



Safety Policy

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I. Purpose Statement

The Safety Policy standardizes policy and procedures for Light of Christ (LOC) Lutheran Church's ministries with children, youth, and adults. The procedures are intended to cover activities through LOC Church. The policy and procedures will be managed by LOC Staff approval by the LOC Church Council.

II. Definitions – The Safety Policy and subsequent procedures include the following terms and definitions:

1. **Child** and **Youth** refer to any person under the age of 18, and the two terms may be interchangeable.
2. **Adult** refers to confirmed members/attenders over the age of 18.
3. **Parent**, as used in this document, shall refer to a parent or designated guardian of a child/youth. This can include older siblings, other family members, or close friends. If the parent designates someone else to pick up or drop off a child more than once, it will be noted on the registration or sign in forms.
4. **Staff** refers to anyone who is a paid employee of Light of Christ.
5. **Ministry Leader/Volunteer** is a person who is unpaid and serving in a ministry area at Light of Christ.

III. General Safety Policy

For the purposes of this document, the following shall encompass all programs and activities involving children at Light of Christ.

- A ministry leader/volunteer will receive annual safety procedure training.
- Volunteers working with children and youth will complete an application. The application will give LOC permission to conduct a background check.
- No adult who is currently charged, has been convicted of sexual abuse, or whose name is on the Sex Offenders list shall be allowed to work with children. The pastors or appropriate ministry staff member will check the National Sex Offender Registry (www.nsopr.gov) and report information that is appropriate to the staff.
- Light of Christ follows a "two-person" rule. Two people are to be present at events that includes children in order to protect both the children and the staff or ministry leader/volunteer.

- Behavior Expectations - The Directors of Children and Youth's Ministries will review the behavior expectations with ministry leaders/volunteers annually. Ministry leaders/volunteers will review the LOC behavior policy in September.
- Food Allergies – Registration for child/youth ministry and events will contain a place for parents to note food allergies to ensure staff, ministry leaders, and volunteers are aware and can avoid providing food that may put a child/youth at risk of an allergic reaction.
- Accident/Injury - If an accident or injury occurs during an activity or ministry program, a member of LOC staff will assess the situation and, if necessary, in the case of a child/youth, contact a parent. If there is any doubt, the parent will be contacted. An incident report will be filled out and reviewed by pastors.
- A ministry leader/volunteer leading an activity, small group, or providing childcare as a part of a program/event is to be at least three years older than the oldest child in the program or event.
- The location of all offsite programs and activities will be publicized beforehand.
- Staff and ministry leaders/volunteers are prohibited from sleeping in the same beds or sleeping bag with children or youth, unless the adult is an immediate family member.
- Staff and ministry leaders/volunteers are prohibited from undressing/dressing and bathing/showering in the presence of children or youth.
- Staff and volunteers are prohibited from participating in or allowing others to conduct any hazing activities.
- Volunteers will follow Guidelines for Appropriate Affection found in Appendix A.
- If inappropriate behavior is observed, a staff member will be notified immediately, and an investigation will be launched. Pastors will be informed of the investigation's findings.
- Staff and ministry leaders/volunteers are prohibited from dating or becoming romantically or sexually involved with a child or youth.
- Staff and ministry leaders/volunteers are prohibited from the use, possession, distribution, being under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or the misuse of legal drugs while participating in or assisting with programs or activities specifically for children or youth.
- Staff and ministry leaders/volunteers are prohibited from using physical punishment in any way for behavior management of children and youth. No form of physical discipline is acceptable. This includes spanking, slapping,

pinching, and hitting. Physical restraint may only be used to curtail behavior causing immediate harm. Abusive or profane language is not acceptable, nor is emotional abuse including shaming, rejecting, terrorizing, or isolating a child. "Time-out" is to be limited to one minute per year of the child's age. "Time-out" may not be used for children less than two years of age. (See Appendix B for behavior guidelines).

- Effort will be made for an adult trained in CPR and First Aid to be present at LOC events where children or youth are present.
- Medications will be administered by a staff-designated person at activities and events that include an overnight stay. On LOC overnight events, the designated representative will collect medication and instructions, then will administer the medication at appropriate times. If there is any doubt about the administration of a medication, a parent will be contacted for further instruction before administration. If a child/youth is suffering from a headache or other isolated pain, the parent will be contacted for permission to administer pain relief medication.

IV. Emergency Plan

A. Children and Youth Attendance Recording

Every child/youth will be signed in on the attendance sheet and/or using Church Center's Check-Ins at the beginning of each event/class/small group. The member of staff or ministry leader/volunteer will take attendance at the beginning of the event/class/small group. The attendance sheet will remain in the meeting room. In the case of an emergency, the member of staff or ministry leader/volunteer will take the attendance sheet with them as they move the children/youth to the designated gathering area. Once gathered, attendance will be retaken by using the attendance sheet.

B. Weekend during worship--Fire

Our goals for when the fire alarm goes off are clear and simple:

1. Get out. Get everyone out of the building and away from it, quickly and safely.
2. Stay out. Do not let people re-enter the building until the fire department gives the all-clear sign.

When the fire alarm goes off, the following people need to take the following actions:

Children's Ministry Director:

The Children's Ministry Director or Leader in Charge should make an immediate assessment (based on any hallway obstructions and weather situation) as to which of the doorways to direct leaders and children out.

The Director or Leader in Charge will then move to each breakout room in Children's Ministry hallway and tell ministry leaders/volunteers one of three things:

1. Go out the door at the end of the Children's Ministry hallway and meet with your group by the Preschool parking lot.
2. Go out the door to the Preschool hallway and gather your class in the Preschool parking lot.
3. The staff and ministry leaders/volunteers will then initiate whatever actions may help to keep the children calm and engaged (e.g. keep the lesson going outside, sing a song, etc.)
4. The person in charge of Toddler Care will immediately gather his/her children and move them to the far edge of the enclosed playground area unless the fire or smoke is close to that end of the building. If that is the case, they will leave the enclosed playground area and move to the Preschool parking lot.
5. Attendance will be retaken using attendance sign in sheets once regathered.

Pastor/Worship Director:

The pastor will announce to the congregation: "Please leave by the main doors or emergency side doors and gather in the Parking lot. Parents do not go through the building to get your children—they are being cared for. You may meet up with your children outside the building."

The pastor then goes to down the hallways to make sure that children are exiting properly. Each room is to be checked to make sure that everyone has exited the building.

If neither pastor is present, the Worship Director on premises will take over this role by communicating to the congregation and completing the building check.

Ushers:

1. One usher should move to the Welcome Center and not allow parents to go down the Children's hallway. They should instruct parents to go outside and meet up with their children in the Preschool parking lot.
2. One Usher can go and open exit doors that the Pastor/Worship Director directed congregants to exit through. After opening the doors, this usher should go outside and direct congregation members away from the fire lane and into the parking lot.
3. Other Ushers should assist any handicapped people in their exiting.
4. After all people from Worship Center have left, ushers should also exit, but remain by the doors and not allow anyone except senior staff to reenter the building until the fire officer gives the "all clear" sign.
5. Children will be taken to one of two places (see above) and if parents want to find their children, they can move around the exterior of the building to those places.

C. Weekend during worship--Severe Weather

In a situation of dangerous weather, our response should be to alert people to move to areas with interior walls and with the least number of windows. When a tornado siren sounds, the following actions will be taken:

Pastor:

The pastor will announce to the congregation to use interior rooms. The Conference Rooms, Red Room, Preschool Room 4, Kitchen, Mailroom, Worship Center, as well as the bathrooms and hallways are all usable spaces in which to seek cover.

Ushers:

Two ushers will direct people to the hallways and direct people into the appropriate rooms.

Children's Ministry Director:

The Children's Ministry Director or Leader in Charge will direct ministry leaders/volunteers to move children into the Red Room and Preschool Room 4 as these are safe spaces away from windows and interior to the building. Attendance will be retaken using attendance sign in sheets once regathered.

Nursery/Preschool Leaders:

The Nursery/Preschool leaders will take children into Preschool Room 4. This is the most secure place available. Attendance will be retaken using attendance sign in sheets once regathered.

Annex:

Remain in the Annex and will sit against the interior walls or move into Conference Room 2.

D. Midweek Events--Fire

When the fire alarm goes off, take the following actions:

1. Get everyone out of the building and away from it, quickly and safely.
2. Stay out. Do not reenter the building until the fire department gives the "all clear" sign.

All On-Site Staff:

Make an immediate assessment (based on hallway obstructions and weather situation) and inform ministry leaders/volunteers as to which of the doorways to exit, taking attendance information with them.

1. Gather at least 50 yards away from the building and sit with your small group in one area. Ensure that you are not blocking the fire lane.
2. Take attendance to be sure all are accounted for and report this to senior staff member.

Senior staff member on site:

Make an immediate assessment (based on hallway obstructions and weather situation) and inform adult ministry leaders/volunteers as to which of the doorways to exit.

Announce to parents with children in childcare - "Parents do not go through the building to get your children—they are being cared for. You may meet up with your children outside the building."

The senior staff member is to move to the childcare area to make sure that children are exiting properly. Then each room in the Children's Ministry hallway is to be checked to make sure that everyone has exited, moving to the Worship Center and Youth/Adult hallway to assess rooms there.

The senior staff person will then connect with each small group leader to assure each person is accounted for. Only the senior staff person will be allowed in the building until an "all clear" sign is given by the fire department.

E. **Midweek events--Severe Weather**

In a situation of dangerous weather, our response should be to alert people to move to areas with interior walls and with the least number of windows. When a tornado siren sounds, the following actions will be taken:

Children's Ministry Hallway - Children/youth/adults in the Children's Ministry hallway will move into the Red Room, Preschool Room 4, family bathrooms, or hallway. They should sit against the internal walls. Children and youth attendance will be retaken using attendance sign-in sheets once regathered.

Youth/Adult Hallway - Children/youth/adults in the Youth/Adult Hallway will move into one of the two Conference Rooms, main bathrooms, Mailroom, Annex, or hallway. They should sit against the internal walls. Children and youth attendance will be retaken using attendance sign-in sheets once regathered.

Worship Center – Remain in the Worship Center and move against the walls or onto the platform. Children's ministry choir or musical leaders will use attendance sign in to recheck attendance once regathered.

Remain in those places until the senior staff member gives all clear.

F. **Medical Emergency**

Upon calling 911, one adult will be sent to the parking lot to direct the emergency personnel. Another ministry leader/volunteer will stay with person needing medical attention. Children/youth will be moved to an adjacent space and attendance retaken once gathered.

G. Missing Child/Youth

If a child/youth is missing during a ministry event while at the church, the following procedures will be followed:

1. On-site staff will be informed that a child/youth cannot be located.
2. On-site staff will begin a room-to-room search for missing child/youth.
3. All on-site ministry leaders/volunteer will be asked if they have seen the missing child/youth, and they will be instructed to stay with their group in that room or meeting space until given an "all clear" by the senior staff member.
4. Two adults will be dispatched by senior staff member to search the parking lot and to make sure any cars that leave the premises are noted.
5. If a child/youth has not been located after ten minutes, police will be notified by senior staff member.

H. Unidentified Persons (intruders)

A member of staff or ministry event leader/volunteer will approach an unidentified person for questioning.

If the situation warrants, 911 will be called and the police will be notified.

I. Active Shooter

1. **Run:** If you become aware that there is a gunman in any part the building, get away from the gunman and call 911. If it is possible, evacuate the building with your hands up. Once outside, the situation should be communicated to all leaders and children should stay in their groups. Groups can be taken to nearby homes the border the church property. Do not reenter the building until the police have given the "all clear" to the senior staff member on site.
2. **Hide:** If you are not able to get out of the building, hide inside the building. Go into a room with a lock on the door. Lock the door of the room you are

in and barricade the door. Turn off the lights in the room and silence your cell phone. Stay hidden in that room until the police have given the "all clear."

3. **Fight:** If you encounter the gunman, fight back. Try to distract or overpower the gunman until help arrives.

J. **Alert from Police Department**

If Light of Christ receives an alert from the police department about suspicious or dangerous behavior in the area of Light of Christ, the church will immediately lock down and be ready for further direction.

V. **Children and Youth Safety Procedures**

A. **FaithLand**

FaithLand is the primary weekend Christian education program for children ages 2 years through 5th grade.

- In Toddler Care, LOC Staff and ministry leaders will provide a safe, enriching environment where they hear short Bible stories and play under the watchful care of loving volunteers. At Light of Christ, the ratio of children to staff/volunteer for Toddler Care is 1:8 with a maximum group size of 16.
 - Elementary Children will discover that God made them, God loves them, and Jesus wants to be their friend forever as they explore bible stories, create crafts, and have fun playing with friends! At Light of Christ, the ratio of children to staff/volunteer for Kindergartners through Fifth Grade is 1:20 with a maximum group size of 30.
1. FaithLand opens 15 minutes prior to the start of worship.
 2. Children will be checked-in at the kiosks in the Welcome Center. A nametag will print for each child checked in and they need to wear it. Each family will be assigned a random ID # that will print on all nametags. An ID pickup tag will print for each family.
 3. All parents/caregivers will sign their child in on the attendance sheet by the door at the beginning of each event/class.
 - a. Please note that a parent/caregiver will be notified via text for the following reasons:

1. A child has cried for longer than 10 minutes and does not appear to be adjusting to the Toddler Care.
2. A child has a dirty diaper or has become ill while in the Toddler Care.
- b.** Children should be picked up promptly at the end of the service.
- c.** In order to provide a safe and healthy environment for the children, parents should keep their children home if they have observed any of the following for the previous twenty-four hours:
 - Fever/Vomiting
 - Diarrhea
 - Discharge in/around the eyes
 - Questionable rash
 - Green or yellow runny nose
 - Excessive coughing
- d.** Ministry leaders/volunteers will follow the same guidelines for the health of children in their care.
- e.** Further policies and procedures for child safety while their parents/guardians are participating in weekend worship are to be followed as defined in Section III – General Policy and Section IV - Emergency Plan.
- 4.** All FaithLand rooms will be visible through a window in the door, or the class will be held in an open, public area.
- 5. FaithLand classrooms** will have a “two person” rule, which will include the follow provisions:
 - a.** All FaithLand leaders will be given a name badge that will be worn prominently so that they may be easily identified by parents and staff.
 - b.** There will be two people scheduled in each classroom. A student younger than 15 can help in FaithLand if they have been through a baby-sitting training course or have a recommendation from the Youth Director or a Pastor.
 - c.** The FaithLand leadership team (or member of LOC staff) may “float” from classroom to classroom to monitor activity.

B. Childcare at Adult Ministry or Congregational Events

If childcare is desired for adult ministry events, provisions will be made to ensure all children are cared for in a safe, inviting environment.

1. The DCFS ratio of children to staff/ministry leaders/volunteers is as follows:

Age of Children	Ratio	Maximum Group Size
Infants (6 weeks through 14 months)	1:4	12
Toddlers (15 through 23 months)	1:5	15
Two years	1:8	16
Three years	1:10	20
Four years	1:10	20
Five years (preschool)	1:10	20
School-age: (Kindergartners present)	1:10	30

2. Whenever children of different ages are combined, the staff/child ratio and maximum group size must be based on the age of the youngest child in the group. If the person providing childcare is a youth, then these ratios should be reduced.
3. There will be a three-year age difference between the person watching the children and the children with the minimum age of 12.
4. Children require supervision until they reach the age of 12.
5. Further policies and procedures for child safety while their parents/guardians are participating in an Adult Ministry or Congregational Event are to be followed as defined in Section III - General Policy, Section IV - Emergency Plan – Section IV, and Section V.A. h Safety Procedures section V.A.-Nursery Care Center.

C. Youth Ministry

1. The ratio of adults to youth will be the following:
 - In-house events: 1 to 8 for Junior High; 1 to 10 for Senior High.
 - Off-site events: 1 to 6 for Junior High; 1 to 8 for Senior High.
- a. Ministry leaders/volunteers are to avoid being alone with a child/youth where other adults cannot easily observe them. If a youth needs a ride home verbal parental permission to the ministry leader/volunteer or staff member is needed.
- b. When mixed genders are participating in an overnight church activity, a male and female volunteer is needed. Each gender will have sleeping areas.

- c. Further policies and procedures for youth safety are to be followed as defined in Section III – General Policy and Section IV - Emergency Plan.

D. Summer Programs

1. Vacation Bible School

- a. Parents are required to check-in and check-out their children daily according to the process determined for the event.
- b. The children are divided into multi-age groups. During any small group breakout sessions, the groups shall meet in rooms that have windows or are in an open public space.
- c. All volunteers are required to attend training before camp begins. If a volunteer cannot attend training, he or she will meet with the Camp Director at an appropriate time.
- d. Volunteers will be trained in emergency response and will know the procedure for a missing child. Volunteers will know who to contact if the Camp Director cannot be located.
- e. Further policies and procedures for child safety are to be followed as defined in Section III – General Policy, Section IV - Emergency Plan, and Section V.C.

2. Theatre Camp

- a. Parents are required to check-in and check-out their children daily according to the process determined for the event.
- b. The children are divided into groups according to their roles. During any small group breakout sessions, the groups shall meet in rooms that have windows or are in an open public space.
- c. All volunteers are required to attend training before camp begins. If a volunteer cannot attend training, he or she will meet with the Camp Director at an appropriate time.
- d. Volunteers will be trained in emergency response and will know the procedure for a missing child. Volunteers will know who to contact if the Camp Director cannot be located.
- e. Further policies and procedures for youth safety are to be followed as defined in Section III – General Policy, Section IV - Emergency Plan, and Section V.C.

E. Children's Choir and Musical Ministries

1. Parents will sign their child in on the attendance sheet at the beginning of each session.
2. Policies and procedures for child safety are to be followed as defined in Section III – General Policy, and Section IV - Emergency Plan.

F. LOC Preschool

1. Children are signed in and out by parent/guardian each school day.
2. A driver's license must be shown if someone other than the parent/guardian is picking up a child.
3. Exterior doors in the preschool hallway and each individual classroom door will remain locked during school hours.
4. The preschool follows the rules and regulations provided by DCFS. Including all Preschool teachers are background checked and receive ongoing safety training.
5. Policies and procedures for child safety are to be followed as defined in Section III – General Policy, and Section IV – Emergency Plan.

G. Transportation of Children and Youth

1. Driving laws (especially those regarding speed limits and use of safety belts) are to be observed at all times.
2. Youth drivers may not take children or youth passengers off church property without the written permission of the parents of the passengers.
3. Leaders of ministry events will not request that student drivers will transport other students to LOC sponsored ministry events.
4. Adult drivers will fill out the Application to be a Church Activity Driver form (Appendix C).

Appendix A

Guidelines for Appropriate Affection

Light of Christ Lutheran Church is committed to creating and promoting a positive, nurturing environment for our children's and youth ministries that protect our children and youth from abuse and our Church Personnel from misunderstandings. When creating safe boundaries for children and youth, it is important to establish what types of affection are appropriate and inappropriate, otherwise that decision is left to each individual. Stating which behaviors are appropriate and inappropriate allows Church Personnel to comfortably show positive affection in ministry, and yet identify individuals who are not maintaining safe boundaries with children or youth. These Guidelines are based, in large part, on avoiding behaviors known to be used by child molesters to groom children or youth and their parents for future abuse. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by all Church Personnel working around or with children or youth.

1. Love and affection are part of church life and ministry. There are many ways to demonstrate affection while maintaining positive and safe boundaries with children and youth.

Some **positive** and **appropriate** forms of affection are listed below:

- Brief hugs.
- Pats on the shoulder or back.
- Handshakes.
- "High-fives" and hand slapping.
- Verbal praise.
- Touching hands, shoulders and arms of children or youth.
- Arms around shoulders.
- Holding hands while walking with small children.
- Sitting beside small children.
- Kneeling or bending down for hugs with small children.

- Holding hands during prayer.
- Pats on the head when culturally appropriate. (For example, this gesture should typically be avoided in some Asian communities).

2. The following forms of affection are considered **inappropriate** with children and youth in ministry setting because they can be perceived as crossing boundaries or can be, in and of themselves, sexual abuse.

- Inappropriate or lengthy embraces.
- Kisses on the mouth.
- Holding a non-related child over eight years of age on the lap.
- Touching bottoms, chests or genital areas other than for appropriate diapering or toileting of infants and toddlers.
- Showing affection in isolated areas such as bedrooms, closets, staff only areas or other private rooms.
- Occupying a bed with a child or youth
- Any type of massage given by a child or youth to an adult.
- Any type of massage given by an adult to a child or youth.
- Any form of unwanted affection.
- Comments or compliments (spoken, written, or electronic) that relate to physique or body development.
 - Examples would be, "You sure are developing," or "You look really hot in those jeans."
- Snapping bras, giving wedgies, or similar touch of underwear whether or not it is covered by other clothing.
- These interactions should be avoided because of the danger of how they can be perceived, by children, youth, or parents:
 - Wrestling with children or youth.
 - Tickling children or youth.

Appendix B

Behavior Expectations for Children/Youth

1. Respect God, our place of worship, and each other.
2. Have a positive, kind and loving attitude.
3. Listen to each other.
4. Be honest.
5. Be on time.
6. Use our Bibles and prayer for guidance.
7. Take care of our supplies, games and space.
8. Play safely.

Following those expectations leads to...

- 1) Learning about God.
- 2) Knowing that God is proud of your efforts.
- 3) Feeling good about yourself and your self-control.

Days when we need a little Grace...

- 1) Receive a verbal warning.
- 2) A member of staff may sit down with the child's parents to discuss the inappropriate behavior.

Appendix C

**LIGHT OF CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH
APPLICATION TO BE A CHURCH ACTIVITY DRIVER**

Thank you for your willingness to consider driving on a church sponsored event. This application and procedure the church has developed were created to help provide a safe and secure environment for the children and youth who participate in our educational programs. Information requested on this application will be confidential and securely stored.

FULL NAME _____ DATE OF BIRTH ____/____/____ TODAY'S DATE _____
MM/DD/YYYY

ADDRESS _____
(STREET) (CITY) (ZIP)

CELL PHONE _____

Describe any medical conditions that could affect your ability to safely transport participants.

List any medications that you currently take that could potentially impair driving ability.

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

Yes No Have you ever been convicted of a crime? If so, please describe.

Yes No Do you have any restrictions on your driver's license? If so, please list.

Yes No Have you been involved in a motor vehicle accident in the last 5 years? If so, please describe.

Yes No Have you been convicted of a DUI, or had your license revoked or suspended in the past 5 years? If so, please describe.

Yes No Have you been convicted of a moving violation in the last 5 years? If so, please describe.

Yes No Does our church have any reason to be concerned about your ability to be a responsible and careful driver?

All of the above statements are correct to the best of my knowledge. I authorize the church to verify this information with Department of Motor Vehicles. By signing, I also agree to abide by all safety procedures established by the church and will abide by all state driving laws.

Signature _____

Printed Name ____

Date_____

**Please attach a photocopy of your Driver's License and a photocopy of your automobile insurance card.
A copier is available in the church office for you to make copies.**

Church Staff use

VALID DRIVERS LICENSE Date: _____

Reviewed by: _____

VALID INSURANCE CARD Date: _____

Reviewed by: _____