

OUR SAVIOR'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

SAFE KIDS POLICY

Approved by Church Council 9/14/10

Our Savior's Lutheran Church is committed to providing a safe, healthy environment for every person to whom we minister. We believe that simple, yet effective steps can be taken to promote a safe environment for our children, youth, and those who work with them.

The guidelines of the booklet are intended to assist our church in:

1. Creating a safe place for all children and youth, while attending church activities.
2. Reducing the possibility of abuse.
3. Protecting Our Savior's volunteers and employed staff.

Terms used in this booklet:

Pastors, Youth & Family Minister, and Program Staff are employed staff of OSLC.

Committees are composed of Our Savior's Lutheran Church members and participants.

Group leaders are teachers, mentors, chaperones.

Children includes ages birth through 18 years.

Youth includes grades 6-12

Our Savior's Preschool is subject to Wisconsin licensing rules for group day care centers.

The Pastor, Youth & Family Minister, and program staff shall make reasonable efforts to see that the following guidelines are followed for each ministry area where they work with volunteers.

STAFF & VOLUNTEERS WORKING WITH CHILDREN & YOUTH

Background Checks for Staff The Personnel Committee of Our Savior's Lutheran Church conducts background checks on all hired staff working with children and youth. The Preschool Director conducts background checks as required for licensing for all employed at Our Savior's Preschool.

Ministry Agreement for Volunteers To assure the safety of children youth, and those who work with them, we ask that all adults working with the following programs complete and return a Ministry Agreement that signifies their agreement to adhere to OSLC policies in this booklet and gives OSLC permission to conduct a background check.

- ◆ Sunday School leaders and teachers
- ◆ Music leaders, teachers, and helpers
- ◆ Confirmation small group leaders

Other Considerations

- ◆ Our Savior's Lutheran Church has taken a position against sexual misconduct and child abuse. A volunteer with a criminal conviction or a guilty plea for a sexual offense, no matter how long ago it occurred, will not be permitted to work with children or youth. They should be directed to serve in other areas of the church.
- ◆ Adult leaders or employed staff will not date or be romantically involved with children in their care.
- ◆ Church sponsored events for children and youth are to be drug, alcohol and tobacco free. Possession of or use of any of these substances at a church sponsored event may result in removal from the event.
- ◆ Being in a one on one situation with a child or youth is discouraged. When necessary, make every effort to be in a space that can be easily seen by others, such as an office or room with windows.
- ◆ Volunteers and employed staff are encouraged to be alert to strangers in the building. If there is a question about an unidentified individual, a staff member should be contacted.

TRAINING VOLUNTEERS AND EMPLOYED STAFF TO PREVENT ABUSE

Volunteers and employed staff members are to be familiar with or receive training with the following:

1. Our Savior's Lutheran Church Safe Kids Policy
2. Wisconsin child abuse and neglect law.
3. How to identify children who have been abused or neglected.

4. The process for reporting known or suspected cases of child abuse or neglect.
5. Additional training will be provided as determined by the program staff, leaders or pastors.

GUIDELINES FOR NURSERY AGE CHILDREN

Drop Off and Pick Up Procedure: Parents/guardians are responsible for completing the nursery sign in form and using the pager. Parents/guardians should clearly label diaper bags with the child's name. Sick children should not be brought to the nursery.

We ask that children with the following symptoms or contagious illnesses not to use the nursery until the time listed below. This is for the overall safety of all children and families who use the nursery.

Symptom/Illness	May return when...
Fever 100 degrees F or higher	Fever absent for 24 hours
Diarrhea (more than 1 abnormally loose stool)	Absent for 24 hours
Vomiting	Absent for 24 hours
Strep Throat	On antibiotics at least 24-48 hours
Pinkeye (conjunctivitis)	No further discharge from eye
Chickenpox	7 days since appearance of last postules
Head Lice	Under treatment
Impetigo	Under treatment 24-48 hours, lesions no longer weeping
Scabies (mites)	Under treatment 24-48 hours
Ringworm	Under treatment

Diaper changing procedures: The nursery attendant/appointed adult or parent shall change diapers. A child should never be left unattended on the changing table. Change the diaper using either diapers and wipes supplied by the nursery or those supplied by the parent. After the diaper change is completed, clean the changing table by spraying it with the mild bleach and water solution that is provided and wipe dry with a paper towel. (This disinfectant should be kept out of reach of children and clearly labeled.) WASH HANDS with warm water and soap.

Nursery committee members or other designees, will make a reasonable effort to clean and sanitize the toys on a regular basis. Volunteers and employed staff should be encouraged to wash their hands frequently while working in the nursery. Every reasonable effort shall be made to remove broken toys or those that pose a choking hazard to younger children.

GUIDELINES FOR ALL OTHER CHILDREN & YOUTH

Registration Information: Parents/Guardians shall provide the program staff with the following information at the time of registration: emergency contact information name (not parents) and phone number along with parents'/guardians' work number(s) or cell phone number(s); medical information (such as medical problems, special needs, medications, allergies; medical release consenting to treatment and transporting in the event of an emergency; transportation release authorizing vehicle transportation for off-campus activities; name of the parent/guardian or person(s) authorized to pick up the child (nursery - grade 5). This information may be shared with group leaders when appropriate.

Parents/guardians shall keep this information current by providing written notice of changes to the program staff. Our Savior's Lutheran Church shall make a reasonable effort to follow parental directives, but reserves the right to make decisions based on reasonable judgment, especially during times of emergency. A reasonable effort will be made to obtain registration information for a guest attending on campus events.

Drop Off and Pick Up Guidelines: As part of the registration process for any preschool-grade 5 program, the parent/guardian shall identify with whom the child is to be dismissed or if the child can leave independently. If a child needs to be picked up at a different time or by someone not listed as an authorized pick-up person, parents shall call the church office or send a written note verifying the change. If an unauthorized person arrives to pick up the child, the teacher, program staff or leader shall make a reasonable effort to clarify the situation before the child is released after obtaining information such as the name, relationship to the child, and description of the individual. Verification of the information with a driver's license is also encouraged.

Our Savior's Lutheran Church will make a reasonable effort to notify parents of class or event times. Parents shall not drop their children off early because Our Savior's Lutheran Church is not able to provide supervision or insure the safety of the children and youth prior to or after the program has ended.

Preschool-grade 5 children are to be dropped off and picked up at the classroom. Possible exceptions are those children who are riding their bikes, walking home, or have arrangements to meet at another designated place in the church as indicated on the pick-up information. Children are not to leave the facility without the group leader's permission. Group leaders are not to leave the classroom or building until all students from their class have been picked up or other appropriate arrangements for classroom supervision have been made.

Students in grades 6-9 may be dropped off and picked up at the church entry on the parking lot side of the church. Following confirmation classes, students will be released from their small groups to the exits on the parking lot side of the church.

Restroom Guidelines: Parents are encouraged to take their child(ren) to the restroom prior to class. Volunteers under age 12 years are discouraged from helping children in the restrooms.

If a restroom time is needed for a very young student, the following procedure is recommended: If only one child must use the restroom, the leader's option could be to take the whole class along or to ask for help from another parent helper who may escort the child to the restroom or supervise the rest of the class. Do not leave the classroom unsupervised. If a child needs assistance in the restroom, leave the stall door open. Never be alone with the child in the stall with the door closed. If a child does not need assistance, it is suggested that the leader remain at the outer door so that the bathroom can be monitored from the hallway.

If a restroom time is needed for older children use of a buddy system is encouraged with the group leader directing which restroom is to be used.

Classroom Supervision Guidelines

The following ratios are suggested staffing guidelines:

- ◆ Nursery: 1 adult for approximately 4-5 children
- ◆ Preschool: 1 adult for approximately 6-12 children
- ◆ Grade K-6: 1 adult for approximately 10-15 children
- ◆ Grade 7-8: 1 adult for approximately 18 children
- ◆ Grade 9-12: 1 adult for approximately 18 children

Special Events and Off-campus Activities

The following adult/child ratios are suggested [staffing] guidelines:

- ◆ Grade K-5: 1 adult for about 6 children
- ◆ Grade 6-8: 1 adult for about 8 children
- ◆ Grade 9-12: 1 adult for about 10 children

Overnight Activities / Mission Trips

An adult/child or youth ratio of 1/5 will be maintained for overnight events or mission trips.

Written permission and registration information is required for participation in off campus activities. In extenuating circumstances, verbal permission with a third party witness may be accepted. Registration information and the medical release should accompany the group leader. For overnight and out of town events, a completed medical release and health history form for each child will be carried by the group leader.

Transporting Children: Drivers need a valid driver's license and current automobile insurance. The vehicle used must be in good running condition with working seat belts. Seat belts are to be used by each occupant in the car and the number of persons per car are not to exceed the number of working seat belts. Children in seat belts and car seats must be in compliance with current Wisconsin law. It is recommended that children under five feet tall not be seated in the front seat of a vehicle equipped with air bags.

No person under the age of 18 may drive from the church to a youth outing in the Menomonie area unless

the parent has given written permission or verbally requests this, per discretion of the program staff. No person under age 18 may drive to a youth outing that is outside the Menomonie area. Rental vehicles will be driven only by a designated group leader age 25 or older.

Anyone transporting children, youth, or vulnerable adults shall obey all traffic laws, such as speed limits.

Proper Display of Affection: Touch is essential in nurturing lives. Physical contact with children should be age and developmentally appropriate. Be aware and sensitive to differences in sexual development, cultural differences, family backgrounds, individual personalities and special needs.

Appropriate Displays of Affection	Inappropriate Displays of Affection
Asking permission before touching.	Any form of unwanted affection
Hugs	Full frontal hugs or bear hugs.
Pats on the shoulder or back	Touching bottoms, chests or genital areas.
Hand-shakes	Laying down or sleeping beside children.
High-fives and hand slapping	Massages
Verbal praise	Patting children on the thigh, knee or leg
Touching hands, faces, shoulders and arms	Tickling, wrestling or piggy back rides
Arms around shoulders	Touching or hugging from behind
Holding hands during prayer or when a person is upset.	Games involving inappropriate touching
Holding hands while walking with small children.	Kisses on the mouth
Sitting close to small children	Showing affection in isolated areas of the building such as closets, restricted areas or other private rooms
Kneeling or bending down for hugs with a small child	Compliments that relate to physique or body development
Holding or picking up children 3 years old and younger	

Constructive Discipline: Discipline needs to carefully consider a child's dignity and fragile life, and reflect Christian values. Gentleness, respect and understanding should guide all actions and words. Discipline will be carried out through instruction, training and correction. Physical punishment is prohibited.

Suggested procedures for constructive discipline: Whenever an inappropriate behavior is observed, the child will be positively redirected into other activities to stop the inappropriate behavior.

When the appropriate expectations are not met, it is suggested that the group leader use the following steps: (1) Give a verbal warning; (2) Notify program staff and/or parents/ guardians; (3) Meet with parents or guardians, and program staff to work towards resolving the problem.

Discipline issues requiring staff assistance should be brought to the staff person with direct responsibility for the program. If the situation happens during Joy choir, it would be taken to the Choir Director. If it happens during confirmation, it would be brought to the attention of the Pastor. If it happens during Sunday school, the Sunday School Superintendent should be involved. If it happens during youth group, the Youth & Family Minister would be in the conversation. Those most closely associated with the situation should be used. When those persons are absent or unavailable, the Youth * Family Minister or Pastor should be asked to assist.

Missing Children: If a child is missing it is suggested to first ask students or youth participating if they are aware of where the student may be. The next step is the group leaders shall assign another group leader, or staff person to supervise the remaining children within the classroom or immediate area. Search the immediate vicinity or interior building. This may include closets, bathrooms, storage rooms, and any other enclosed area. If outside areas need to be searched, additional individuals will be organized in an area search. Each person will be designated a specific area to cover. Consider immediately notifying security (if available) at off-campus events. If the search is still unsuccessful, the local police will be notified for

further assistance and the parents or emergency contact person will be contacted.

Medication Guidelines: If any medication needs to be administered to a child, the parent/guardian will complete a medication consent form. Dispensing medications in the classroom is discouraged.

When middle or high school students are away from home at a retreat or other youth gathering, and prescription medications are to be administered, parents will give the completed medication consent form along with instructions to the program staff or adult group leader. All prescription medications shall be in the original container, held by the responsible adult, and administered in the prescribed dosage by, or in the presence of, the responsible adult as per written instructions of a custodial parent, guardian, or physician. Emergency medications such as inhalers or bee sting kits may be carried and administered by the student as requested. Our Savior's staff does not administer over-the-counter medications.

Medical Emergencies/Accidents: Volunteers and employed staff may administer basic first aid measures. It is suggested that first aid kits be available in several locations throughout the building. Reasonable efforts will be made to notify a parent/guardian of an injury. If medical care is seen as necessary beyond first aid measures, reasonable efforts will be made to notify a parent/guardian for transportation to a local emergency room or medical clinic. If the situation is life threatening, emergency professionals, through 911, will be immediately contacted. Volunteer and employed staff are encouraged not to transport the child. The accident report form must be filled out in the church office for situations as noted

A first aid kit is recommended to be taken along on off-campus activities. For medical emergencies when out of town, the group leader will refer to the medical release/health history form.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION PLANS

Fire or any threat to the building: Exit the building as diagramed on the floor plan which shall be posted in each classroom or activity area. Shut the door of the classroom when everyone is out. There should be one way traffic in the hallways. Take the class well away from the building and make sure all of your students are with you. Group leaders are encouraged to have available their class roster to take with them. Students should not go looking for parents, brothers, sisters or the family car. Once it has been determined that the danger is past, the group leader will direct the children back into the building or other designated area. If it is ascertained that there is a fire or definite danger, the children will be taken across the street to St. Joe's School parking lot. Parents will be contacted and asked to pick up their child(ren). Group leaders are encouraged to review and practice the fire safety rules with their class.

Tornado/Severe Weather:

- ◆ Tornado Watch: Tornadoes and severe thunderstorms are possible.
- ◆ Severe Thunderstorm or Tornado Warning: Severe storm or tornadoes detected (siren), take shelter immediately.

Upon a city severe storm or tornado warning siren or other notification, the group leader will take students to areas that have no windows and are interior rooms or to the basement areas. The group leader will account for all children. The program staff, group leaders or office staff as directed will make reasonable efforts to check the bathrooms and then take shelter. The program staff member will check radar if possible to determine the type of weather threat. If a tornado warning, the group leader should instruct children to crouch down on the floor, heads down, with hands over their heads.

REPORTING SUSPICIONS OR THREATS OF CHILD ABUSE WISCONSIN LAW AND CHURCH POLICY

Wisconsin Statute

Wisconsin law requires that allegations or suspicions of child abuse or neglect or threats of abuse must be reported to law enforcement by anyone considered to be a mandated reporter.

- ◆ The report must be made immediately s48.981(3)⁽²⁾ Wis. Stats.
- ◆ The local DHS number is 715-232-1116 during normal business hours. (715-232-1348 after hours)
- ◆ Any mandated reporter who intentionally fails to report a suspicion of abuse or neglect may be fined by to \$1,000 and/or imprisoned by to 6 months.

According to the Children's Code, four church employees can be considered mandated reporters: Pastor, Youth & Family Minister, and Youth & Family Ministry Assistant, as members of the clergy as described both in s48.981 (2) ^(bm) Wis. Stats. and s48.981(1)^{(cx)(1)} Wis. Stats., as well as the Parish Nurse as nurse as described in s48.981 (2)⁽⁴⁾ Wis. Stats. Our Savior's Lutheran Church policy requires that the persons in the positions of Pastor, Youth & Family Minister, Youth & Family Ministry Assistant, and Parish Nurse abide by this law.

Church Policy

While most volunteers and some staff members are not "mandated reporters" as defined by Wisconsin Statute, anyone working in a professional capacity with children in any kind of supervisory role has a professional obligation to report abuse or suspected abuse of a child. Furthermore, all Christians share a moral obligation to report suspicion of abuse. **Immunity from Liability:** To encourage protection of children, the Wisconsin law provides that any person who reports a suspicion of abuse or neglect in good faith will be immune from any civil or criminal liability. Good faith will be presumed.

Terms Relating to Both Wisconsin Law and Church Policy

Abuse and Neglect

Abuse of a child can occur in a variety of forms. It can be physical or emotional abuse, physical neglect, or sexual abuse. To help volunteers and employed staff to comply with the law and church policy, abuse is defined as a non-accidental physical injury inflicted on a child or a sexual contact with a child. Neglect is defined as failure to properly provide for the child's physical needs (i.e., food, clothing, etc.) or normal development (i.e., bullying, verbal attacks). These definitions are to assist the volunteer or employed staff in determining if there might be abuse or neglect, but you are not required to make legal distinctions in order to make your report.

Suspicion vs. known Abuse

If you suspect that a child has suffered abuse or neglect or may suffer abuse, you should report your suspicion. The suspicion of abuse or neglect may be based on your observations of or interactions with a child or if a child tells the volunteer or employed staff of past or threatened events that suggest to you abuse or neglect. Understandably, where abuse or neglect has occurred or may occur is not always clear. However, you should still report the suspicion because the protection of the child is of paramount concern. Moreover, the reporting signifies only a suspicion of abuse or neglect. The actual determination of whether or not the child was abused or neglected will only occur after an investigation by appropriate law enforcement. Even

marginal cases may be found to be valid. You can anonymously discuss whether or not a report should be filed with law enforcement by contacting the Department of Human Services at (715) 232-1116 Monday through Friday.

Confidentiality

The reporting of a suspicion of abuse or neglect shall be confidential and the reporter's identity will not be disclosed.

REPORTING PROCEDURES

If any adult suspects child abuse or neglect, please do one of the following:

- ◆ File your own report with the Department of Human Services. The local DHS number is 715-232-1116 during normal business hours, and 715-232-1348 after hours.
- ◆ Bring your concern to one of the four mandated reporters at OSL: Pastor, Youth & Family Minister, Parish Nurse, or Youth & Family Ministry Assistant. The staff member, acting as a mandated reporter will report the suspicion of child abuse or neglect to the Department of Human Services.

In an emergency report immediately to the Menomonie Police Department of the Dunn County Sheriff's Department.

GUIDELINES FOR GATHERING INFORMATION IF A CHILD TELLS YOU OF ABUSE

If a child tells you that he or she has been abused or neglected or fears abuse, take him or her seriously. Calmly listen without denying or discussing the child's claim. This is an important opportunity to gather as many facts as possible so let the child tell his or her story in his or her own words. Under no circumstances should you promise not to tell anyone. Provide emotional support and stress to the child that he or she has done nothing wrong and that coming to you was the right thing to do. If the child is willing, have another adult listen to the conversation.

Immediately write an account of the conversation, date it, and report it yourself to the Department of Human services or to a Mandated Reporter at OSL.

Because suspicions of child abuse or neglect are so serious in nature and to protect all involved, particularly the child and the person(s) suspected of the abuse or neglect, all information will be handled in a confidential manner. Other than reporting to DHS and a mandated reporter, please do not discuss the matter with anyone. The reporting needs to be properly investigated by law enforcement. It is not your duty or responsibility to investigate or resolve the matter. The best thing to do after reporting abuse or suspected abuse is to do and say nothing pending law enforcement's investigation.

Ministry Agreement

Our Savior's Lutheran Church

I believe that each child is unique and a wonderful gift from God. I will do my best to make Our Savior's Lutheran Church a safe place where children and youth can strengthen relationships with each other, with members of the church, and most importantly with Jesus Christ. I commit to active participation in the life of OSLC. As a volunteer, I commit to preparation for lessons, events, and activities, as well as attending necessary meetings that support my role as a volunteer in ministry to children and youth.

- ◆ I will follow supervision guidelines for children and youth in my care.
- ◆ I agree to abide by the transportation guidelines.
- ◆ I agree to avoid situations where I would be alone with a student.
- ◆ I am aware of the distinction between appropriate and inappropriate ways to demonstrate affection to children and youth in my care.
- ◆ I am familiar with what to do in the event of an emergency like fire or severe weather.
- ◆ I understand and agree to use the concept of constructive discipline.
- ◆ If a discipline issue develops, I know to work with the staff member most closely associated with or supervising the program where this occurred. I know that the Youth & Family Minister or the Pastor can assist if other staff are unavailable.
- ◆ I will encourage parents to drop off their children at the time events begin, and not early, as OSLC is unable to provide supervision before and after events.
- ◆ I will attempt to follow parents identified wishes regarding the dismissal of their children from OSLC events. When there is confusion, I will double check the instructions and or ask for photo identification of the person picking up the child.

I agree that I have submitted to a background check and attest to the fact that the information contained in that document is accurate.

I have read and understand OSL's Safe Kids Policy and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I agree to uphold the principles of the policy.

Signature

Date

