

<b>Lockport Alliance Church Policy Manual</b>	<b>Personnel – 2020 March 2007</b>
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## **CHURCH MINISTRY VOLUNTEERS POLICY** **WITH FOCUS ON CHILD SAFETY**

The mobilization of volunteers for ministry is essential to the healthy growth of our church. Scripture teaches that every believer has been equipped by God for ministry in or through the church. When everyone in the church is doing his or her part, the church normally grows spiritually and numerically (Ephesians 4:16). Therefore, a healthy church utilizes a large number of volunteers in a variety of ways both within and outside the church.

Encouraging believers to get involved in church ministries is a spiritual service. Church leaders have been given the assignment “to stimulate one another to love and good deeds.”

This policy is designed to assist church leaders in recruiting a large core of volunteers and to provide, to the greatest extent possible, for the safety of children, youth, and developmentally disabled persons who are served by these volunteers.

The consistent application of this policy and accompanying procedures is important in our church. Every church is susceptible to abusive behavior. While some flexibility may be allowed, it is important that our church be professional in its oversight of volunteers.

The implementation of this policy is possible only as lay volunteers and church leaders have a thorough understanding of the rationale for such a policy. Therefore, this policy should be distributed to members of the educational ministry team to prospective volunteers.

## ***I. Recruitment Procedure***

Volunteers will be recruited by the pastoral staff or volunteers helping to administer a particular program.

All names of potential volunteers will be brought to the Christian Education Committee. CECOM will then inform them of the requirements for teaching appointments. Once the requirements are fulfilled, their paperwork will be referred to the Senior Pastor and Elders before these individuals are given ministry assignments. If the Senior Pastor, Elders, or CECOM members know of reason why a person would not be suitable for a volunteer position, final approval or rejection of the appointment will be made only after further investigation.

In case where children, youth, or developmentally disabled persons are to be supervised by volunteers, a formal application, Volunteer Personnel Form (see Appendix A), will be filed by the volunteer before final approval is considered.

Three personal references are requested on the Volunteer Personnel Form. These references should be phoned and asked to affirm the appointment of the volunteer. A record should be kept of the person making the phone calls, the date of the calls, and a summary of the reference's comments.

While the form asks the prospective volunteer for his/her permission for the church to conduct a criminal check, legal counsel has advised The Christian and Missionary Alliance that such a check probably is not necessary except for paid pastoral staff, day care center workers, and Christian school workers. If a criminal records check is provided by the state government free of charge, the church should take advantage of this service.

## ***II. Personal Safety Procedures***

Church leaders must be concerned for the safety of the children and families they serve. At the same time, they should be concerned about the safety and reputation of the adults and teens who volunteer to make this ministry possible. There will be some, however, who may come in with impure motives. The Christian and Missionary Alliance therefore has developed these procedures to make it difficult, if not impossible, for abuse to occur.

### ***a. Classroom Ratios***

Every church desires to provide a safe, loving classroom where the child feels comfortable and where learning can take place. Therefore, the following ratios shall be standard in our church:

- i. There should be a minimum of two adults in any room with children, except in the event of an emergency situation. This standard not only helps provide for a safe and loving classroom, it also gives volunteers more encouragement, creativity, and flexibility. In addition, this arrangement allows for a gift-mix in each classroom that makes for a richer teaching environment. The arrangement of two adults in each room usually will require that children in two or three grade levels be combined in departmental teaching units.
- ii. When it is necessary that only one adult teacher be in a closed room with children, the door of that room will remain slightly open or be a window door that will allow the LIFE Hour Superintendent or secretary to look in occasionally without interrupting the teaching process.

**b. Record Keeping**

- i. The names and addresses of parents and children shall be carefully maintained.
- ii. An accurate sign-in procedure will be maintained for each preschool child, recording the child's name, parent's name, and parent location during the service (see Appendix C). A line on this sheet should be provided for parents to list special needs of their children. Workers must not release a child to a teenager or adult without complete certainty that the parent or parent's representative is receiving the child.
- iii. The names of each nursery volunteer shall be recorded each hour on the sign-in list (Appendix D). No two volunteers should be related to each other.

**c. Diaper Changing**

Diaper changing should always take place in such a way that another nursery worker can easily see the child that is being changed as well as the other children and workers in the room.

**d. Classroom Ratios**

This is an area in which church leaders need to be very sensitive to the possibility of problems. One adult will not be allowed into a rest room alone with a child or children. A second adult should accompany them or be within visual contact. One adult may take a child or children to the rest room only if he/she stands in the open doorway.

**e. Sick Children**

A child who is not feeling well should not be received into the classroom, exposing other children and workers to illness. Some signs of illness are unusual fatigue or irritability, coughing, sneezing, runny nose and eyes, fever, vomiting, diarrhea, and inflamed mouth and throat.

**f. Worker Behavior**

- i. Workers should always conduct themselves in a godly manner, being an example of obedience, respect, and honesty to young believers.
- ii. All workers must fill out a Volunteer Personnel Form, and it must be kept on file.
- iii. Workers will not be involved in any of the following activities with older children (ages 6-18): extended hugging, kissing, sitting a child on the lap, inappropriate touching, or being alone with a child.

**g. Emergencies**

- i. Workers are not to give or apply any medication. If a child needs medication, the parent must give it. No medication will be left in the classroom or with a worker or child.
- ii. First Aid boxes will be kept on hand and all workers are to review the location and contents quarterly.
- iii. Procedures will be reviewed quarterly for fire emergencies.

**h. Classroom Ratios**

Teachers are encouraged to have special class activities in their homes, plan social activities and involve pupils in field trips and service projects. The following precautions need to be taken with these activities.

- i. Always have another unrelated adult present at these activities.
- ii. Secure a signed parental release statement (see Appendix E) from each parent, if the church is responsible for transporting children to these activities.
- iii. Invite one parent to come as an activities assistant. Parents helping with an activity do not need to fill out a Volunteer Personnel Form.

**III. Child Abuse Protection and Procedures**

**a. Scripture**

- i. *“Avoid every kind of evil.” – I Thessalonians 5:22*
- ii. *“But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality ... because these are improper for God’s holy people.” - Ephesians 5:3*
- iii. *“But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.” - Matthew 18:6*
- iv. *“If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the Church; and if he refuses to listen even to the Church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector. - Matthew 18:15-17*

**b. Definitions**

The state of Washington uses the following definition of child abuse:

“Child abuse or neglect shall mean the injury, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, or negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child by a person who is legally responsible for the child’s health, welfare, and safety. An abused child is a child how has been subjected to child abuse or neglect as defined herein: Provided, that this subsection shall not be construed to authorize interference with child-raising practices, including reasonable parental discipline, which are not provided to be injurious to the child’s health, welfare, and safety: And provided further, that nothing in this section shall be used to prohibit the reasonable use of corporal punishment as a means of discipline.

The technical definition of child abuse may vary from state to state. However, this partial definition is supplied because it speaks of the issue of spanking that could be interpreted by some as abusive behavior.

- i. ***Child Abuse*** – a non-accidental physical or mental injury or mistreatment caused by the acts or omissions of the child’s parents or caretakers.
- ii. ***Physical Abuse*** – non-accidental physical injury to a child.
- iii. ***Physical Neglect*** – failure on the part of the child’s parents or caretakers to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, or supervision.
- iv. ***Emotional Maltreatment*** – belittling and rejecting the child – not providing a positive emotional atmosphere.
- v. ***Sexual Abuse*** – sexual exploitation of a child done for the sexual gratification of the offender or another person.

**c. Classroom Ratios**

- i. ***State Policy.*** Child abuse policies vary from state to state. Our church can contact our Child Protective Services to secure a copy and interpretation of state policies. Most states require workers in schools, social programs, and medical institutions to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect, and circumstances that might reasonably result in abuse or neglect. Any person who willfully does not report child abuse incidents can be prosecuted. While the law is sometimes unclear in requiring clergy to report child abuse, it is always in the best interest of the child to report such cases to the local public child protection agency. In most states, persons reporting child abuse in good faith, except for the perpetrator and co-conspirator, are immune from any liability, civil or criminal. Church leaders should become familiar with state reporting laws. Each church should contact its public protection agency to secure the name of the person it is to contact in reporting child abuse or neglect. The state’s child abuse and reporting policies should be on file in our church. The principles and policies contained in this document are representative of most state policies, but not all.

- ii. ***Church Policies.*** Church personnel are required to report to designated church personnel any suspected case of child abuse. It is not a breach of confidence between church personnel and the child involved. Church leaders have a double accountability before God to be aware of the responsibility the church has in defending and protecting one of God's little ones. Church leaders also desire to protect the parents as much as legally possible from undue interference by outside authorities into their family. Therefore, church leaders want to follow the principles of submitting to governing authorities (Romans 13:1), while at the same time helping parents to exercise discipline that is consistent with Scripture.
- iii. ***Who Must Report.*** State law will often say, "when any practitioner, professional school personnel, registered or license nurse, social worker, psychologist or employee of social services has reasonable cause to believe that a child or developmentally disabled person has suffered abuse or neglect, he/she shall report such incident, or cause a report to be made to the proper law enforcement agency at the first opportunity, but in no case longer than 48 hours after there is a reasonable cause to believe that the child or adult has suffered abuse or neglect." For reasons of liability and integrity, all church personnel, paid and volunteer, shall be required to report to a pastoral employee or church elder within 48 hours any instance of child abuse they have reasonable cause to believe occurred.
- iv. ***How to Report.*** Immediately call a pastoral employee or church elder. Procedures to maintain strict confidentiality will be followed. This means that only those who are directly involved will be informed.
- v. ***Report Follow-Up.*** In cases where the child is not in immediate danger, the parents will be interviewed by a team of three members including an elder, pastor, and person with reasonable cause. When the team has evaluated this information and determined that there is reasonable cause to suspect child abuse then Child Protective Services or the police department will be contacted and the parents informed of such action.

In cases where a person has reasonable cause to believe a church staff person or church volunteer is involved in behavior that could be child abusive, a team of three members to include an elder, pastor, and person with reasonable cause shall interview the person suspected of child abuse. Immediate suspension shall result when a staff member is suspected of child abuse and reasonable evidence exists as to his/her alleged involvement, until a complete investigation and decision has been made. The District Superintendent shall be informed immediately of all cases when a pastoral staff person is suspected of child abuse.

A written report with conclusions, actions taken, and recommendations for follow-up action (if appropriate) shall always be made by the pastor or District Superintendent following a child abuse interview. These reports shall be kept in a personnel file.

- vi. ***Church Discipline.*** If it is found that child abuse by a worker, paid or volunteer, of the church has taken place, the church will practice discipline according to Matthew 18:15-17. When a member of the pastoral staff has been involved in child abuse, the District Office will follow the procedures under “Uniform Policy on Discipline and Appeal” as found in the Manual of The Christian and Missionary Alliance. The church should ask the Child Protection Agency if it can assist in helping the hurt family. The church should maintain frequent communication and supportive relationships with those suspected or guilty of child abuse, as long as these persons exhibit a willingness to listen, change, and look to Christ for help. This does not exclude the need for hurting individuals to receive professional counseling.