

# FAITH EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SAFE CHURCH POLICY



HR Committee

## Contents

General Purpose Statement.....	2
Definitions.....	2
Selection of Workers.....	2
Written Application.....	2
Personal Interview .....	2
Responding to Allegations of Child Abuse .....	3
Mandated Reporters.....	4
Child Line Reporting: 800.932.0313.....	4
Open Door Policy .....	5
Supervision Requirements .....	5
Teenage Workers .....	5
Medications Policy .....	6
Discipline Policy.....	6
Training .....	6
Forms: .....	7
Attachment A: Application for Volunteer Position .....	7
Attachment B: Employee/Volunteer Screening.....	7
Attachment C: Record for Employee File.....	7
Attachment D: Record for Volunteer File .....	7

## General Purpose Statement

Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church of Whitehall, PA (further referred to as FELC) seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for the children and adults who participate in our programs and activities. By implementing the below practices, our goal is to protect all members and guests of all ages from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also protecting our staff and volunteers (workers) from false accusations.

## Definitions

For purposes of this policy, the terms “child” or “children” include all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years as well as a Vulnerable Adult, defined as any person 18 years and older who because of mental or physical dysfunction is unable to manage his/her own resources, carry out the activity of daily living or protect himself/herself from abuse or neglect without assistance from others. The term “worker” includes both paid and volunteer persons who work with children and vulnerable adults.

## Selection of Workers

All persons who desire to work with the children participating in our programs and activities will be screened. This screening includes the following:

### Written Application

All persons seeking to work with children must complete and sign a written application in a form to be supplied by us. The application will request basic information from the applicant and will inquire into previous experience with children, previous FELC affiliation, reference and employment information, as well as disclosure of any previous criminal convictions. The application form will be maintained in confidence on file at the FELC.

### Personal Interview

Upon completion of the application, a face-to-face interview may be scheduled with the applicant to discuss his/her suitability for the position.

#### a) **Criminal Background Check**

A national criminal background check and Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance are required for all employees (regardless of position) and for the following categories of volunteers:

- Those who will be involved in our school/preschool/daycare center;
- Those who will be involved in overnight activities with children;
- Those counseling children;
- Those involved in one-on-one mentorship of children; and

- Those having any occasional one-on-one contact with children (such as, FELC activities requiring off premise drivers).

Before a background check is run, prospective workers will be asked to sign an authorization form allowing the FELC to run the check. If an individual declines to sign the authorization form, s/he will be unable to work with children.

What constitutes a disqualifying offense that will keep an individual from working with children will be determined by the Child Protective Services Law (CPSL), the Pastor or a designee on a case-by-case basis in light of all the surrounding circumstances. Generally, convictions for an offense involving children and/or for offenses involving violence, dishonesty, illegal substances, indecency and any conduct contrary to our mission will preclude someone from being permitted to work with children. Failure to disclose a criminal conviction on the application form will also be a disqualifying event.

The background check authorization form and results will be maintained in confidence on file at FELC.

## Responding to Allegations of Child Abuse

For purposes of this policy, “child abuse” is any action (or lack of action) that endangers or harms a child’s physical, psychological or emotional health and development. Child abuse occurs in different ways and includes the following:

- **Physical abuse** – any physical injury to a child that is not accidental, such as but not limited to beating, shaking, burns, and biting.
- **Serious Physical Neglect** - Repeated, prolonged or unconscionable egregious failure to supervise appropriately, failure to provide adequate essentials of life; any of which endangers life or health, threatens well-being, causes bodily injury or impairs health development or functioning.
- **Creating a Reasonable Likelihood of Bodily Injury or Sexual Abuse or Exploitation** – Putting a child in harm’s way where he/she could easily suffer a bodily injury or sexual abuse, but by chance this was averted.
- **Emotional abuse** – emotional injury when the child is not nurtured or provided with love and security, such as an environment of constant criticism, belittling and persistent teasing.
- **Sexual abuse** – any sexual activity between a child and an adult or between a child and another child at least four years older than the victim, including activities such as fondling, exhibitionism, intercourse, incest, and pornography.
- **Neglect** – depriving a child of his or her essential needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter, and medical care.

## Mandated Reporters

Mandated Reporters are any adult, paid or unpaid, who on a basis of the individual's role is an integral part of a regularly scheduled program, activity or service, accepts responsibility for a child. **Under the new law, every volunteer is now a mandated reporter.**

Reporting of an allegation of child abuse is required whenever there is "reasonable cause to suspect" that abuse has occurred, according to PA Child Protective Services Law, Title 23 Pa. C.S.S. Chapter 63.

Reasonable cause occurs when: 1) any staff or volunteer personally witnesses an incident of abuse, 2) an allegation of an event of abuse is made to a staff or volunteer or a third party, and/or 3) a child, youth or vulnerable adult discloses abuse to staff or a volunteer which meets the criteria of the above PA Law.

The mandated reporter receiving or observing this information, must **immediately** file the report to the PA Child Abuse Hotline. (The Director of Christian Education, the Pastor or the designee should be notified after the official submission of the report.)

**Child Line Reporting: 800.932.0313** available 24 hours a day, seven days a week

For questions regarding a previously reported abuse, dial: **717.783.1964** to speak to an Intake Manager.

In the event that an incident of abuse or neglect is alleged to have occurred at FELC or during our sponsored programs or activities, the following procedure shall be followed:

1. The parent or guardian of the child will be notified by the Director of Christian Education or their designee.
2. The worker alleged to be the perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct will immediately be placed on leave from working with children pending an investigation and instructed to remain away from the premises during the investigation.
3. A Child Abuse Incident Report form will be filled out (attached). Civil authorities will be notified, and FELC will comply with the state's requirements regarding mandatory reporting of abuse as the law states. FELC will fully cooperate with the investigation of the incident by civil authorities.
4. Our insurance company will be notified, and we will comply with CPSL reporting and requirements.
5. The Pastor or Council President will be our spokesperson to the media concerning incidents of abuse or neglect, unless he or she is alleged to be involved. We will seek the advice of legal counsel before responding to media inquiries or releasing information to the congregation. All other representatives of the church should refrain from speaking to the media.
6. A pastoral visit will be arranged for those who desire it.

## SAFE CHURCH POLICY

7. Any person who is substantiated of the alleged abuse or misconduct will be removed from their position working with children or youth.

## Open Door Policy

Classroom doors should remain open unless there is a window in the door or a side window beside it. Doors should never be locked while persons are inside the room.

Whenever possible, there will be two persons in a classroom or attending children while in the care of FELC. When a child is in transition to the restroom, an attending adult will be available and within sight of the child.

During the worship hour, it is the responsibility of the parent or adult guardian to supervise their child when leaving the service.

## Supervision Requirements

- Two adult rule – Whenever possible, two adults must be present at all times, a roamer can be the second adult.
- No child left unsupervised – once parents turn over the responsibility of their child to the church, he/she must be supervised by an approved adult. (An approved adult is defined as a person who has passed the Pennsylvania State Police and Childline Clearances.)
- Ministries and activities must be conducted in open view – avoid opportunity for secrecy. Doors should be left open, unless a window in the door.
- No supervision by a person under age 18 – unless this is the second person. An adult must always be in the role of supervisor.
- Written consent forms – must be completed for activities that include transportation. Must include destination, time of departure and time of arrival.

## Teenage Workers

We recognize that there may be times when it is necessary or desirable for teacher aids (paid or volunteer) who are themselves under age 18 to assist in caring for children during programs or activities. The following guidelines apply to teenage workers:

- Must be at least age 14
- Must pass the PA State Police and Childline Clearances
- Must be under the supervision of an adult and must never be left alone with children.

## Medications Policy

It is the policy of FELC not to administer either prescription or non-prescription medications to the children under our care. Medications should be administered by a parent at home. Parents are reminded of our sick child policy.

Exceptions to the medications policy may be granted to parents of children with potentially life-threatening conditions (such as asthma or severe allergic reactions). Parents of such children should address their situation with the Pastor or Director of Christian Education to develop a plan of action.

## Discipline Policy

It is the policy of FELC not to administer corporal punishment, even if parents have suggested or given permission for it. There should be no spanking, grabbing, shaking, hitting, or other physical discipline of children. Workers should consult with the Pastor or Director of Christian Education if assistance is needed with disciplinary issues.

## Training

FELC will provide training on this Safe Church Policy to all new childcare workers and provide annual training for all paid and volunteer workers.

;

Forms:

Attachment A: Application for Volunteer Position

Attachment B: Employee/Volunteer Screening

Attachment C: Record for Employee File

Attachment D: Record for Volunteer File

This is a working draft of the Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church, January 2015.



**APPLICATION FOR VOLUNTEER POSITION** Appendix A

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

Position applying for: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone Number: (Home) \_\_\_\_\_ (Cell) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Reference Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Reference Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Experience working with children: \_\_\_\_\_

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

Any previous criminal convictions. No: \_\_\_\_\_ Yes: \_\_\_\_\_

Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

**EMPLOYEE/VOLUNTEER SCREENING**

Appendix B

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_

**Phone: (h)** \_\_\_\_\_ **(c)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **PA State Police Criminal Record Check - SP 4-164 \$10**

\_\_\_\_\_ **PA Child Abuse Clearance – DPW – CY-113 \$10**

\_\_\_\_\_ **FBI Clearance (fingerprinting) Employee \$27.50**

\_\_\_\_\_ **FBI Clearance (fingerprinting) Volunteer \$27.50 UNLESS:**

- **Has been a resident of PA for all of past 10 years**
- **Affirms in writing that they have not been convicted in any other state of any of the PA offenses that prohibit service**

\_\_\_\_\_ **All of the above repeated every 3 years.**

**Clearances due again:** \_\_\_\_\_

**RECORD OF EMPLOYEE FILE**

Appendix C

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

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Department/Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Hired/accepted: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact Info: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Application/Resume

\_\_\_\_\_ Job description

\_\_\_\_\_ Offer/wage commitment

\_\_\_\_\_ Employee Manual

\_\_\_\_\_ W-4

\_\_\_\_\_ I-9

\_\_\_\_\_ LST

\_\_\_\_\_ Background consent form

\_\_\_\_\_ PA State Police Criminal

\_\_\_\_\_ PA Childline

\_\_\_\_\_ Date completed

\_\_\_\_\_ **Date to be repeated**

\_\_\_\_\_ Performance Reviews

\_\_\_\_\_ Eligible for Benefits?

**RECORD FOR VOLUNTEER FILE**

Appendix D

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

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Department/Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Date accepted: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact Info: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Application/Resume

\_\_\_\_\_ Job description

\_\_\_\_\_ Background consent form

\_\_\_\_\_ PA State Police Criminal

\_\_\_\_\_ PA Child Abuse

\_\_\_\_\_ Date completed

\_\_\_\_\_ **Date to be repeated**