

**SAFETY AWARENESS FOR EVERYONE POLICY  
(S.A.F.E.)  
FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH  
OF GREENSBORO, NC, INC.**



**Revision effective July 1, 2017**

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## STATEMENT OF INTENT

The members and staff of First Evangelical Lutheran Church of Greensboro, Inc. ("First Lutheran Church" throughout this document) are committed to maintaining a safe environment in which children, youth and vulnerable adults participating in educational or recreational programs both on and off the First Lutheran Church campus are protected from physical, emotional and/or sexual abuse/assault and in which church staff, teachers and volunteers are protected from false allegations of abuse/assault.

## DEFINITIONS

(Words or phrases in bold may be used throughout the policy)

**Children and Youth:** Any person under 18 years of age involved in programs provided at or sponsored by First Lutheran Church.

**Vulnerable Adult/s:** Persons 18 or older who live in or receive services from licensed facilities such as nursing homes, hospitals or treatment centers for chemical dependency, mental retardation, mental illness or physical disabilities or in family settings and unlikely to report abuse/assault or neglect because of impaired physical or mental function, or emotional status.

**Provider(s):** Any staff person, teacher or volunteer (i.e., any person other than a parent) participating or providing supervision in programs for **Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults** provided at or sponsored by First Lutheran Church.

## VOLUNTEER CLASSIFICATIONS (Refer to Attachment 2):

- VISITOR:** Any person who has not been a member of First Lutheran for at least six months and/or has yet to complete the application and screening process.
- TEEN VOLUNTEER:** Any person between the ages of 12 and 17 years providing a service during an authorized event.
- LEVEL II VOLUNTEER:** Any person who has completed the application and screening process and the required review of this Policy.
- LEVEL I VOLUNTEER:** Any person who has completed the application and screening process, the successful completion of Safe Gatherings\* training, and required review of the Policy.

\*Safe Gatherings is a comprehensive system that incorporates an online application, several levels of background checks, paperless reference checks, and online abuse prevention training.

**ABUSE/ASSAULT:** As referred to in this document includes physical, emotional and sexual:

- **PHYSICAL ABUSE/ASSAULT** of children includes any non-accidental physical injury caused or allowed to be caused by the child's parent, guardian, caretaker or volunteer. It may include burning, beating, punching, etc. By definition, it is not an accident.
- **EMOTIONAL ABUSE/ASSAULT** as defined by North Carolina law is as follows: "Any person or caretaker who has the care of a child and creates or allows to be created serious emotional damage to the child and refuses to permit, provide for or participate in treatment." Emotional abuse/assault includes blaming, belittling or rejecting a child.
- **SEXUAL ABUSE/ASSAULT** as defined by North Carolina Law is as follows: "Any person or caretaker who has the care of a child and commits, permits or encourages the commission of vaginal intercourse, any sexual act, the obscene or pornographic photographing, filming or depicting of a child in those acts for commercial or non-commercial usage or any other offense against public morality and decency provided by Chapter 14, Subchapter VII, Article 26 by, with or upon a juvenile in violation of law; commits, permits or encourages any act of prostitution with or by the juvenile."

## **PROGRAM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

To achieve the goals of preventing either incidents of abuse/assault or the unfounded assertion of such conduct, First Lutheran Church has developed appropriate procedures to be followed in the following areas:

- Selection of **Providers**.
- Orientation and training of **Providers**.
- Supervision of **Providers**.
- Reporting of and responding to incidents and allegations of abuse/assault of **Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults**.
- The general policy and procedures shall apply to all persons, whether compensated staff, teacher or volunteer **Providers**, all church members, visitors and guests. As situations arise in the future, which any specific procedure does not address or does not practically address, these procedures may be revised by the First Lutheran Church Congregation Council.

All **Providers** must be approved by the Senior Pastor or their designee. The failure of a **Provider** to comply with this policy may result in the **Provider** being removed from the approved list.

## PROCEDURES FOR THE SCREENING AND HIRING OF TEACHERS, STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

1. All compensated staff and teachers of First Lutheran Church and First Lutheran School for Young Children shall complete the First Lutheran Church Application and Screening Form for Staff and Volunteers (Attachment 1), successfully pass the Safe Gatherings training and background checks.
2. Uncompensated volunteer **Providers** for programs sponsored by First Lutheran Church when **Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults** are entrusted to the care of adults shall complete the First Lutheran Church Application and Screening Form for Staff and Volunteers.
3. The confidential personnel files of all compensated staff and teachers shall include the completed employment application, the Application and Screening Form for Staff and Volunteers, and documentation they have successfully passed the Safe Gatherings training and background checks.
4. Confidentiality of the completed and signed forms utilized to implement this policy shall be maintained by limiting the access to these filed forms to the Senior Pastor and/or his designee.
5. All Volunteers who work with **Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults**, even in a limited capacity of only a few hours per year, are required to be active members of First Lutheran Church for a minimum of six months or be parents of children enrolled in the First Lutheran School for Young Children of First Lutheran or other church sponsored programs and must complete and sign the application and screening form. Prior to the six month anniversary these individuals may attend activities as a **visitor**.
6. Adults who have been convicted of either sexual, emotional or physical abuse or assault are not permitted to be volunteer **Providers** for **Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults**.
7. Safe Gatherings training and background checks must be renewed every two years. A search of the North Carolina Sex Offender Registry will be conducted annually for all **Providers**.
8. Other organizations that use First Lutheran facilities for programs for **Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults** must either agree to abide by this policy or operate under a compatible policy issued by that organization. The similar procedures of that

organization must be approved by the First Lutheran Church Senior Pastor or his designee.

## **PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING INCIDENTS OF ABUSE/ ASSAULT OF CHILDREN, YOUTH OR VULNERABLE ADULTS**

1. Dial 911! Incidents of abuse/assault or reasonably suspected incidents of abuse/assault of **Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults** shall be reported as soon as possible (and at least within 24 hours) to the Director of the Department of Social Services of Guilford County at 336-641-3795 or 1-800-378-5315 and to the First Lutheran Church staff person directly responsible for the area of ministry or education where the incident occurred and/or to a pastor. A staff person and/or pastor shall also make a report or verify the making of the report.

2. Questionable or inappropriate behavior, when observed, shall be reported to the First Lutheran Church staff person directly responsible for the area of ministry or education, as such conduct can precede abuse/assault, even though the observed act itself is not.

3. All adult members of First Lutheran Church staff and other adults participating in programs on the property of First Lutheran Church are encouraged to be sensitive to the potential for abuse/assault of **Children, Youth** or other **Vulnerable Adults**. They shall be encouraged not to hesitate to caution others that activities they observe are, or may appear to be, inappropriate.

4. Organizations that use First Lutheran Church facilities that have reporting procedures of their own shall follow those established reporting practices. In addition to following their notification procedures, the organization that uses First Lutheran Church facilities shall also notify First Lutheran Church Senior Pastor or designee as soon as possible (and within 24 hours) about any incident or suspected incident involving any person affiliated with that arm of the organization that uses First Lutheran Church facilities.

5. Any report involving a pastor or other rostered leader of the North Carolina Synod of the ELCA shall also be made to Synod Office at 704-633-4861.

## PROCEDURES FOR RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE/ASSAULT OF CHILDREN, YOUTH OR VULNERABLE ADULTS

1. All the facts and circumstances of an incident shall be documented. Concurrently with the notification to the Guilford County Department of Social Services (DSS), (refer to reporting procedures) the Senior Pastor and designee shall be notified of the incident/reasonably suspected incident of abuse/assault.
2. The Senior Pastor or designee shall be responsible for first securing the safety of the potential victim in cases where County DSS is not responsible for the potential victim, for immediate notification of parents/ guardian of the potential victim and for notification of the person(s) accused of the abuse/assault. The safety of the potential victim must be safeguarded before the person(s) accused of abuse/assault.
3. Investigations shall be carried out by Guilford County DSS and/or law enforcement and not by church personnel.
4. Persons accused shall be immediately relieved of further responsibilities involving direct contact with **Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults** until the investigation is completed and the allegations are cleared or charges are formally brought against the accused. If charges are made, the Personnel Committee of First Lutheran Church will consult with the accused regarding future responsibilities.
5. Incidents/reasonable suspected incidents shall be reported to church legal counsel, if any, and to the liability insurer for the church by the Senior Pastor or the Director of Administration.
6. All steps taken in the course of handling the incident or report shall be documented by all involved parties and maintained with other secure files.
7. All parties involved in the incident/reasonably suspected incident, including the accuser, the accused and the victim, shall be treated with dignity, support and Christian love in accordance with the mission and principles of First Lutheran Church. Confidentiality of all persons involved shall be safeguarded to the extent possible.
8. The Senior Pastor or designee shall be the sole spokesperson for the church insofar as media inquiries are concerned. Confidentiality of all persons involved shall be safeguarded to the extent possible.

## TRAINING AND SUPERVISION PROCEDURES

1. It shall be the responsibility of the First Lutheran Church staff member accountable for any First Lutheran Church program that involves **Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults** to insure that appropriate practices are implemented within those programs and activities to reduce the risk of abuse/assault. The specific circumstances of each program shall be considered in the development of those program-specific practices.
2. An education program on abuse/assault issues involving **Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults** shall be offered at least every two years to all staff and volunteer **Providers** at First Lutheran Church addressing these goals:
  - Protection of **Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults** in First Lutheran Church programs and activities
  - Protection of **Providers** from exposure to “high-risk” situations and false accusations
  - Awareness of the symptoms of abuse/assault
  - Understanding of the reporting procedures and the procedures for responding to incidents/reasonably suspected incidents of abuse/ assault
  - Demonstration of appropriate/expected communication between people and behavior styles that foster healthy relationships.
3. This educational program is available to all adult members of First Lutheran Church and is required training for each new compensated staff or teacher and new **Level 1 and Level 2 Providers**. Their immediate supervisor or, for volunteers, the staff member in charge of the volunteer’s area of interest is responsible for insuring completion of training. Each rostered person on the First Lutheran Church staff shall be asked to sign an acknowledgement that she or he has received and read a copy of the Employment Policy and Procedures Manual as well as a copy of the “Sexual Misconduct Policies and Procedures for Rostered Leaders” issued by the NC Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. This acknowledgement will be kept in their employment file.
4. To the extent practical, **Providers** shall observe the “two-adult /open door” rule at all times, which requires an adult working with children, youth or vulnerable adults, to be accompanied by an another adult, and to provide visual access to the room. This requires that doors without windows must always be left slightly ajar when conducting programs.
5. To the extent practical, **Providers** shall have no one-on-one contact with **Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults**, without notification of one of pastoral staff and prior parental approval.
6. Where practical, the “two-adult” rule applies to vehicles used to transport youth to



and from youth activities that are not conducted on the property of First Lutheran Church. In those situations where two adults are not present in each vehicle, in no case shall only one youth be present in the same vehicle (to prevent a “one-adult/one-youth alone” situation). Also, solo adult drivers must establish a “caravan” with at least

one other driver with the understanding that the two or more vehicles are always within eyesight of each other. (This is intended to prevent a solo adult from getting “lost” or placed in a “high-risk” situation during transit to or from a youth activity.)

7. The Senior Pastor of First Lutheran Church or his/her designee will establish a schedule for unannounced visits to all scheduled small group classroom situations involving **Providers**.

8. All **Providers** for any overnight church activity involving **Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults** must be approved in advance by the pastoral or program staff accountable for that program. At least one **Level 1 Provider** shall participate. Males and females shall be segregated during sleeping times. If it is necessary for adults to share sleeping accommodations with **Children** or **Youth**, a minimum of two adults shall sleep in those areas. Overnight events require a ratio of one adult per ten **Children** or **Youth**, with a minimum of two adults.

9. Written parental permission, including a signed Medical Liability Release form and emergency contacts, shall be required prior to taking **Children or Youth** on any off campus trip or overnight stay on campus.

10. A parent or guardian is responsible for insuring that his/her child is not left alone in an unsupervised area. Drop-off and pick-up of children shall only be by the parent or guardian unless written, signed notification is provided for other arrangements.

11. The compensated church staff member directly responsible for campus programs shall make recommendations to the property manager and/or church administration committee for facility modifications that could further reduce the risk of abuse/ assault occurring on the church campus.

12. Whenever nursery services are provided by the church, **Providers** shall follow the rules and guidelines that have been established for the nursery.

13. Possession or use of weapons or other dangerous items is prohibited by any **Provider** or participant, regardless of it being otherwise lawful.

14. Entities of other organizations that use First Lutheran Church facilities must either agree to abide by this policy or operate under similar training and supervision

procedures issued by that organization. The similar procedures of that organization must be submitted to First Lutheran Church Senior Pastor.

## MANDATED REPORTERS

- Any person who has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is being abused or neglected is required to report this information to the Department of Social Services at 336-641-3795. Those required to report include professionals, relatives or any other person in the community, without exception.
- North Carolina statutes provide protection from civil or criminal liability for any person making a report in good faith.
- The Department of Social Services is not allowed to reveal the name of the person making the report of suspected abuse/assault or neglect.

## ADDITIONAL POLICIES

During hours of operation for the School For Young Children, the north end of the building (that space occupied by the School) shall remain locked at all times and access granted only to authorized staff members. All visitors, parents or guests must use the north entrance to the building and check-in with the School Director or designee upon arrival. School children should enter and dismiss only from these doors.

During any activity that involves **Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults**, building access should be limited to those entrances that have a **Provider** monitoring such entrance. This would include events such as Vacation Bible School (VBS), day camps, youth retreats and “lock-ins”,

During normal operating hours, all visitors (including church members) are asked to report in at the main office. Anyone that is unaccompanied by a staff person should display a “Visitor” name badge and return such before they depart.

No **Provider** may share, post, or otherwise distribute photos, comments or otherwise communicate any images or sound of; through social media, email or any other form of electronic communication any **Child, Youth or Vulnerable Adult** without express written consent of the individual or their parent/guardian and in consultation with a staff member or SFYC director

# FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH APPLICATION AND SCREENING FORM FOR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

In compliance with the Safety Awareness For Everyone (S.A.F.E.) Policy

The Safety Awareness For Everyone Policy of First Lutheran Church has been created to reflect our commitment to provide protective care to everyone who participates in activities at or with our church. Please be sure to read the Policy before completing this application. Copies are available in the church office.

One of the goals of First Lutheran is to “create an open, safe community where the love of God is shared and people are accepted and encouraged to grow in discipleship.” In keeping with that purpose, this policy seeks to assure that First Lutheran Church is continually working toward providing an environment safe from physical, emotional, verbal, sexual or any type of abuse for those participating in, receiving and/or providing its ministries.

For Office Use Only: Staff \_\_\_ Level 1 \_\_\_ Level 2 \_\_\_ Teen (Under 18) \_\_\_ Visitor \_\_\_

## PERSONAL INFORMATION

Please indicate the area in which you will be working: FLC \_\_\_ School For Young Children \_\_\_

Full Name (First, Middle, Maiden, Last) \_\_\_\_\_

Present Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Numbers: Home/Cell \_\_\_\_\_ Work \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth (MM/DD/YYYY) \_\_\_\_\_ Do you have a current driver’s license? No \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_

If yes, license number and state of issue \_\_\_\_\_

List any previous addresses over the last 7 years (including county name):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## **CHURCH AND PERSONAL HISTORY (Attach separate sheet if necessary)**

**Please answer each question. Your response will be used only by First Lutheran Church and not released to any third party. If for any reason you prefer not to answer these questions in writing, you may discuss your answers in confidence with the Senior Pastor.**

Name of church which you are a member \_\_\_\_\_

List (names/address) of other churches you have attended regularly during the past five years.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
List at least three personal references, including contact information that may speak to your qualifications and abilities to work with children, youth or vulnerable adults:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
List all your previous experiences, including church work/volunteer but not exclusive to, for at least the past five years involving children, youth or vulnerable adults (list each organization's name, address, type of work performed, dates, and supervising person.) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
List any personal gift, training, education or other factor that has prepared you for work with children, youth or vulnerable adults.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Have you ever been convicted of physical, sexual or emotion assault/abuse? No \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_  
*If yes, please explain, attaching a separate sheet if necessary.*

Have you ever been formally accused by an individual of physical, sexual, or emotional assault/abuse? No \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ *If yes, please explain, attaching a separate sheet if necessary.*

I have read the Safety Awareness For Everyone (S.A.F.E.) Policy and agree to be observe all policies stated. The information contained in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge. I authorize any references or churches listed in the application to give you any information (including opinions) they may have regarding my character and fitness to work with children, youth or vulnerable adults. In consideration of the receipt and evaluation of this application by First Lutheran Church, I hereby release any individual, organization, church, charity or employer, reference or any other person or organization, including record custodians, both collectively and individually, from any and all liability for damages of whatever kind or nature which may at any time result to me, my heirs, or family, on account of compliance or attempts to comply with authorization.

Should my application be accepted, I agree to be bound by the constitution, bylaws and policies of First Lutheran Church, as amended from time to time, and to perform my services on behalf of the church in accordance with scriptural conduct.

I further state that I HAVE CAREFULLY READ THE ABOVE RELEASE AND KNOW THE CONTENTS THEREOF, AND I SIGN THIS RELEASE AS MY OWN FREE ACT. This is a legally binding agreement, which I have read and understand.

**Applicant's signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

## S.A.F.E. POLICY VOLUNTEER PROVIDER CLASSIFICATIONS

Status	Member Relationship Term	Age Limit	Screening Form	Reference Check	FLC S.A.F.E. Review	Safe Gatherings Completion	Limitations (see below)
Visitor	0-6 mo.	> 18 yr.	X				"A"
Teen Volunteer	N/A	12-18 yrs.	X				"A"
Level 2 Volunteer	6-12 mo.	> 18 yr.	X	X	X		"B"
Level 1 Volunteer	> 12 mo.	> 18 yr.	X	X	X	X	"C"

### Limitations:

- A. 1) Never left alone with a child, youth or vulnerable adult. 2) Always under the supervision of a Level 1 or Level 2 volunteer. 3) Single day activities only.
- B. 1) Available as an overnight escort or to escort a group of children off-campus under the supervision of staff or a Level I volunteer.
- C. 1) Eligible to serve as a staff designee. 2) Eligible to direct overnight activities approved by staff.