

ADULT VOLUNTEER - SAFETY POLICY & PROCEDURES

Approved by Church Council 2.2017

This is a summary of the Safety Policy and Procedures of Bethlehem Lutheran Church. This policy sets forth the requirements and procedures that will apply to all Children's and/or Youth Ministries (CYM). This includes, but is not limited to, everyone who teaches, helps, or cares for children or is otherwise involved in the lives of young people within our congregation.

ADULT VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS

- No history of child abuse or sexual abuse
- A member or active participant of the church for at least 6 months
- Agrees to receive the appropriate training and orientation or information per the position
- Understands that the church will not tolerate the abuse of children and youth and agree to comply in spirit and action with the position
- Agrees not to physically, sexually, or emotionally abuse or neglect a child or youth
- Responds to children and youth with respect, consideration and equal treatment regardless of sex, race, religion, sexual orientation, culture or socioeconomic status.
- Serves as a positive role model for children and youth by maintaining an attitude of respect, patience and maturity. They should also avoid even the appearance of favoritism or impropriety.
- In the event that Adults observe any inappropriate behaviors or possible policy violations with children or youth, they agree to report their observations to the appropriate church leadership.
- Agrees to encourage, equip, and love young people as they grow in their relationships with Jesus Christ and each other
- Believes every young person should know that they are unconditionally loved by God and called to share that love with the world

PROGRAMMING

Two Adult Policy: Whenever possible, at least two unrelated adults or volunteers should be in the room when Children or Youth are present. In the event only one adult is in the room, even temporarily, the door shall remain open or otherwise have a clear line of sight through the door.

1:7 ratio: Every program for children and youth will have a minimum of 1:7 adult to youth ratio. Male and female adult presence is preferred.

BEHAVIOR GUIDELINES FOR EVERYONE

All children and youth agree to the following guidelines for every event and activity:

- Fully participate in all activities without the use or possession of illegal drugs, alcohol, cigarettes or weapons.
- Does not engage in sexual relations and/or inappropriate displays of affection with anyone
- No offensive language will be used by anyone
- Commitment to offering love, support, and respect to each and every member and sponsor of BLC Youth Group
- Respect for themselves and others. This includes respect for other's personal property, opinions, and feelings
- Agrees to and fully participates in cleaning up any meeting spaces after the conclusion of an event
- Agrees to honor and uphold the Ten Commandments which is best summarized by Jesus' words: Love your neighbor as yourself.

APPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS FOR ADULT VOLUNTEERS

Any physical contact between an Adult and a Child or Youth will be limited to: pats on the head, pats on the back, handshakes, high fives, verbal praise, holding hands during prayer, hugs in the sight of others, arms around the shoulders, and sitting beside the child.

Adults may meet one on one with a child or youth in a public setting and with the knowledge of the parent/guardian.

INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS FOR ADULT VOLUNTEERS

Prolonged hugs, striking, spanking, shaking, slapping, or other forms of physical abuse are considered inappropriate behaviors. Verbal or mental abuse including, but not limited to, humiliation, degradation, or threatening are considered inappropriate behaviors. Any sexual abuse including, but not limited to, inappropriate touching, exposure, kissing, showing affection in isolated areas, occupying a bed with a youth, or lengthy embraces are considered inappropriate behavior. Any behavior that a youth resists or otherwise rejects is considered inappropriate, even if it is defined as appropriate per the "appropriate behaviors" list.

DISCIPLINE GUIDELINES

No form of punishment that involves physical pain or discomfort may be used. Children may only be restrained if they are in danger of hurting themselves or others. Disruptive children may be removed from the group to another part of the room, keeping in compliance with the supervision requirements.

Children and youth who are disruptive should be taken to another side of the room or into the hallway (with the supervision requirements) and explain to the child or youth that a particular behavior is unacceptable. It is important to highlight that the behavior is unacceptable, not the individual.

If disruptive behavior persists after the initial explanation:

- The parents should be asked to come and sit with the child or youth
- If no parents are present, the child or youth will sit with a staff member for the remainder of the time of the activity and the parents or guardians of the child will be notified promptly by the staff person.
- If disruptive behavior continues, the child or youth's parents may be asked to remove the child or youth from the classroom or other ministry setting.

OFF SITE REQUIREMENTS

When an adult is driving a child or youth, the adult will contact the parent/guardian to inform them that they are transporting their child and get their approval. Most often, this will be the responsibility of the Director. In the event that an adult will drive a child to or from an event, the parent/guardian permission will be required.

Adults must have a valid driver's license and current auto insurance in accordance with the state law. Adults who drive to or from an event must be 21 years of age or older.

Some activities or events may require a background check in order to be in compliance with a third party organization.

POLICY VIOLATIONS

Any violation of this policy should be reported to the Director of Children, Youth & Family Ministry or Pastor. In the event they cannot be reached or other reporting is necessary, violations of this policy will be reported to the President of the Church Council.

I have read and understand the Safety Policy & Procedures for Bethlehem Lutheran Church Children, Youth & Family Ministries. I agree to comply with these expectations, behaviors, and boundaries. I understand failure to do so may result in my no longer being able to volunteer with the Children, Youth & Family Ministries at Bethlehem Lutheran Church.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

Date: _____

This agreement will be kept on file for 3 calendar years before a renewal is required.