

CHILD/YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY

Kimball Memorial Lutheran Church
Kannapolis, NC 28081

OVERVIEW

Kimball Memorial Lutheran Church seeks to provide a safe, supportive, and Christian environment for all people. All institutions, whether religious or secular, in which children and youth participate face a moral and ethical challenge to provide an environment free from the potentially devastating effects of incidents of either verbal, physical, or sexual abuse of children or unfounded allegations that such conduct has taken place. This policy was adopted in order to provide the safest and most secure environment as possible for the children and youth of KMLC congregational community and to ensure that false allegations are avoided.

GOALS

The goals of the Child/Youth Protection Policy are the following:

- to provide a safe and caring environment for our children and youth;
- to protect children/youth in Kimball Memorial Lutheran's congregational community from sexual, physical, and verbal abuse;
- to provide educational vehicles and opportunities to educate the congregation, as a whole, and those involved with children and youth, in particular, about child and youth abuse issues; and
- to protect leaders, staff, teachers, and volunteers, as well as the congregation as a whole, from potential allegations of abuse.

POLICY STATEMENT

The Congregation Council, staff and members of Kimball Memorial Lutheran Church recognize that children and youth are entrusted to the care of adults in congregational programs and activities both on and off the campus of KMLC. KMLC is committed to providing a safe and caring environment in which children are protected from sexual, physical and verbal abuse and in which church staff, teachers, volunteers and other caregivers are protected from potential allegations of child abuse.

PROCEDURES

- I. Selection/Screening (forms and explanation of the screening process are found in the appendices)
 1. One of two separate screening forms is required for those working with children/youth; either
 - A. The Screening Form for all volunteer persons involved in any way with supervision of or contact with children under the age of 18. (Appendix 1)
 2. After completion of the appropriate form, the following guidelines apply to the screening process.
 - A. All adults who work with children/youth are expected to have a commitment to Jesus Christ and the church.
 - B. Adults who have been convicted of or who have committed either sexual, physical, or verbal abuse will not be permitted to work in any church sponsored activity or program for children or youth.
 - C. Volunteers will be required to complete the Criminal Records form.
 - D. All forms shall be kept in a confidential file in the Senior Pastor's office.

- E. All adults who work with children/youth are expected to know and abide by all policies and procedures of the church including the Child Protection Policy.

II. Never Alone Rule

At least one adult, over the age of 21, who has been approved as a volunteer through our screening process, should be present at any youth or children's ministry event. No adult should ever be alone with only one child/youth at any event.

III. Appropriate actions when serving in Ministry with Children and Youth

Kimball Memorial Lutheran seeks to provide a safe, supportive, Christian environment for all members. In particular, we want to be an environment where minors will be safe from physical, verbal, and sexual abuse and will feel safe, secure and valued. Adults working with children and youth are to maintain appropriate adult/youth/child boundaries in all interactions with them. In addition, adults are to model Christian principles of adult/child/youth relationships at all times. The following are some examples for adults to use in relating to minors when working or volunteering in church:

1. Listen carefully to children/youth and show interest in what they have to say.
2. Be consistent and fair with all children/youth.
3. Be giving and flexible, keep a good sense of humor and enjoy the children/youth. Smile often.
4. Focus on positive behaviors and praise the children/youth for that behavior.
5. Set clear limits that can be managed by adults and understood by the children/youth.
6. Use appropriate, positive, steps when discipline is needed. Focus on the behavior, not the person.
7. Pray for our children/youth that they may grow in faith in God, respect for each other, and God's creation.

IV. Inappropriate and prohibited actions when serving in ministry with children and youth, including the following:

1. Physical abuse – physical injury inflicted by an adult on child/youth by other than accidental means.
2. Sexual abuse – employing, using, persuading, inducing, enticing or coercing any minor to engage in any sexual act.
3. Sexual exploitation – conduct which allows, permits, encourages or requires that a child/youth engage in prostitution or child pornography.
4. Inappropriate touching or fondling of a sexual nature by any adult of a minor.
5. Corporal Punishment – use of physical force to discipline a child/youth unless they are in ultimate physical danger/harm.
6. Verbal Abuse – verbal conduct directed towards children/youth that results in severe emotional trauma in the children/youth.

V. Summary Guidelines for children/youth work volunteers

The disturbing and traumatic rise of physical and sexual abuse of children has claimed the attention of our nation and our society. The following policies reflect Kimball Memorial Lutheran's commitment to providing protective care of all children, youth and adults who participate in church sponsored activities.

1. Adults who have been convicted of either child sexual or physical abuse will not volunteer service in any KMLC sponsored activity or program for children or youth.
2. Adult volunteers will observe the Never Alone Rule.

3. Adult volunteers will within twenty-four hours report to the Senior or Associate Pastor any behavior, which seems abusive or inappropriate.

VI. Screening process for called/employed staff

1. Shall be covered under the employee handbook with Appendix 1 attached.

PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO ALLEGED INCIDENTS OF CHILD ABUSE

1. To whom and how soon? Incidents of child sexual, verbal, and/or physical abuse or reasonably suspected cases of abuse should be reported as soon as possible (at least within a 24 hour period) to the local authorities, then a call will be made to the Pastor or Associate Minister. Reports should be made orally and confirmed in writing.
2. Incidents/allegations shall be reported to designated church legal council who shall make an appropriate report to the liability insurer for the church.
3. Parents/guardian of the suspected victim shall be notified as appropriate.
4. The safety and security of the child/youth must be safeguarded before the person accused of abuse is confronted.
5. All reports of actual or suspected sexual or physical abuse shall be taken seriously but shall not be judged prematurely. Adults are encouraged to be sensitive to the potential for child abuse and to appearances of such behavior(s). They should not hesitate to caution others that activities they observe are or may appear to be inappropriate. Those reporting are expected to maintain confidentiality.
6. Persons accused must be treated with dignity and support; however, such persons shall be immediately relieved of further responsibilities involving youth/children until investigation is completed and allegations are cleared or substantiated. All reasonable steps shall be taken to preserve the confidentiality of the accused by church personnel.
7. The Senior Pastor and/or legal representative of the church shall be the sole spokespeople for the church insofar as media inquiries are concerned. Confidentiality of all persons involved shall be safeguarded.
8. Incidents of child sexual, verbal, and/or physical abuse involving the pastors and rostered lay leaders shall be reported to the president of the Congregation Council. He/she shall immediately notify the Office of the Bishop of the North Carolina Synod of the alleged charges. The Office of the Bishop is solely responsible for processing allegations against any rostered person.
9. Should false allegations be made, all possible efforts shall be made to correct any damage done to the one(s) falsely accused.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Kimball Lutheran Church will provide ongoing training opportunities for all those working with children and youth. In addition, Kimball Memorial will provide periodic educational information and classes on topics associated with child protection issues to keep all members informed of the needs and concerns our policy addresses.

Appendix 1
SCREENING FORM FOR VOLUNTEERS

PLEASE ANSWER EACH QUESTION. YOUR RESPONSE WILL BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL.

1. As a church volunteer, do you agree to observe all church policies regarding working with youth or children? No _____ Yes _____
2. Have you ever been, convicted of or pled guilty to a crime involving assault, abuse or neglect of a child or an adult? No _____ Yes _____

If you answered 'Yes' to question 2, pastors may provide referral assistance.

Please list the name, address, and phone number of the church where you are currently a member.

VOLUNTEER STATEMENT

The information contained on this form is correct to the best of my knowledge. I authorize any churches listed in this form to give any information (including opinions) that they may have regarding my character and fitness for working with youth or children to any representative on behalf of Kimball Lutheran. I agree to be bound by the Child/Youth Protection Policy. I agree to refrain from inappropriate conduct in the performance of my volunteer services on behalf of Kimball Memorial. I have read and understand the Child/Youth protection policy and agree to abide by the policy.

Print Name: _____

Volunteer Signature: _____

Date: _____

REQUEST FOR CRIMINAL RECORDS CHECK / AUTHORIZATION

I hereby request the Cabarrus County Sherriff's Department to release any information which pertains to any record of convictions contained in its files or in any criminal file maintained on me, whether local, state or national. I hereby release the Cabarrus County Sherriff's Department from any and all liability from such disclosure.

Signature: _____

Print Name: _____

Print Maiden name if applicable: _____

Print all Aliases: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Place of Birth: _____

Social Security Number: _____

Today's date: _____

Record is to be sent to: Kimball Memorial Lutheran Church
 101 Vance St.
 Kannapolis, NC 28081