to drive during events.
 - All designated drivers must be at least 21 years of age. Drivers must appear physically fit and capable to operate a vehicle and to navigate the route based on its complexity and relative hazards.
 - Vehicles must appear to be in good working condition, properly insured and operated safely. Proof of vehicle insurance including liability coverage is required.
 - Parental permission is required for transportation of any minor not having a valid drivers license by someone other than an adult family member. Any deviations must have the prior consent of the parent and be reported to the next person in the line of responsibility.
 6. There are no "secret" church activities or organizations recognized by Faith Lutheran Church. Parents are welcome to observe their child in any class or activity. As a courtesy to our personnel, we ask that parents inform the supervising adult of their desire to observe, prior to the beginning of the activity. Parents should not disrupt or interfere with the activity.
 7. An adult worker must accompany all children through age 4 to the restroom. Workers should enter the restroom stall only to assist a child when necessary.
 8. Topics, vocabulary and attire that could not be used or worn comfortably in the presence of parents should not be employed with children and youth.

Guidelines for Ministry to Minors (continued)

9. Alcohol, drugs and other related substances that may adversely impact mental or physical fitness must not be used by workers in the relative timeframe prior to or during activities scheduled with children and youth. These items are not permitted to be provided to anyone.
 - Parents of minors shall identify the need for use of any prescription medications that may need to be taken.
 - These restrictions from alcohol do not apply to participation in the Sacrament of the Altar (Holy Communion).
10. All workers should use good judgment when having physical contact with children and youth. Workers are cautioned not to touch minors in any way that would appear intimate, threatening or frightening. Minors should not be forced to give physical contact such as kisses, hugs or sitting on an adult's lap. Children and youth are not to be intimidated, grabbed forcibly, shaken or struck.
11. A worker must maintain a professional posture, avoiding emotional attachment and remaining aware of a child's powerful attraction to persons in authority and trust.
12. Initiation of direct one-to one electronic communication (e.g. email, messaging or phone call) with a minor should be avoided. If electronic communication with a minor is initiated, the communication must include the minor's parent/legal guardian, or another ministry leader when the safety and protection of the minor is warranted. Similarly, if electronic contact is initiated by a minor, the response must include the minor's parent/legal guardian or another ministry leader.