

# **LWCC CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

## **Introduction**

A primary concern of LWCC is to continue to provide a safe place for all minors and adults who attend any activity or ministry. Across America each year minors are victimized by individuals they know and trust. The church is not immune to the potential for such abuse or neglect of minors. This Child Protection Policy reflects LWCC's commitment to protect minors, employees, childcare contractors and ministry partners (volunteers) from harm. The policy applies to all compensated and non-compensated personnel at LWCC who are placed in positions to work with children and from this point forward are referred to as children's workers. For the purposes of this policy "children" are all children from birth through 4<sup>th</sup> grade (See the Youth Safety Policy for standards established for youth from 5<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade).

LWCC will not tolerate child abuse or neglect. Your cooperation in this policy not only reflects your concern about child's safety in this society, but also your willingness to take steps toward halting child abuse and its detrimental effects. For the safety and protection of our children and children's workers, all people who participate in church-sponsored activities with children will be required to comply with this policy.

## **Prerequisites for Children's Workers**

Anyone applying to work with children at LWCC **must**:

1. Regularly attend Living Word for a minimum of 4 months (exception made for compensated personnel who participate in a more rigorous standard of selection and review)\*
2. Fill out an Application Form including two non-family member references
3. Read and sign our Child Protection Policy indicating understanding and agreement
4. Complete and return criminal background clearances as required under Pennsylvania law
5. Interview with a staff ministry leader
6. A photo name badge or other identifier of approved status will be provided only when all steps 1-5 and the accompanying records are completed.
7. Attend and abide by ministry training.

## **Minimum Leader Rule**

By signing this document you agree to follow this policy about being alone with a child or children (other than your own children) during any church related functions. It is not permissible for one adult and one child to be alone in a room at any time. The number of adults required is based upon a number of factors. The age of the children determines the ratio of adults to children. The age of the children also determines the minimum number of adults in a room even with a minimum number of children, as age is a factor in the child's awareness of normal adult behavior and the child's ability and confidence to communicate with other adults regarding their experiences. Activity may also be a factor, especially for activities such as changing diapers, clothing or assisting a child with bodily bathroom necessities.

Thus we have established that there must be a minimum of two leaders attending to the children ages birth through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade at all times and it is your responsibility to assure that you are not alone with a child or children of this age, but that there are always a minimum of two leaders attending a child or children of this age in our care.

At the 4th grade level or above, it is permissible have only one adult leader with a group of children. However, when there is one leader in a room with children the classroom door must be open to the hallway so that anyone passing by can see into the room.

The preferred classroom setting includes two or more adults, one being of the female gender. We love and encourage our families to serve the Lord together; however, we also desire to have at least one non-family member present when working with children in a classroom setting. This provides the optimal level of accountability and protection for our children and children's workers. If your room is in need of additional supplies (which would require your absence from the classroom even for a moment and put the minimum leader rule in jeopardy), please contact another leader, a security team member, a coordinator, or a director for assistance in order to maintain the minimum leader rule.

## **Restroom Rules**

The goal of the LWCC restroom policy is to protect children from any adult with wrong motives, prevent misbehavior, provide the assistance that small children may need in a safe manner, and protect children's workers from false accusations. Each age group has slightly different procedures to provide protection for all involved, which is detailed in the training video. By signing this policy you agree to be familiar with and follow the current training procedures for the age group you are attending.

## **Physical Contact**

Young children need and desire to be loved and nurtured. We want you to be aware of the context of today's environment and comfortable providing appropriate care within that context. It is very important that as a caregiver you execute appropriate physical contact so that there is never a question with regard to our care.

Children's workers are not to have any outside function or event, on their own, without the expressed consent of the children's ministry director and the parents of the children involved (e.g., a class sleepover or party where the class membership is invited as a group). Also, by signing this document you agree to abide by the kid::life training video in regards to posting photographs or videos of children.

## **Discipline**

Since we are only caring for children when the parent or guardian is present in the building appropriate discipline is limited in nature to controlled verbal corrections indicating the expected behavior and timeouts as presented in the kid::life training video. When these methods do not result in the appropriate behavior of a child, the parent or guardian is to be paged.

Inappropriate discipline or abuse in any form, physical, verbal, mental, or sexual will not be tolerated and by signing this document you agree to never treat a child inappropriately as outline here and in the expanded format of the kid::life training video.

## **Mandatory Reporters of Child Abuse and Neglect (PA: Cons. Stat. Tit. 23, § 6311)**

§ 6311. Persons required to report suspected child abuse.

(a) Mandated reporters.--The following adults shall make a report of suspected child abuse, subject to subsection (b), if the person has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is a victim of child abuse:

- (1) A person licensed or certified to practice in any health-related field under the jurisdiction of the Department of State.
- (2) A medical examiner, coroner or funeral director.
- (3) An employee of a health care facility or provider licensed by the Department of Health, who is engaged in the admission, examination, care or treatment of individuals.

- (4) A school employee.
- (5) An employee of a child-care service who has direct contact with children in the course of employment.
- (6) A clergyman, priest, rabbi, minister, Christian Science practitioner, religious healer, or spiritual leader of any regularly established church or other religious organization.
- (7) An individual paid or unpaid, who, on the basis of the individual's role as an integral part of a regularly scheduled program, activity or service, accepts responsibility for a child.
- (8) An employee of a social services agency who has direct contact with children in the course of employment.
- (9) A peace officer or law enforcement official.
- (10) An emergency medical services provider certified by the Department of Health.
- (11) An employee of a public library who has direct contact with children in the course of employment.
- (12) An individual supervised or managed by a person listed under paragraphs (1), (2), (3), (4), (5), (6), (7), (8), (9), (10) and (11), who has direct contact with children in the course of employment.
- (13) An independent contractor.
- (14) An attorney affiliated with an agency, institution, organization or other entity, including a school or regularly established religious organization that is responsible for the care, supervision, guidance or control of children.
- (15) A foster parent

(b) Basis to report.—

(1) A mandated reporter enumerated in subsection (a) shall make a report of suspected child abuse in accordance with section 6313 (relating to reporting procedure), if the mandated reporter has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is a victim of child abuse under any of the following circumstances:

(i) The mandated reporter comes into contact with the child in the course of employment, occupation and practice of a profession or through a regularly scheduled program, activity or service.

(ii) The mandated reporter is directly responsible for the care, supervision, guidance or training of the child, or is affiliated with an agency, institution, organization, school, regularly established church or religious organization or other entity that is directly responsible for the care, supervision, guidance or training of the child.

(iii) A person makes a specific disclosure to the mandated reporter that an identifiable child is the victim of child abuse.

(iv) An individual 14 years of age or older makes a specific disclosure to the mandated reporter that the individual has committed child abuse.

(2) Nothing in this section shall require a child to come before the mandated reporter in order for the mandated reporter to make a report of suspected child abuse.

(3) Nothing in this section shall require the mandated reporter to identify the person responsible for the child abuse to make a report of suspected child abuse.

(c) Staff members of institutions, etc.--Whenever a person is required to report under subsection (b) in the capacity as a member of the staff of a medical or other public or private institution, school, facility or agency, that person shall report immediately in accordance with section 6313 and shall immediately thereafter notify the person in charge of the institution, school, facility or agency or the designated agent of the person in charge. Upon notification, the person in charge or the designated agent, if any, shall facilitate

the cooperation of the institution, school, facility or agency with the investigation of the report. Any intimidation, retaliation or obstruction in the investigation of the report is subject to the provisions of 18 Pa.C.S. § 4958 (relating to intimidation, retaliation or obstruction in child abuse cases). This chapter does not require more than one report from any such institution, school, facility or agency. (d) (Deleted by amendment). (amended by Acts 32,33,34, 44 and 153 of 2014 effective: 12/31/14) Note: Act 45 of 2014 provides that §§ 6311(a) and (b) shall take effect 12/31/14, notwithstanding Section 4 of Act 32 of 2014, which had provided for a 60-day effective date for Act 32 (June 15, 2014)

By signing this document I agree to report any abuse or suspected abuse immediately to a ministry director who will assist me in following the above outlined reporting procedures.

*Mandated reporters must complete a report that includes their name and contact information.* The release of the identity of the mandated reporter is prohibited unless the secretary finds that the release will not be detrimental to the safety of the reporter. Thus maintaining the strictest confidentiality in this process is extremely important.

### **Children’s Worker Acknowledgment**

I have read, agree with, and will comply to, the LWCC Child Protection Policy:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

#### **For Office Use Only**

Interview conducted on *(date)* \_\_\_\_\_ with the following in attendance:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*(Name)* \_\_\_\_\_ is cleared for ministry and will begin serving in

*(Ministry Area)* \_\_\_\_\_

*(Beginning date)* \_\_\_\_\_

\*Regularly attending is defined as a minimum of 50% of Sundays, the date of first visit in our database established the beginning of the 4 month period.