

Policy to Prevent Abuse of Children and Youth

1. Mission Statement

The Long Lake Lutheran Church seeks to serve the Lord Jesus Christ: by growing in faith through worship, study and prayer; by proclaiming and teaching the Good News of God's saving grace in Christ; and by reaching out to one another and the world in love.

2. Two Adult Rule

There will always be 2 adult (21 years of age or older) supervisors present when caring for minor children under the auspices of Long Lake Lutheran Church.

Long Lake Lutheran Church

Policy for Protecting Children and Youth in Church Activities

Long Lake Lutheran Church
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Long Lake Lutheran Church Policy for Protecting Children and Youth in Church Activities

(adapted from Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse in Your Church, published by Church Law and Tax Report, from Youth Protection Guidelines: Training for Volunteer Leaders and Parents of the Boy Scouts of America and from the Policy and Procedure Manual of Youth and Young Adult Ministry of the Episcopal Diocese of Milwaukee: Bethany Lutheran Church Policy for the Protection of Children).

Introduction:

On August 7 of 1997, the Church Council adopted the following policies and procedures to help keep our church a safe sanctuary for our children and youth. Fortunately, this is not initiated in response to problems within Long Lake Lutheran, but it is prompted by awareness of problems in other churches that have allowed for the abuse of children by paid and unpaid child and youth workers in the church, as well as by other minors. The advice of experts from the Church Law and Tax Report has shaped our response and assures us that what helps protect our children and youth also helps protect our church from unfounded charges and legal liability. In no way will we allow these policies and procedures to interfere with our service of Christ; they will enhance it.

Other agencies in our society have taken similar steps with good results. Among them are scouting agencies and YMCA and YWCA. Many of today's parents are accustomed to these considerations in their volunteer activities with children and youth outside the church. The experience of other churches who have adopted similar policies is positive. Unfortunately, most churches have not been motivated to take this action until after a problem has occurred. We, of Long Lake Lutheran, are motivated because we are entrusted with the spiritual, educational and moral development of our children and youth.

The following policies shall be followed by all professional and lay people in their work for Long Lake Lutheran.

A. Screening of Lay and Professional Workers (“Leaders”)

Lay and professional child and youth activity leaders must go through a standardized screening procedure, overseen by the Long Lake Church Council, who reserves the right to verify information regarding background and history of activities with minors, as well as doing a check on legal history. This includes people working in youth activities, Confirmation, music and educational activities, such as Sunday School. No one will be accepted who has had a criminal sexual or physical abuse violation. Leaders shall be informed of the rules they are required to follow in their activities with minors and shall be required to sign that they will faithfully follow these requirements.

B. History of Sexual Misconduct

Any adult who has been convicted of sexual misconduct or abuse may not participate in any capacity in Long Lake Lutheran programs for children or youth.

C. Dating

Adult leaders shall not date or be romantically involved with a Long Lake Lutheran youth. If there is a current relationship, the adult cannot participate in Long Lake Lutheran events with that minor.

D. Two-deep Leadership

Two adult leaders must be present at each activity with minors. Exceptions are Sunday School classes held in rooms with a window in the door. Such activities are to be monitored by the paid staff. The Nursery shall always have at least two leaders.

E. Individual Consultation

Individual consultation between adults and minors must be done within the two-deep framework. In situations that require personal conferences, mentoring, or counseling, this should be conducted in the church offices with at least one other approved leader present in the area (though not necessarily in the office).

As a rule, the counseling should be as public as possible, without sacrificing effectiveness. Seclusion should be avoided. If conducted in an office, it shall only be in an office with an unobstructed window in the door or wall. Unplanned individual contact on outings (such as for counseling purposes) must be done in view of another adult or minor. Planned individual contact outside the church building must occur only in public places and with the prior consent of the minor and parent or guardian. Examples would be a ride home, or a conversation over a coke between a disciple and mentor.

F. Respect of Privacy

Adult leaders need to respect the privacy of minors in situations such as use of rest rooms, changing into swimming suits, or taking showers on overnight outings, and intrude only insofar as health and safety require. They also need to protect their own privacy in similar situations.

G. Separate accommodations

A minimum of two adults should be present at an overnight activity. If participants are both male and female, the adults should be both male and female. If these conditions can not be met, the event should be canceled. When camping, no minor is permitted to sleep in the tent of an adult other than his or her own parent or guardian. On other outings that require that an adult share the same room as a minor (such as ELCA national gatherings) the minors and parents or guardians shall give prior consent. The adult should avoid occupying the same bed as a minor, again with the exception of a parent or guardian. Males and females should sleep in separate rooms at events and have separate access to bathroom facilities. When separate facilities are not available, times for male and female use should be scheduled and posted for showers.

H. Appropriate Attire

Proper clothing for activities is required, e.g., skinny-dipping is not appropriate as part of church activities.

I. Housing

When private homes are used for overnight events, the program staff member will make final approval of all adults involved as hosts, hostesses and chaperones. At no time may only one child or youth dwell in one home.

J. No Secret Activities

There are no “secret” activities or organizations recognized by Long Lake Lutheran. All aspects of the church program are open to observation by parents and congregational leaders. Confidentiality or secrecy is not a privilege of adult leaders while involved in church activities with youth, but a privilege of the youth.

K. Transportation

Transportation to and from events is the responsibility of the families. During events, drivers should avoid dropping off or picking up minors without being accompanied by another adult. The Long Lake Church Council shall set standards for who is permitted to drive during events. Any deviations should have the prior consent of the parent and be reported to the next person in the line of responsibility.

L. Constructive Discipline

Discipline used in church activities should be constructive and reflect Christian values. Corporal punishment is never permitted.

M. Hazing Prohibited

Physical hazing and initiations are prohibited and may not be included as part of any Long Lake Lutheran activity.

N. No Sexualizing

No sexual behavior is permitted with Long Lake Lutheran minors. Other behaviors which are abusive, but do not involve physical contact, are also prohibited.

Examples are sexual comments, the showing of sexual material and the exposure of sexual parts of the minor’s body and/or the adults body.

O. Gifts

Child and youth leaders shall not give personal gifts or money to individual children or youth without first notifying the parents and direct supervisor. An exception is the Disciples/Mentor program in Confirmation, where gift giving is an encouraged part of the program. Gifts to entire classes are acceptable.

P. Nursery

The nursery (if so established) shall have an identification system that links the

child with the parent in a way that prevents the possibility of someone else taking the child. The nursery is required to have two adult leaders at all times of operation.

Q. Reporting of Violations of These Rules

Persons covered by these rules are required to notify the Long Lake Council of any violations of these rules. Suspicions of child abuse occurring during an event shall be reported to the event coordinator and to the local authorities. The alleged perpetrator should be removed and supervised until the proper authorities arrive on the scene.

R. Mandatory reporting of abuse

According to Wisconsin State Law, Section 48.98, those having cause to suspect that a minor, seen in the course of professional responsibility (including church professionals) has or will be the victim of abuse or neglect, must report the case immediately (not more than 24 hours after cause) by telephone or personal visit to the local county child welfare agency, the office of the county sheriff or the city police department. Concern for the alleged victim, good judgment and open communication are the standards surrounding the reporting of an alleged case of emotional, physical, or sexual abuse. Keep calm, stay with the participant and know that you don't have to deal with the victim or information alone. Any person who reports an incident in good faith is immune from either civil or criminal liability. All reports are treated with confidentiality by the authorities.

'There are four types of child abuse. Physical abuse is the deliberate physical injuring of a child by an adult. Sexual abuse is the involvement of a child in any sexual act or situation for the gratification or benefit of an adult. Emotional abuse is maltreatment which causes low self-esteem in a child or undue fear or anxiety, or other damage to a child's well-being caused by such acts as angry fault finding, humiliating and belittling a child for mistakes or failures, and deliberate inattention to a child's emotional needs. Neglect is not providing necessary food, clothing, shelter, health care, psychological nurturing, education or supervision for a child.

Variance from these guidelines can only be permitted when written consent is given by the Long Lake Church Council for deviation from a specific guideline for identified reasons.

Program staff are responsible for screening and registering people working in their program area, informing them of these guidelines and are responsible for these policies being followed in their area. The Ministry Team is responsible for the Program Staff following these rules. The Ministry Team is responsible to the Church Council for compliance of these rules.

Adult leaders are liable for disciplinary action for not following these guidelines, even if no abuse can be established.

These policies shall go into effect on_____. As of that time, all new adult participants in Long Lake Lutheran activities involving minors shall go through the

application and screening process. All adults who were participants before _____ shall sign a statement of compliance with adopted policy for reducing the risk.

Adult Registration
Long Lake Lutheran Child & Youth Ministries

Thank you for your interest in working with the young people of Long Lake Lutheran. Your involvement with the young people of Long Lake Lutheran is very important and vital to a successful child and youth ministry. This form will help us to get to know you better so that together we will be able to give our young people the best possible experience in their faith journey, now and throughout their entire lives. Adults planning to participate in the Long Lake Lutheran programs for children and youth protection policies adopted by the Long Lake Church Council. We hope and pray that God will lead and guide us in our ministry together. Thank you for your participation.

Name:

Social Security Home Address:

Home Phone:

Work Phone:

Place of Employment:

Health/accident insurance and policy

Emergency contact: Name

Home Address:

Home Phone:

Work Phone:

Please list all present or previous work, either paid or volunteer, involving youth. Identify the institution and type of work.

Do you have any medical related training (CPR, lifeguard, first aid, EMT, etc.)?

Please list any gifts, training, education, interests, hobbies, etc., that relate to your interest in youth ministry. Include any you feel you could share with young people. (e.g., fishing, golf, etc.)

Are you a member of Long Lake Lutheran? If not, what church?

Are you a part of any committees, organizations within Long Lake Lutheran? If so, which ones?

Please describe briefly any church involvement over the past few years.

Do you belong to any organizations, groups, etc., within the community besides Long Lake Lutheran? If so, what are they?

Is there any circumstance in your background which would call into question your being entrusted with the supervision, care or guidance of youth?

Have you every been accused of sexual misconduct or abuse? - If yes, please explain.

Have you ever been convicted of a felony? _____ Do you use controlled substances?

In general, what age of youth do you prefer working with?

Are there any physical handicaps or conditions that would limit your activities in working with youth? If yes, please explain.

Please provide the names, addresses and phone numbers of three references who are not related to you. These references should be able to describe you in a way that is relevant to your involvement in child and youth ministries at Long Lake Lutheran

All the information I have provided in the process of applying to work with the children and/or youth of Long Lake Lutheran is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I voluntarily and knowingly authorize any person named herein as a contact to give to the staff of Long Lake Lutheran, any information they may have regarding my character and fitness for working with children and youth. I voluntarily and knowingly fully release and discharge all such contacts from liability for any evaluation provided of me. I consent to have a police check of my legal history.

I have read and understood the information contained in the Long Lake Lutheran Policy for Protecting Children and Youth in Church Activities and will comply with the procedures and policies laid out in said manual.

Signature:

Date:

Reviewing staff person:

Signature:

Date:

Position: