
Code of Conduct for Protection of Children and Youth

Relationships among people are at the foundation of Christian ministry and as such are central to the life of the church. Defining healthy and safe relationships through policies and codes of conduct is not meant, in any way, to undermine the strength and importance of personal interaction in our ministries. Rather, it is to assist in more clearly defining behaviors and practices that allow the church to more fully demonstrate its love and compassion for children and youth in sincere and genuine relationships.

Relationships in ministry should, ideally, always be experienced as caring and without intention to do harm or allow harm to occur. This Code of Conduct has been adopted by Carlton Hills Evangelical Lutheran Church to help the church create safe environments for children and youth and for those who minister to them.

Code of Conduct for Protection of Children and Youth

- ◆ Ministry Workers agree to do their best to prevent abuse and neglect among children and youth involved in church activities and services.
 - ◆ Ministry Workers agree to not physically, sexually or emotionally abuse or neglect a child or youth.
 - ◆ Ministry Workers agree to comply with the policies for general conduct with children and youth as defined in The Child and Youth Protection Policy for Ministry Workers.
 - ◆ All Ministry Workers agree to comply with the Guidelines for appropriate Affection with children and youth.
 - ◆ In the event that Ministry Workers observe any inappropriate behaviors or possible policy violations with children or youth, Ministry Workers agree to immediately report their observations.
 - ◆ Ministry Workers understand that the church will not tolerate abuse of children and youth and agree to comply in spirit and in action with this position.
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Carlton Hill Evangelical Lutheran Church Child and Youth Protection Policy for Ministry Workers

Carlton Hills Evangelical Lutheran Church desires to be a safe and secure place for ministry to all children, youth and adults who attend or participate in activities. Jesus Christ sets the standard for relationships when He says:

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and most important commandment. The next is like it: ‘Love your neighbor like yourself.’ All the Law and Prophets depend on these two commandments.” (Matthew 22:37-40)

Objectives

As reflected in these policies and procedures, Carlton Hills Evangelical Lutheran Church wants to:

1. Provide a safe and secure place where children and youth can grow in faith and share Christ’s love.
2. Build parental confidence in church programs;
3. Educate church leaders and ministry workers with children and youth about prevention of abuse or accidental injury;
4. Encourage and enlist church leaders and ministry workers to develop procedures and practices that reduce the risks of abuse or accidental injury;
5. Prepare church workers to respond should an incident or accident occur;
6. Protect adults from mistaken or groundless allegations; and
7. Reduce liability for Carlton Hills Evangelical Lutheran Church;

“You, O Lord, will protect us; You will guard us from this generation forever. On every side the wicked prowl, as vileness is exalted among humankind” Psalm 12:7-8 NRSV

Definitions

Ministry Worker: The term “worker” refers to any volunteers or paid employees teaching and/or working with children and youth. (e.g. Bible class teachers, Vacation Bible School volunteers, nursery workers etc.)

Youth: The term “youth” refers to any person from 7th grade through 18 years of age.

Child: The term “child” refers to any children from birth through grade 6.

Ministry Manager: A church volunteer who is responsible for a specific area of ministry or specific ministry event. (e.g. Sunday School Superintendent, Vacation Bible School directors, education and ministry event leaders, Chair Person of Board of Christian Education)

Program Director: Paid church staff and church personnel responsible for ministry (e.g. Pastor, Music Director)

Screening Process

All ministry workers directly involved in ministry with children and youth are screened. The process may include:

- ◆ Completion of Safe Place Training
- ◆ Written application, renewed annually
- ◆ Multiple references
- ◆ Interviews with program director or ministry manager
- ◆ Consent to criminal background check
- ◆ Finger printing

All screening information is confidential.

Safety Measures

The following safety measures reflect our commitment to provide protective care of all children, youth, and workers participating in ministry activities.

- 1) All adult volunteers with children and youth are required to be members of Carlton Hills Evangelical Lutheran Church or another local Christian church for a minimum of 6 months.
- 2) Persons who have been convicted of, placed on probation for, received pretrial diversion for, pleaded guilty or nolo contendere for, or are currently charged with prohibited offense shall not serve in any church-sponsored activity or program for children or youth. Prohibited offense includes any crime against a child or any offense involving sexual conduct, physical abuse, violence or threatened violence, or such other felony or crime involving moral turpitude as determined by the church staff.
- 3) Potential ministry workers who are survivors of abuse are encouraged to consult with a pastor. When that ministry worker comes forward, the pastor shall determine from the screening procedure and interview if the person may work with minors.
- 4) Ministry workers will complete training activities appropriate to their ministry involvement.
- 5) Adequate numbers of trained ministry workers will be present to supervise all activities involving children and youth. At least two adults will be present at child and youth activities and remain until the last child or youth is picked up.
- 6) Ministry workers should remain at each activity until all children have been dismissed, and early dismissal of participants should not be allowed, except at the express direction of a parent or guardian.
- 7) All programs, events, and activities for children and youth will comply with the applicable written ministry procedures.
- 8) Transportation:
 - a.) Drivers aged 21 or over are permitted to transport youth during youth events. Drivers 18-20 are permitted to drive as long as parents or guardians of passenger sign waiver/consent form.
 - b.) All drivers for youth events must have and provide a photocopy of a valid driver's license and qualify for the vehicle being operated.
 - c.) They must provide proof of vehicle insurance for the vehicle being driven.
 - d.) Seat belts must be worn by all passengers in vehicles which are equipped with seat belts.
 - e.) All state traffic laws must be observed.
 - f.) Each vehicle used during a major event (i.e. over night) must carry medical forms for all passengers.
 - g.) It is recommended that an adult never be alone with a youth in a vehicle. Last child/youth in vehicle shall sit in a rear seat.
- 9) Medical:
 - a.) A person certified in First Aid and CPR must be a part of the staff for day long events.
 - b.) A well-equipped and fully stocked First Aid kit must be available and maintained at all functions.
 - c.) Permission must be obtained for minors to receive over the counter medication from the event's First Aid Station.
 - d.) When specified, a medical release form must be provided and fully completed for each participant of the event.
 - e.) Information on dietary restrictions and allergies must be indicated on consent/medical forms.
- 10) General:
 - a.) A minimum ratio of one adult per seven youth must be maintained for all overnight events. This ratio requirement assumes male adult for male youth and female adult for female youth, but over-lap is acceptable.
 - b.) There shall be no "one-on-one" contact between youth and adult except in view of other adults and youth. If confidential conversation needs to occur, it should be done in proximity to the rest of the group with doors open and lights on.
 - c.) Youth events are to function with an open-door policy, which means:
 - 1) Adults have a right to observe any youth activity at any time.
 - 2) Youth of the opposite sex in a room together must meet with the door open.
 - d.) Any kind of illicit drugs, alcohol or tobacco use by youth at a youth event is strictly prohibited. Adults are prohibited from using illicit drugs and alcohol at youth events. Tobacco products can not be used in front of youth and/or during activities at an event. Adults must also maintain proper supervision of their youth at all times.
 - e.) There are to be no weapons, firearms, laser pointers or fireworks at any youth event.

- f.) Physical discipline is never an option. No one is to strike or hit anyone at any time. Verbal harassment or threats are also not to be tolerated.

Definitions of Abuse

Abuse is any physical injury, physical neglect, emotional injury, or sexual act inflicted upon a child or youth.

- ◆ Physical abuse means the infliction of injury by intentional or non-accidental actions or inactions.
- ◆ Neglect means the failure or inattention on the part of the caregiver or parent to provide for that child's basic needs, such as food, clothing, shelter, medical care, and supervision that results in harm to a child.
- ◆ Emotional abuse or maltreatment is a consistent, chronic behavior by a parent or caretaker that has a harmful effect on the child/youth. It involves a pattern of attitudes or acts that are detrimental to the child/youth's development of a sound and healthy personality. Emotional abuse is the infliction of mental or emotional injury.
- ◆ Sexual abuse is any sexual act used for the sexual stimulation of the child, perpetrator or another person that is carried out with a child/youth. It would also be considered sexual abuse if the abuse is committed by a person under the age of 18 but who is older than the victim, or when the abuser is in a position of power or control over another child, or uses force or coercion. Both males and females can be victims.

How to Report

In case of suspected child abuse, the ministry worker must report the incident to a ministry manager or church staff.

Violation of Policy or Procedures

Ministry workers must promptly notify the ministry manager or church staff of any activity undertaken on their own behalf or by others which violates this policy or procedure.

Dealing with Law Enforcement

All ministry workers will cooperate fully with any law enforcement or governmental agency that may be investigating allegations.

Public Relations

1. All new members shall be informed about the Child and Youth Protection Policy of Carlton Hills Evangelical Lutheran Church.
2. The Child and Youth Protection Policy of Carlton Hills Evangelical Lutheran Church shall be annually publicized to all members of the congregation. A copy of the policy will be available in the church office for inspection.

Revision of Policy

This policy will be regularly reviewed with legal counsel and can be modified in accordance with the bylaws of Carlton Hills Evangelical Lutheran Church. Any such modification will be promptly conveyed to all persons affected by the modification.

“At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” He called a little child and had him stand among them. And He said: “I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me. But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believes 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 18:1-6