

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Good Shepherd  
SAFE CHURCH POLICY  
Policies and Procedures  
to Maintain a Safe Church Community

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The policies and procedures that follow apply to all activities that take place within the buildings and property of Good Shepherd Church, as well as to programs and events scheduled as part of the ministry of this Church that take place elsewhere. These policies and procedures apply to all members, friends, volunteers, and/or employees of this Church, and are put forth for all members, friends, volunteers, and/or employees of Good Shepherd Church to follow, to ensure appropriate care for the children, youth and adults of the Church.

As a community of Christian faith and in keeping with the mission of Good Shepherd Church, Good Shepherd is committed to creating and maintaining programs, facilities and a community in which members, friends, volunteers, and/or employees can worship, learn and/or work together in an atmosphere free from all forms of discrimination, harassment, exploitation or intimidation. All persons associated with Good Shepherd should be aware that the Church is totally opposed to Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Harassment (as defined below) and that such behavior is prohibited. It is the intention of Good Shepherd to take action to create a safe environment, to prevent behavior that is contrary to this Policy and, if necessary, to take appropriate actions in response to any allegations that a violation has occurred. In addition to the policies outlined in this document, employees of Good Shepherd are expected to abide by Church personnel policies and procedures. A glossary of terms is included in Section 12.0 of this Policy.

## 2.0 MINISTERIAL CONDUCT

Consistent with our understanding of the priesthood of all believers, all rostered leaders, those preparing to be rostered leaders, employees, elected and appointed lay leaders, and authorized volunteers are Ministers to the congregation. It is important that every Minister to the church be adequately prepared and educated for the ministry in which they serve others, and to understand the ways in which their use or misuse of authority may impact others.

It is the policy of Good Shepherd to encourage its Ministers to nurture safety within Ministerial Relationships by being attentive to self-care, education, maintaining appropriate boundaries, and by referring those in need to supportive and helpful resources.

## 2.1 STANDARD OF BEHAVIOR

Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Harassment are unethical behavior, contrary to the teachings of Christ and the Church, and will not be tolerated within this congregation.

## 3.0 **FORMATION AND MANDATE OF THE SAFE CHURCH COMMITTEE**

### 3.1 PURPOSE OF THE SAFE CHURCH COMMITTEE

The Good Shepherd Church Safe Church Committee is responsible for ensuring that all members, employees, volunteers, and outside organizations utilizing the Church facility are instructed to follow the practices and guidelines of the Good Shepherd Safe Church Policy.

### 3.2 COMMITTEE COMPOSITION, MEMBERSHIP TERMS, AND MEETING FREQUENCY

A. The Good Shepherd Church Safe Church Committee shall have at least five (5) members, including (1) the Pastor or his/her designee from the pastoral staff; (2) the Church Council President or Vice-President; (3) the Youth, Family and Education Director (if vacant, an individual fulfilling this role), (4) a member of the Youth and Education Board; and (5) two (2) members-at-large from the congregation, one of whom shall serve as Chair of the committee and as the church's Safe Church Advocate.

B. The committee members shall be recommended by the Executive Committee and appointed by the Church Council at its January meeting, if new members are joining at that time.

#### 3.2.1 ELECTION OF MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

Upon formation of the committee, one member-at-large shall be elected to a term of two (2) years, and the other member-at-large shall be elected to a term of two (2) years, with the exception of the first member-at-large appointee, who shall serve for three (3) years. All subsequent members-at-large shall be elected to terms of two (2) years.

#### 3.2.2 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND SAFE CHURCH ADVOCATE

The member-at-large elected for two (2) years shall act as the first Chair, unless otherwise elected by the Safe Church Committee itself. Each subsequent Chair shall be a member-at-large who, upon assuming the duties of Chair, will serve a two (2) year term. The Chair shall serve as the Church's Safe Church Advocate.

#### 3.2.3 APPOINTMENT OF SECRETARY

At the first meeting, the Committee shall choose a Secretary who will keep accurate and complete minutes of meetings and will submit them, for approval, to the Committee. This position can be filled by any member of the committee.

#### 3.2.4 TERM

The Church Council shall appoint members-at-large, as needed, to fulfill any terms that may from time to time become vacant. An at-large member can serve a total of two (2) non-consecutive terms. All other members serve for the duration of his or her term.

### 3.2.5 FREQUENCY OF SAFE CHURCH COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Safe Church Committee shall meet at least once every six (6) months or when convened by the Chair. All meetings of the Committee are closed to non-members, except by invitation or request of the Chair. No action may be taken by the Safe Church Committee other than at a meeting called by the Safe Church Advocate, as Chair of the Committee, and in the presence of a quorum. A quorum shall be defined as at least three members of the Committee.

### 3.2.6 CONFIDENTIALITY OF PROCEEDINGS, DISCUSSIONS, DELIBERATIONS, ACTIONS AND RECORDS

The proceedings, discussions, deliberations, actions and records of the Good Shepherd Safe Church Committee, including but not limited to approval of individuals with criminal backgrounds permitted to work with minors as a volunteer or chaperone, shall be treated with the utmost confidentiality by all members of the Committee, all members of the staff of Good Shepherd, and any other person who is or may become privy to them. No information arising out of the proceedings, discussions, deliberations, actions and records of the Good Shepherd Safe Church Committee shall be shared with anyone not a member of the Committee, except (1) insofar as the Committee deems necessary in carrying out its functions, and (2) as required by law, court order, or other valid legal process. Nothing in this Section (3.2.6) shall be construed as grounds for Good Shepherd, the Safe Church Committee, or any member thereof to refuse to testify or to respond to a valid and appropriate request for the production of documents in any legal proceeding. Any breach of this Section shall be grounds for dismissal from employment by Good Shepherd Church or from Committee membership, and may be grounds for legal action.

## 3.3 SAFE CHURCH COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS

### 3.3.1 MANAGEMENT OF BACKGROUND CHECKS

Prior to any person's commencing service as a Good Shepherd employee or volunteer, the Safe Church Coordinator shall confirm that a background check has been completed for that person if he or she, in the performance of his or her duties as an employee or volunteer, has the potential for unaccountable, unsupervised time with a child or youth. At least once every six (6) months, the Committee shall review the background check log maintained by the Safe Church Coordinator, to confirm that the log is accurate and complete, and that all required background checks have been performed. The Committee may recommend, at any time that an additional

background check be performed on any person already serving as an employee or volunteer of Good Shepherd Church that is prompted by suspicious activity.

### 3.3.2 INCIDENT REPORT REVIEW

The Safe Church Committee shall review each Incident Report and determine necessary and appropriate follow-up. Follow-up may include, but need not be limited to: consulting with parties knowledgeable about the reported incident; offering any individual who is the subject of an Incident Report an opportunity to respond to the Committee, in writing, to any allegations; consulting with individuals and/or groups with relevant expertise; and ameliorating any known threat or condition to prevent recurrence.

The Committee shall create a written Closure Report when the review is complete. The Closure Report shall include a summary of the required follow-up, combined with action taken or recommended actions.

### 3.3.3 REVIEW OF PRACTICES

The Safe Church Committee shall periodically audit Good Shepherd Church offsite trip practices concerning medical form completion, and chaperone and driver practices, to confirm compliance with the Good Shepherd Church Safe Church Policy.

### 3.3.4 TRAINING

The Safe Church Committee, or an individual designated by the Safe Church Committee, shall offer regular training including this Safe Church policy for Good Shepherd Church Committee chairpersons, and other appropriate and interested parties.

## 3.4 RECORD MAINTENANCE

### 3.4.1 RECORD CONTENT

Safe Church Committee records shall include, but shall not be limited to:

- Background check application forms and associated documents
- Completed medical forms
- Completed driver forms
- Incident Reports, associated follow-up records and Closure Reports
- Minutes of the Committee

- Written confirmation of receipt of the Good Shepherd Church Safe Church Policy by building and grounds users, as necessary

### 3.4.2 RECORD STORAGE

Safe Church Committee records shall be kept in a locked file in a locked office within the Church or an approved offsite location. Access to these records will be limited to the Committee, except as the Committee may provide.

### 3.4.3 RECORD RETENTION

In all cases, a written summary of the Safe Church proceedings will be maintained for a minimum of seven (7) years.

## 3.5 INCIDENT REPORT PROCEDURES

### 3.5.1 INCIDENT REPORT PROCEDURES

Upon receipt of an Incident Report, the Committee shall review the matter reported to determine whether the allegations set forth, if proven, describe an incident that a reasonable person would believe could constitute a serious threat to the safety and well-being of any individual or group connected to Good Shepherd Church, or to the congregation of Good Shepherd Church, as a whole. If and when the Committee determines that the allegations, if proven, describe such an incident, the Chair shall convene a meeting of the full Committee as soon as practicable, in order that the Committee may take the actions set forth below, if warranted. If the Committee determines that the allegations do not describe an incident that could constitute a serious threat to the safety and well-being of any individual or group connected to Good Shepherd Church, or to the congregation of Good Shepherd Church as a whole, the Committee will prepare and maintain a written Closure Report.

## 3.6 PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION, HARASSMENT OR ABUSE

### 3.6.1 SEXUAL EXPLOITATION, HARASSMENT OR ABUSE REPORTING AND ACTION

Any incident of suspected Sexual Exploitation, Harassment or Abuse shall be reported to the Committee. Nothing within this Policy shall modify any obligation of the Pastor to make a report to the Administration of Child Services (“ACS”) or other appropriate state or local agency. The Committee should meet and take any appropriate measures, such as contacting local authorities, legal counsel and /or the insurance carrier Nothing within this provisions is designed to be inconsistent with the advice of legal counsel or preclude the reporting of events to an insurance carrier, if applicable. To the contrary,

all insurance procedures and counsel advise, to the extent applicable, should be strictly complied with.

Further Action:

- The Safe Church Committee shall meet as promptly as possible to review the Incident Report. After appropriate review of the Incident Report, the Committee shall first, by majority vote, make either (1) a determination that further review of the report should be pursued by additional entities or individuals, including but not limited to third parties such as an insurance carrier, or (2) a preliminary finding that no further review is required.

- Upon a finding by the Committee that no further review is required, the Committee shall either (1) close the matter by filing a Closure Report, or (2) take appropriate further action, which, if the reported person is a non-pastoral employee of Good Shepherd Church, may include: a recommendation that the reported person's duties/responsibilities be temporarily or permanently modified or reassigned; a recommendation that the reported person be offered counseling or training related to the incident; a recommendation that the reported person be asked to resign said position, if the reported person is in an authorized volunteer position at the church; and/or probationary standing, with the terms of the probation clearly defined.

Upon a preliminary finding by the Committee, the appropriate individual designated by the church's insurance carrier shall promptly provide to the reported person written notice that such a preliminary finding has been made. Such notice shall contain a summary of the Incident Report, including the date, location and approximate time of the alleged incident, but shall not include the identity of the person making the report, unless that person gives his/her permission, in writing, to the Safe Church Advocate for the inclusion of such information. The notice shall also inform the reported person that he/she may submit a written response to the Safe Church Committee, such response to be submitted (if at all) to the Safe Church Advocate within 24 hours of receipt of the notice.

As promptly as possible but no sooner than 24 hours after receipt of the notice by the reported person, the Safe Church Committee shall reconvene to make a final finding, by majority vote. The Committee shall consider any written response submitted by the reported person.

If the Committee then makes a determination that an incident may have occurred that requires further action of the Safe Church Committee, it shall include such finding in the Closure Report. If the Closure Report by the Safe Church Committee determines that appropriate action is dismissal from (i) employment by the Church, (ii) an

authorized volunteer position at the Church; and/or (iii) affiliation with or membership in the Good Shepherd Church, following any necessary procedures set forth in the Church Constitutions and By-laws, then a recommendation seeking such relief should be made to and voted upon by the Church Council.

### **3.7 LEGAL COUNSEL**

The Safe Church Committee may seek the advice of legal counsel of its choosing or by any insurance carrier, as applicable in performing its functions. Any reasonable expenditure for such advice shall be paid by Good Shepherd Church as authorized by the Church Council, and such authorization shall not be unreasonably withheld.

### **3.8 SPECIAL REPORTING IN EVENT OF INCIDENT INVOLVING ROSTERED LEADER**

In addition to a Safe Church Incident Report and the appropriate action taken by the Committee, all allegations of behavior that call into question the fitness for public ministry of any rostered leader, or person preparing to be a rostered leader, will be promptly forwarded to the Bishop of the Metropolitan New York Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The Metropolitan NY Synod can be contacted at (212) 665-0732. A written report will be made, in all cases.

### **4.0 BUILDING USE**

In order to provide a safe church environment for all who use Good Shepherd's facilities, all groups, organizations and persons who make use of those facilities complete a building use form and comply by these procedures.

### **5.0 EMPLOYMENT REQUIREMENTS**

Before temporary or permanent hiring, and certainly before beginning their duties, all prospective employees shall cooperate with and submit to a background check, including, but not necessarily limited to, inquiries of references and any criminal history verification by a third party. Good Shepherd Church is compliant with the laws of the State of New York for religious institutions regarding the hiring of convicted felons. All prospective employees shall confirm, in writing, their understanding that any refusal to provide full and accurate information in their application for employment, any refusal to submit to a background check, and/or any findings in the background check that, in the discretion of the Pastoral Staff or the Safe Church Committee, make them unsuited for

employment by Good Shepherd Church, shall be grounds for refusal to hire, rescission of any offer of employment, or termination, as may be applicable.

## **6.0 REQUIREMENTS FOR COMMENCING AND CONTINUING MINISTRY**

### **6.1 LAY MINISTERS**

Before beginning their duties, all Lay Ministers will:

- submit a disclosure form (See Exhibit A)
- be personally interviewed by a pastor or a designate of a pastor, to assess the suitability of their character and qualifications for the position they seek.

### **6.2 ROSTERED LEADERS**

Rostered leaders, or those persons preparing to be rostered leaders, are required to have fulfilled the applicable requirements and be in compliance with applicable regulations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or its equivalent. This may include, but is not limited to, comprehensive psychological screening, boundary training and comprehension of related policies.

### **6.3 ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR CHILD AND YOUTH MINISTRY**

Good Shepherd Church is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment in which young people can learn about and experience God's love. It is the policy of this church to provide adequate supervision and safeguards for child and youth activities. In order to promote this, Good Shepherd Church has established the following guidelines, in addition to its general requirements for child and youth ministers.

#### **6.3.1 NON-EMPLOYEE LAY MINISTERS**

Only those who have been members of Good Shepherd Church for at least six months or, if not members, have been regularly and frequently associated with Good Shepherd Church, shall be allowed to serve as volunteer lay ministers working with minors.

#### **6.3.2 DISCLOSURE FOR NON-EMPLOYEE LAY MINISTERS**

All volunteers who regularly work with children and youth will complete and submit a disclosure document.

#### **6.3.3 REGISTERED SEX OFFENDER REVIEW**

The Church will conduct a registered sex offender review for each Lay Minister by searching their name on the Department of Justice website at [www.nsopr.gov](http://www.nsopr.gov). This

registered sex offender review will be repeated as necessary in the opinion and discretion of the Safe Church Committee.

#### 6.3.4 TRAINING REGARDING SAFE CHURCH POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

All Rostered Leaders and Lay Ministers who regularly work with children and youth, will receive training regarding safe church policy and procedures. Training should be repeated for all Rostered Leaders and Lay Ministers no less than every two (2) years.

### 7.0 **TRANSPORTATION RULES**

In cases in which driving private vehicles is necessary, Good Shepherd Church has adopted the following rules.

#### 7.1 PRIVATE VEHICLE DRIVER

##### 7.1.1 DRIVER INFORMATION

Prior to using a private vehicle to transport minors on church activities, the driver will complete and provide to the adult church staff member in charge of the activity (or his or her designee) a Good Shepherd Church Form providing: (1) Name; (2) Address; (3) Telephone number; (4) Driver's license number; (5) Vehicle description; and the (6) Vehicle license plate number. All drivers must have a valid driver's license and proof of insurance in their vehicles during any Church trip.

##### 7.1.2 INELIGIBLE DRIVER

Any driver who has had any at-fault accidents, repeated moving traffic violations, or license suspension within the last two years is ineligible to transport persons associated with church activities. Any driver who has ever been convicted of reckless driving, driving while intoxicated, or under the influence, is similarly ineligible.

##### 7.1.3 DRIVER IMPAIRMENT RESTRICTION

The operator of a vehicle that will transport persons on church activities shall not use alcohol or drugs that may impair his or her ability to operate the vehicle.

##### 7.1.4 YOUTH DRIVER RESTRICTION

The operator of any vehicle being used to transport any other person not related to the driver during Church-sponsored activities, must be a duly licensed person at least 25 years of age.

No person may drive minor passengers during any Church-sponsored activity without the express written permission of said passengers' parents. Parental permission also includes, but is not limited to, youth drivers.

### 7.1.5 DRIVER OPERATOR RESTRICTION

A vehicle leased for transportation of persons on church activities will only be operated by the person listed as the operator, or the additional driver on the vehicle lease contract.

### 7.2 INDIVIDUAL SEAT BELT

All drivers and passengers of private vehicles being used to transport persons on church activities will wear an individual seat belt (no multiple belting) at all times during operation of the vehicle.

### 7.3 CHARTER BUS

Buses shall be chartered only from companies fully insured and certified to operate in all states between the church and the destination of the planned trip.

#### 7.3.1 CHARTER BUS DRIVER REQUIREMENTS

The Good Shepherd Church affiliate planning the trip shall request the charter company to indicate, on the printed charter order, that the coach operator will be required to show his or her:

- Valid Commercial Driver's License
- Medical Certificate (also known as the "DOT" card)
- Driver's Log

Reputable charter companies dispatch operators who are qualified. However, only the operator can produce qualification at any given time. Telling the charter company that the operator will be required to produce the documents described above will serve as a useful reminder. No responsible operator will refuse.

Trip organizers are responsible to check with the charter company to ensure their vetting procedures are consistent with the Good Shepherd Church driver policy.

### 7.4 TRAVEL RESTRICTION RECOMMENDATION

Trips should be planned to avoid travel between 11:00 pm and 6:00 am the next day.

## 8.0 **USE OF TECHNOLOGY**

### 8.1 CHURCH NETWORK

Church network usage on the church's premises (on church or personal computers) is strictly for the purpose of fulfilling the church's ministry and mission.

## 8.2 CHURCH DESKTOP AND LAPTOP COMPUTERS

### 8.2.1 PASSWORD PROTECTION

Every church desktop and laptop computer should be password-protected. All computers should have a screen-saver that automatically locks the screen after 15 minutes of non-use.

Individuals given church logins and passwords should not share their personal login/password information with anyone other than the computer administrator. This information should be kept confidential and not written down in public view. If logins/passwords are found to have been shared, disciplinary action may be taken.

### 8.2.2 COMPUTER SIGN-OUT LOG

If a shared laptop computer is removed from church premises, a sign-out log will record the user's name, the date the computer was checked out, and the expected return date.

### 8.2.3 INAPPROPRIATE USE OF CHURCH COMPUTERS

Any inappropriate use of church computers should be brought to the attention of the Pastor for investigation and subsequent follow-up measures to be taken, as warranted.

## 8.3 CHURCH DIRECTORY

Use of Good Shepherd's printed or online directory is limited to active members of the congregation, and the directory is available only upon request.

## 8.4 CHURCH DATABASE

Only staff and authorized members of Good Shepherd Church may use the church database for the sole purpose of conducting the ministry and mission of the church.

## 9.0 **PASTORAL COUNSELING AND INDIVIDUAL CONFESSION**

### 9.1 GENERAL

The regularly called pastor(s) of Good Shepherd Church are to offer pastoral counseling in an environment that is safe for all involved parties (in accordance with the ELCA document for ethical pastoral counseling).

### 9.2 LOCATION

All counseling is to take place in a well-lit location, either on the church premises or in a public location, in clear view of others. Other appropriate locations for counseling include the Sanctuary.

### 9.3 SPECIAL LICENSURE

Aside from pastors with regular calls from the congregation, professional Pastoral Counselors must be licensed by the State of New York and must abide by the State's Code of Ethics for licensed mental health counselors, as well as the Code of Ethics of their accrediting association.

### 9.4 SPECIAL PROVISIONS FOR CHILD AND YOUTH COUNSELING

Parental permission is not required for an individual event of youth or child counseling.

#### 9.4.1 ADDITIONAL PRESENCE

If a pastor or staff member needs to be alone in a closed room with a youth or child, for ongoing counseling purposes, parents must give permission. However, in both cases, another staff member should be present in the building at the same time, and be informed of the session.

Generally speaking, adult advisors and staff should not be alone individually with a youth or child, at any time. However, some youth or children may seek or benefit from private counseling with an adult. In such an event, the following steps must be taken:

- If the meeting occurs at the church, it must take place in a room with an observation window or, if there is no window, with the door ajar. Another adult in the church should know of the meeting in advance. If clergy or staff needs to be alone in a closed room with a youth or child participant for ongoing counseling purposes, parents must give permission.
- If the meeting occurs outside the church, it must take place in an easily observable public place, and another adult in the church should know of the meeting, in advance.
- If a need for a one-to-one meeting arises on a trip away from the church, the adult advisor must inform another adult advisor, beforehand, where they are going to converse, and how long the conversation is likely to last. The meeting must occur in a place visible to others (i.e., outdoors, within view of another adult leader; inside, at one end of a large room or in a room with an observation window; or in a room with the door ajar).
- Advisors and staff must adhere, at all times, to the reporting requirements and confidentiality policies of the church.

### 9.5 SUSPECTED ABUSE OR IMMINENT DANGER TO LIFE

#### 9.5.1 SAFE CHURCH ADVOCATE

If an incident of church-related misconduct occurs, the incident must be reported to the Safe Church Advocate or a pastor, as outlined in Section 3.6.1. Confidentiality, as described in Section 3.2.6, shall be maintained by all. Because of the vulnerability of children, their right to protection supersedes a counselee's right to confidentiality.

## **11.0 PROCEDURES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

### **11.1 GENERAL GUIDELINES**

#### **11.1.1 DISCIPLINE**

The purpose of practicing discipline with children and youth is to maintain order in a manner consistent with the teaching of Christian responsibility, respect, and cooperation. Positive reinforcement is the most appropriate form of discipline. Teachers, advisors, aides, volunteers, and others helping in the room or elsewhere, are encouraged to listen to the child, communicate positive and reasonable expectations of appropriate behavior, offer choices, use time-outs or redirect the child with alternative choices, and/or encourage children to verbalize their feelings.

If a child repeatedly displays inappropriate behavior, the teacher will contact the Sunday Church School Superintendent or Youth, Family and Education Director for assistance and advice. One of the aforementioned supervisors will determine whether/when to contact the child's parent(s) or other guardian(s). No spanking, restraint or other corporal punishment of any kind shall be used. Verbal reprimands shall not include destructive criticism, insult, profanity, or shouting.

#### **11.1.2 CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

While Good Shepherd Church welcomes all children and youth, if a child or youth becomes disruptive during religious education courses, a parent or adult with special training to meet his or her needs may be requested in order to attend such courses. When attending events, whether on the Church premises or on an outside excursion, children and youth with special needs must be accompanied by their parent or an adult with special training to meet his or her needs.

#### **11.1.3 INJURY/ACCIDENT REPORT**

Such forms shall be made readily available in the office and should be filled out anytime a child is hurt, falls, or becomes ill. Parents should be notified as soon as possible of any injury and any first aid administered.

#### **11.1.4 FIRST AID AND HEALTH PRACTICES**

First aid supplies are available on each floor. Names of children registered for Church activities with allergies shall be shared with supervising adults to avoid their exposure to foods, chemicals, or other materials to which they are allergic.

#### 11.1.5 EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Fire Drills will be conducted periodically, but no less than once each year. If there is a medical emergency, teachers should contact parents' cell phone, contact the Sunday Church School/Preschool supervisors, or a member of the church staff, to locate parents in church and/or call 911, if appropriate.

#### 11.2 GUIDELINES FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL (GRADES 5 AND UNDER)

##### 11.2.1 THE TWO-ADULT RULE FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL

All children in the Sunday School shall be under the care and supervision of at least two (2) adults. The Hall Monitors on each floor provide the supervision of a second adult.

##### 11.2.2 REGISTRATION

Upon registration, each parent should submit a list of names and phone numbers of individuals authorized to leave the school with the child.

#### 11.3 GUIDELINES FOR YOUTH (GRADES 6-12)

##### 11.3.1 YOUTH SUPERVISION

There should be at least two adults, with a ratio of no less than one adult for every ten students, at all youth programs or activities. If this ratio cannot be met or maintained, the youth activity may be cancelled at the discretion of the pastor or Youth, Family and Education Director, in an effort to adhere to this Safe Church Policy and to provide for the safety of the youth involved.

Adult advisors for such activities must be over the age of 21 and part of the church community. Where possible, the advisors should be at least five years older than the oldest youth present, and subject to the discretion of the pastor or Youth, Family and Education Director. The adult advisors must report all infractions of the youth rules to a pastor or the adult leading the group.

##### 11.3.2 PROCEDURES FOR YOUTH PARTICIPANTS

All youth are expected to act in a respectful manner toward all others participating in a youth group function. Sexual activity, smoking, possession of drugs or alcohol, violent behavior, obscene language, harassment, and bullying are strictly prohibited during any

youth group meeting and may result in expulsion from the meeting and the group or class sponsoring it. Youths attending a youth meeting may not leave early without the express consent of the youth's parent or guardian, which consent must be conveyed to one of the adult leaders. Firearms or weapons of any kind are prohibited in the church building and at all church activities regardless of location.

#### 11.4 SPECIAL PROCEDURES FOR YOUTH TRIPS

##### 11.4.1 CONSENT FORMS

Written consent of one parent or guardian of a minor will be required for all activities off the church property, and for any overnight activities held at the church.

##### 11.4.2 MEDICATIONS

The parent of a child whose schedule will require that s/he receive medication while participating in a youth trip or other Church-sponsored activity must inform the activity's adult leader, providing the name(s), dosage(s) and timing of the medication(s), and contact information for the prescribing doctor as reflected by the consent form.

##### 11.4.3 ADULT PRESENCE

There should be at least two adults, and no fewer than one adult for every ten youths, on all youth trips. For co-ed trips, there is to be at least one female and one male adult. If these ratios cannot be met or maintained, the youth trip may be cancelled at the discretion of the pastor and/or Youth, Family and Education Director.

Chaperoning adults shall agree to be present and available at all times during the trip.

##### 11.4.4 STANDARD OF BEHAVIOR

All youth are expected to act in a respectful manner toward all others participating on a youth trip. Sexual activity, smoking, possession of drugs or alcohol, violent behavior, harassment, obscene language and bullying are strictly prohibited during such trips.

If Advisors suspect a youth of possessing cigarettes, drugs, alcohol or a weapon, they will ask the youth for permission for a person of the same gender to search the youth's belongings. If permission is denied, parents will be called and the youth will be sent home.

- Under no circumstances are girls or boys to enter the bedroom or bathroom areas of the opposite sex
- Each person's privacy should be respected in bedrooms and bathrooms
- Under no circumstances are youth allowed to wander away from the group

- Young people attending a youth trip may not leave early without the express consent of the youth's parent or guardian, which consent must be conveyed to the trip leader
- Youth are expected to adhere to the rules established by the adult leaders, including, but not limited to, lights-out and wake-up times, use of electronic devices, and boundaries

## 12.0 DEFINITIONS

Children: Those participating in church activities, from infancy through grade 5.

Youth: Those who participate in church activities from grade 6 through grade 12.

Room Aide: Assistant teachers in educational settings. Room Aides must be a minimum of 14 years of age and at least five (5) years older than the students in whose class they are assisting. Jr. Helpers (children and youth serving as volunteers for Sunday Church School or Vacation Bible School) will be overseen by teachers and assistants.

Lay Minister: A person authorized by the Church to carry out its ministry.

Rostered Leaders and Preparing Rostered Leaders: A person—lay, commissioned or ordained—who is rostered or is preparing for rostered leadership in the Evangelical

Lutheran Church in America, or its equivalent in another church body. This includes, but is not limited to, seminarians, field workers, interns, deacons, deaconesses, associates in ministry, and ordained clergy (pastors). This also includes those persons commissioned or preparing to be commissioned as part of the Metropolitan New York Synod's diaconate program, i.e., deacons and deaconesses associated directly with the Metropolitan NY Synod.

Ministerial Relationship: The relationship between one who carries out the ministry of the church and the one being served by that ministry.

Harassment: Repeated and/or coercive advances toward another person contrary to his or her wishes. It includes behavior directed at another person with the intent of intimidating, humiliating, or embarrassing the other person, or subjecting the person to public discrimination.

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition or circumstance of instruction, employment, or participation in any church activity.

- Submission to, or rejection of, such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for evaluation in making personnel or church-related decisions affecting an individual
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's performance or participation in church activities or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or church environment.

Prohibited sexual harassment includes unsolicited and unwelcome contact that has sexual overtones, particularly:

- Written contact, such as sexually suggestive or obscene letters, notes, text messages, e-mails, or invitations
- Verbal contact, including telephone contact, such as sexually suggestive or obscene comments, threats, slurs, epithets, jokes about gender-specific traits and sexual orientation, and sexual propositions
- Physical contact, such as intentional touching, pinching, brushing against any portion of another's body
- Impeding or blocking movement, assault, coercing sexual contact
- Visual contact, such as leering or staring at another's body, gesturing, displaying sexually suggestive objects or pictures, cartoons, posters, or magazines

Sexual harassment also includes continuing to express sexual interest after being informed directly that the interest is unwelcome and using sexual behavior to control, influence, or affect the career, salary, work, learning, or worship environment of another person. It is impermissible to suggest, threaten, or imply that failure to accept a request for a date or sexual intimacy will affect a person's job prospects, church leadership, or non-threatening participation in the life of the church.

It is forbidden either to imply or actually withhold support for an appointment, promotion, or change of assignment, to suggest that a poor performance report will be given because a person has declined a personal proposition, or to hint that benefits, such as promotions, favorable performance evaluations, favorable assigned duties or shifts, recommendations or reclassifications, will be forthcoming in exchange for sexual favors.

Abuse includes:

- Physical abuse, which is defined as the deliberate physical harm of a person
- Sexual abuse, which is defined as the involvement of a person in any sexual act or situation for the gratification or benefit of another, without their informed consent

- Emotional abuse, which is defined as maltreatment that results in low self-esteem, undue fear or anxiety, or other damage to a person's well-being, caused by such acts as fault finding, humiliating and belittling a person for mistakes or failures, and deliberate inattention to a person's emotional needs
- Neglect: not providing food, clothing, shelter, health care, psychological nurturing, education, supervision, or other basic necessities