

BEAUTIFUL SAVIOR LUTHERAN CHURCH CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Responsible Body: Director's Board Director's Board Approval Date: October 24th, 2016

Effective Date: **April 25th, 2017**

POLICY STATEMENT

Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church (hereafter referred to as BSLC) strives to provide adequate safety and protection for all participants and leaders in sponsored programs and events.

PURPOSE

The Director's Board is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for those participating in our ministry activities. We also seek to minimize vulnerability to unwarranted accusations of improper behavior that our organization, volunteers, and employees may experience as they fulfill their ministerial duties. To fulfill these commitments, we have adopted the following procedures to be used as fully as possible.

WAITING PERIOD

All volunteer candidates must be 14 years of age or older and, either regularly involved in life and ministry with BSLC for at least six months or have written verification from a lead staff member or director from a previous ministry of which the volunteer was involved for at least 2 years before they will be considered for any ministry position involving contact with children (any child under 18 years of age), or disabled adults. Parent volunteers may assist in events or areas with their own children under the supervision of other trained adult workers. Short term guest teachers or specialized instructors must complete an initial application (including background check) and will remain under the supervision of other trained adult workers and only for the specified duration. After four months of regular involvement any candidate can begin the screening process to become a trained worker. Children under 14 years of age may assist a trained volunteer provided that they complete the examination.

WORKER SCREENING

1. All candidates seeking a position working with children or the disabled will complete and return an initial ministry application, including at least two references (one of which may be provided by a BSLC staff member who has observed the applicant serving in the church for at least 2 years) and complete an affirmation of their understanding of our policies and training. Reference providers must be at least 18 years old. Immediate family members may not provide a reference.
2. A ministry leader or designee will carefully review the ministry application. If the applicant appears to be an appropriate candidate for the ministry work, at least two references will be checked and a criminal background check will be performed on the applicant.

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3. Any verifiable information indicating a candidate poses a threat to others, or has any prior history of physical or sexual abuse directed against another person will result in the immediate and permanent removal of the individual candidate from consideration for any position working with children, youth, or the disabled.
4. Every applicant will completely read this policy statement and initial having read the document.
5. Every applicant will complete the affirmation of their understanding of our policies and training before their application or renewal will be approved.

EMPLOYEE SCREENING PROCEDURES

1. The same procedures set forth for volunteer workers will apply to all paid employees, regardless of the ministry position for which they are being considered. The 4 month waiting period may be waived for Ministry staff, provided that they have a clean history as shown on the background check.
2. A background check will be performed on all applicants prior to being accepted for employment.
3. Any verifiable information indicating a candidate poses a threat to others, or has any prior history of physical or sexual abuse directed at another person will result in the immediate removal of the individual candidate from consideration for employment at BSLC.
4. Every paid employee will completely read this policy statement and initial having read the document.

RENEWAL OF APPLICATIONS

1. Staff and all volunteers working in any capacity with children, youth, or the disabled will initial and submit a new affirmation of the policy every two years.
2. Any verifiable information indicating that any employee or volunteer has become unsuitable for working with children or the disabled, will result in their immediate removal from their current position and will not be considered for positions involving children, youth, or the disabled or other similar groups.

SUPERVISION

1. **Two Adult Rule.** A minimum of two adults (age 18 or over), one of whom is at least 21 years of age, who have been approved through the above screening process, shall be present at every function of child and disabled adult ministry programs. With the exception of the Three Person Rule and BSLC's Preschool, which will follow all state guidelines and standards of child care, if the required two adults cannot be present, the function will be cancelled.

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2. All events will maintain a maximum child to volunteer ratio of 10:1 (10 children per volunteer age 21 or over).

3. **The Three Person Rule.** The Three Person Rule can be used in lieu of the Two Adult Rule for activities of short duration and/or occurring in a highly public situation (e.g., teaching in a classroom with roving adult over age 21 or driving to or from an event). The rule is that at least three individuals at least age 14 (one being age 21 or older who has been approved through the screening process and trained) are required to be present at a function, and in each vehicle, classroom, or other enclosed area during activities involving children or disabled adults.

4. **Limited Exception:** Limited exceptions to the Two Adult Rule and/or the Three Person Rule include one-on-one counseling and emergency situations (e.g., isolation of a child during illness for safety or transportation). Parents are always informed when this exception is used.

5. **Releasing children from care:** Workers are to release children fourth grade and under in their care, only to parents, guardians, or persons specifically authorized. Children in 5th and 6th grades may be released to find their parents, or allowed to wait unattended for transportation, unless specifically documented otherwise by the child's parents or guardians.

6. **Bathrooms** During events where children grade four and under and/or the disabled are scheduled to be separated from their parents or guardians, a trained adult will monitor the bathroom doors. When restrooms are directly accessible to children from the room where children's activities are taking place and not accessible to the general public, children can be allowed to utilize the restroom alone. If assistance is required, the trained adult will lead the child to the nursery where other trained adults are present.

DISCIPLINE

Staff and all volunteers are:

1. Never to spank, hit, grab, shake, or otherwise physically discipline anyone. Physical restraint should only be used in a situation where it is reasonably necessary to prevent an individual from harming himself or another individual or causing damage. Workers are never to use harsh or threatening language, degrading comments, or verbally abusive speech to discipline anyone.
2. Never to touch a person's private areas except when necessary, as in the case of changing a diaper.
3. To avoid the appearance of impropriety – such as sitting older children on the lap, kissing, back rubs, initiating full hugs, etc.

ONE ON ONE MEETINGS

When ministry staff or volunteer workers meet with any individuals one on one, a staff member or if that individual is a minor, their parents, will be informed. BSLC Child Protection Policy Revised April 25th, 2017

REPORTING

1. All ministry staff and trained workers are required to immediately report suspected abuse of children or youth to the appropriate state authorities as well as the ministry supervisor. The accused may not need to be immediately removed but should be constantly monitored for the rest of the event. The reporting party and those receiving the report should fill out the "Notice of Concern" form found in the Appendices. Copies of the completed form should be given, within a day to the Lead Pastor and Chair of the Child Protection Committee for review and follow up.
2. All ministry staff or trained workers who become aware of any known abuse, or molestation must immediately inform the appropriate state authorities, their ministry supervisor, the Lead Pastor, and the Chair of the Child Protection Committee. The reporting party should then complete and forward the "Notice of Concern" form to the Lead Pastor and the Child Protection Committee immediately.
3. The Child Protection Committee will seek legal counsel as soon as possible after receiving notice of possible abuse or molestation within the organization. Advice from legal counsel will be the basis for our response to the allegations.
4. One individual—a member of the leadership team, a staff member, a ministry leader, or our attorney—will be the designated spokesperson to handle all inquiries from the news media. Our spokesperson will be the **only** person to convey information concerning the situation, doing so in a prudent manner to avoid compromising an ongoing investigation and to maintain the privacy of the individuals involved.
5. All ministry leaders, employees, and volunteers of this ministry will cooperate fully with law enforcement and/or governmental agencies investigating allegations of injury, abuse, or molestation.
6. Employees who are the subject of an investigation will be immediately suspended from their position, pending completion of the investigation. Employees who admit to the abuse or molestation will be terminated immediately. Whenever termination of employment is a factor, we will consult with legal counsel.
7. Volunteer subjects of any investigation will be immediately suspended from their positions pending completion of the investigation.

POLICY VIOLATION

1. Ministry workers must promptly notify their ministry coordinator or supervisor when they or others violate the procedures mandated by this policy.
2. Ministry coordinators, supervisors, and ministry leaders who become aware of a violation of the procedures set by this policy are required to take all necessary steps to ensure future compliance with them. For every violation a report will be made to the Child Protection Committee of the violation and a corrective plan of action will be implemented. In the process of ensuring compliance with this policy, it may become necessary to remove workers from their positions. BSLC Child Protection Policy Revised April

SEXUAL OFFENDER ATTENDANCE

1. Each case will be considered individually to determine whether attendance and/or ministry participation will be allowed. A covenant agreement will be required for any accused or determined offender to be allowed to attend worship services or participate in ministry at Beautiful Savior. The covenant contract will include participation restrictions and chaperone/accountability requirements. See Sexual Offender Safety Plan for Attendance.

2. The Child Protection Committee will be responsible for oversight and management of sexual offenders in attendance at BSLC.

POLICY REVISION

Every three years, we will review and update this policy. At that time, the procedures mandated by this policy will be reviewed by employees, ministry staff, Child Protection Committee and the Director's Board. When changes are made, ministry leaders will communicate them to all employees and volunteers affected by the policy changes. Revised April 25th, 2017