

**Pilgrim Lutheran Church**

**DOCUMENT COVER SHEET**

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Safe Child Policy

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## 1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1. It is the mission of Pilgrim Lutheran Church (PLC) to grow in faith, love, and service to all people. In keeping with that purpose, this policy seeks to assure that PLC is continually working toward providing a loving, safe and supportive environment in which children and youth can grow spiritually.
- 1.2. In order to provide as safe and secure an environment as possible for our ministry participants, and to minimize the ministry's and workers' vulnerability to unwarranted accusation, the following procedures have been adopted and will be strictly enforced. If activities at Pilgrim Lutheran Church do not comply with this Safe Child Policy, then those activities will be suspended until they are compliant with this policy.

## 2. APPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS

- 2.1. In keeping with our mission, PLC seeks to provide a Christian environment where minors (children and youth) will be safe from abuse and will feel safe, secure, and valued. Adult caretakers are to be models of Christ's love as they relate to children and youth. Everyone is a child of God and, as such, should treat each other with respect.
- 2.2. The following are appropriate behaviors to use in relating to PLC children and youth when working or volunteering for the church:
  - 2.2.1. Listen carefully to children and youth and show interest in what they have to say.
  - 2.2.2. Pray that our children and youth may grow in faith in God and respect for each other and creation.
  - 2.2.3. Be fair and consistent.
  - 2.2.4. Have a sense of humor, be flexible and giving, enjoy the children and youth, and smile often.
  - 2.2.5. Focus on positive behaviors and praise him/her for that behavior.
  - 2.2.6. Set clear limits that can be managed by adults and understood by children and youth.
  - 2.2.7. Use appropriate, positive steps when discipline is needed and focus on the behavior, not the child or youth.

## 3. INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS

- 3.1. The following behaviors are prohibited for all paid employees and volunteers who participate in programs at PLC.
  - 3.1.1. Verbal abuse, which is any word or behavior that devalues the self-esteem and emotional well-being of a child or youth.
  - 3.1.2. Physical abuse, which is any physical injury inflicted by an adult on a child by other than accidental means.
  - 3.1.3. Corporal punishment, which is the use of physical force to discipline a child.
  - 3.1.4. Sexual abuse, which is a person's employing, using, persuading, inducing, enticing, or coercing any minor to engage in any sexual act as defined by the laws of the State of South Carolina. This includes inappropriate touching or fondling of a sexual nature of a child or youth by any adult.

## 4. VOLUNTEER WORKER SCREENING PROCEDURES

- 4.1. Prior to consideration for a position, any candidate who may be working with children, youth, or the disabled will complete and return a background check authorization form.
- 4.2. Any information indicating that a candidate poses a threat to others or has any prior history of physical or sexual abuse directed against another person will result in the immediate removal of the individual candidate from consideration for a ministry position with this organization.
- 4.3. A criminal background check may be performed through a state law enforcement agency with respect to any candidate seeking to work with children, youth, or the disabled. The fee for this background check will be requested to be donated by the volunteer.

## 5. EMPLOYEE SCREENING PROCEDURES

- 5.1. The same procedure set forth for volunteer workers in section 4 will apply to all potential employees, regardless of the ministry position for which they are being considered. In addition, a criminal background check will be performed through a state law enforcement agency with respect to all candidates for employment.
- 5.2. Any information indicating that a candidate poses a threat to others or has any prior history of physical or sexual abuse directed against another person will result in the immediate removal of the individual candidate from consideration for employment with this organization.

## 6. WAITING PERIOD

- 6.1. No volunteer worker candidate will be considered for any ministry position involving contact with children, youth, or the disabled until the candidate has been regularly involved with our organization for six months or more.

## 7. SUPERVISION

- 7.1. Parents or responsible adult guardians must sign in all children to the nursery which is available during worship services and Sunday school. Sign in includes the child's name, parent or guardian's name any food allergies of the child as a snack is usually provided.
  - 7.1.1. A beeper is available to the parent and will be used if a situation arises where the nursery workers need to contact the parent during the service.

- 7.2. At least one adult, over the age of 21, who has been approved as a volunteer worker through the above screening process, should be present at every function. No adult should ever be alone with only one child/youth at any time. This includes a classroom, vehicle, or other enclosed area, during every child, youth, and disabled ministry program. For large groups of children, the number of adult supervisors will be increased in accordance with SC Department of Social Services (DSS) regulations on student / teacher ratio requirements.
- 7.3. Workers should arrive at least 10 minutes before a scheduled activity and should keep watch over those in their care until all have been picked up by an authorized person. Do not send children out to find their parents, and do not release any child or youth to await transportation.
- 7.4. Leaders should make random visits to all classrooms and insure that there is visual access to the room.

## 8. WORK RESTRICTIONS

- 8.1. For children over the age of five, at least one adult female should take the girls to the restroom, and one adult male should take boys to the restroom. The adult should check to make sure the facility is safe, and then wait outside the restroom until the children come out.
- 8.2. Children five years of age or younger (boys and girls) should be assisted as needed in the restroom by an adult female.
- 8.3. Never touch a person's private areas except when necessary, as in the case of changing a diaper.
- 8.4. Workers should avoid the appearance of impropriety, such as sitting older children on their lap, kissing or embracing others, etc.
- 8.5. Workers are to release children in their care only to parents, guardians, or persons specifically authorized to pick up the person.
- 8.6. Any overnight activity with children or youth must have a ratio of 1:8 adults to youth. The adults must be 21 years of age or older and be present at all times. If the overnight activity is coed, there must be at least one male and one female adults.
- 8.7. In situations where an adult has a legitimate reason to be alone with a child or youth, every effort should be made to meet in a public place, or church office during normal office hours. Meetings should not take place at night or alone in a person's home.

## 9. DISCIPLINE

- 9.1. Workers are never to spank, hit, grab, shake, or otherwise physically discipline anyone.
- 9.2. Disciplinary problems should be reported to the workers' coordinator / supervisor or to a parent or guardian.

## 10. INJURIES OR ILLNESS

- 10.1. Persons who are ill (with a fever or having a communicable disease which can be transmitted by cough or by touch) will not be permitted to participate in any ministry activity.
- 10.2. A suitable substitute (who has been approved as a volunteer worker through the above screening process) must be used to take the place of workers who are ill.
- 10.3. Participants should be returned to their parent or guardian as soon as illness is discovered. If this is not possible, then the person who is ill should be isolated in a manner that will allow supervision to continue until the person can be returned to their parent or guardian.
- 10.4. Reasonable steps should be taken to avoid contact by anyone with body fluids of any kind from the individual who is sick.
- 10.5. Any coordinator / supervisor who becomes aware of an injury to a worker or participant will take steps to ensure proper medical attention is given to the injured person.
- 10.6. Persons who have received an injury which may require medical treatment beyond simple first aid should be given immediate attention. The parent or guardian of the injured person should be immediately notified, along with the worker's coordinator/supervisor. An ambulance should also be called immediately if warranted by the injury.

## 11. RECORD KEEPING

- 11.1. An attendance list should be kept for all of the ministry's functions involving children, youth, and the disabled. The date of the function, along with the names of all participants and coordinators/supervisors should be recorded.
- 11.2. A written incident / notice of injury report should be prepared by workers whenever an injury should occur during a ministry function. The incident report will be forwarded to the worker's coordinator / supervisor promptly upon completion.

## 12. NOTICE OF INJURY, ABUSE, OR MOLESTATION

- 12.1. Workers who become aware of any injury, abuse, or molestation connected with any ministry activity will immediately inform their coordinator / supervisor or ministry leader of such injury, abuse, or molestation.
- 12.2. Any coordinator / supervisor who becomes aware of any injury, abuse, or molestation connected with any ministry activity will immediately inform a ministry leader of such injury, abuse, or molestation and will complete a "Notice of Injury" form. Any ministry leader who becomes aware of possible abuse or molestation of a participant will ensure that the participant's parent or guardian is immediately informed that possible abuse or molestation has occurred. The ministry leader will also see that an attorney is promptly contacted to provide a written opinion as to whether the organization should report the abuse or molestation to law enforcement authorities. The written opinion should be obtained within 24 hours of when the ministry leader first becomes aware of the abuse or molestation, and the attorney's

advice should be followed. If the attorney recommends that an incident be reported, the advice should be acted upon immediately.

- 12.3. Upon notice of abuse or molestation, the ministry's insurance carrier, (general or professional liability insurance) must be promptly notified, as well as the SC Synod of the ELCA when the alleged violator is a rostered person. Further disciplinary measures shall follow ELCA policies for rostered persons.
- 12.4. The Senior Pastor shall report all alleged violations to the SC Synod of the ELCA when the alleged violator is a rostered person. Further disciplinary measures shall follow ELCA policies for rostered persons.

### 13. VIOLATION OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- 13.1. Workers must promptly notify their coordinator / supervisor of any activity undertaken on their own behalf or by others which violates this policy or procedures.
- 13.2. Any coordinator / supervisor or ministry leader who becomes aware of a violation of the policy or procedures will take all necessary steps to ensure future compliance with the policy and procedures by all workers; and will remove workers from their position if such removal is warranted, or if the worker poses a potential threat to others.
- 13.3. Upon receipt of any violation of this policy or procedures, the employee or volunteer's services will be suspended immediately. Following due process, services will be terminated if a worker is found guilty of any inappropriate conduct or relationship with a child or youth.

### 14. INTERNAL INVESTIGATION

- 14.1. Any allegation of abuse or molestation will be taken seriously and will be investigated by ministry leaders.
- 14.2. Any employee of the ministry who is the subject of an investigation will be removed from their position, with pay, pending completion of the investigation (unless the employee has admitted to the abuse or molestation, in which case they will be terminated in accordance with organizational employment practices).
- 14.3. Any volunteer worker who is the subject of the investigation will be removed from their position pending completion of the investigation.
- 14.4. Any person who is not found innocent of alleged abuse or molestation will be removed from work with children, youth or the disabled within the organization. The church will consult with legal counsel for advice if termination of employment is indicated.

### 15. DEALING WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT / MEDIA

- 15.1. All ministry leaders, employees, and volunteers will cooperate fully with any law enforcement or governmental agency that may be investigating allegations of injury, abuse, or molestation in connection with activities of the organization.

- 15.2. Legal counsel will be contacted for advice and guidance as soon as possible after the organization receives notice of possible abuse or molestation in connection with organization activities. Decisions concerning the ministry's response to the allegations will be made in accordance with such advice.
- 15.3. A single organizational leader will be designated as spokesperson following notice of any abuse or molestation in connection with activities of the ministry. This spokesperson will be the only person to convey information concerning the situation, and (to avoid compromising any ongoing investigation) will convey only such information as is necessary under the circumstances.

## 16. REVISION OF POLICY / PROCEDURES

- 16.1. This policy and procedures will be regularly reviewed with legal counsel and can be modified in accordance with the bylaws of the organization. Any such modification should be promptly conveyed to all persons affected by the modification.



1430 North Lake Drive  
Lexington SC 29072  
803-359-9421

David "Rusty" Sullivan, Pastor

## Volunteer Background Check Request Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Social Security Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Race: \_\_\_\_\_ Male / Female

By signing below, I submit that the above information is accurate, and I authorize the Lexington County Sheriff's Department to conduct a criminal background check. I acknowledge that the Sheriff's Department will notify Pilgrim Lutheran Church of the positive/negative outcome. The purpose of this background check is to adhere to the Safe Child Policy of Pilgrim Lutheran Church and to ensure the well-being of our children and youth.

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

*Growing in faith, love, and service to all people.*



### Notice of Injury

<b>Organization</b>	Name: _____ Address: _____
<b>Time and Place of Injury</b>	Date of Injury: _____ Time: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> AM <input type="checkbox"/> PM Where did it occur? _____
<b>Person Injured</b>	Name: _____ Age: _____ Address: _____ Telephone: _____ Name of parents/guardians (if a minor): _____ Employer: _____ Injuries sustained: _____ Where was injured taken? (hospital/doctor): _____ Relationship to organization: <input type="checkbox"/> Member <input type="checkbox"/> Visitor <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer <input type="checkbox"/> Employee <input type="checkbox"/> Student/Camper <input type="checkbox"/> Tenant/Resident <input type="checkbox"/> Other If injury occurred on insured's premises, for what purpose was the injured on the premises? _____ Who was responsible for supervision at the time of injury? _____ If injury occurred elsewhere, what connection did it have with the insured's operations or activities? _____ Does the injured party have personal medical insurance? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Name of medical insurance company: _____
<b>Full Description of Injury</b>	_____ _____ _____ _____
<b>Witnesses</b>	Name: _____ Telephone: _____ Address: _____ Name: _____ Telephone: _____ Address: _____

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of report: \_\_\_\_\_  
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