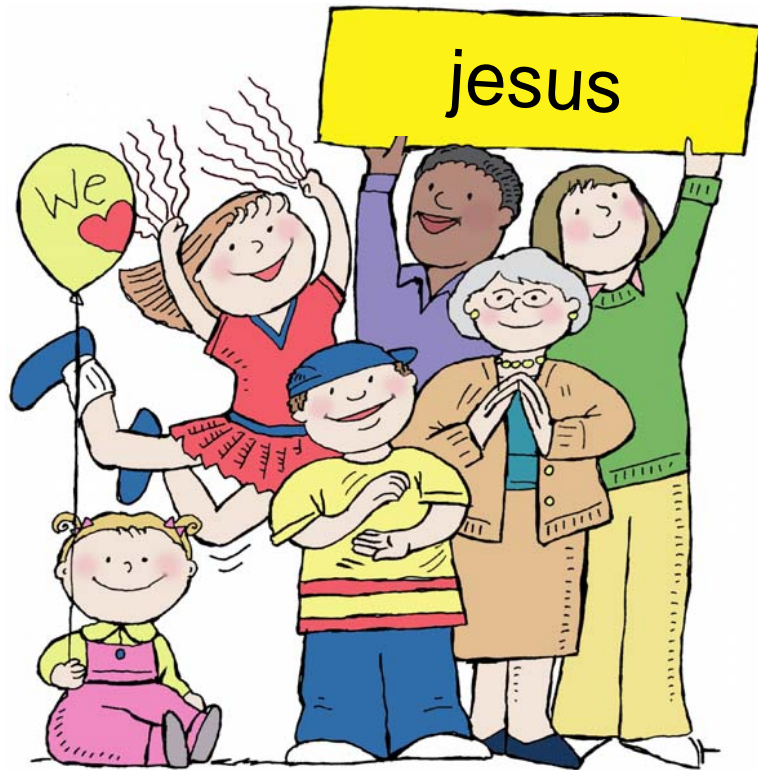


Child Protection Plan

Proactive Guidelines to Prevent Child Abuse for
Liberty Evangelical Free Church—Pella, Iowa



As a church, we believe that the spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being of children is vital. These guidelines are intended to ensure that church activities involving children are consistent with the teachings and example of our Lord Jesus Christ and with the Christian tradition of nurturing vulnerable children.

Jesus said, "Let the children come to me. Don't stop them! For the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to such as these." He also said, "Anyone who welcomes a little child like this on my behalf is welcoming me. But if anyone causes one of these little ones who trusts in me to lose faith, it would be better for that person to be thrown into the sea with a large millstone tied around the neck."

When a child is physically or sexually abused in the context of the church, then children, families, and communities can lose faith. The Kingdom of God is a wonderful place where the energy and curiosity of a child should be directed toward Christ, in whom they can find lasting joy and fulfillment.

It is imperative that Liberty Evangelical Free Church take steps to protect children. This plan includes information about child abuse followed by four areas of concern that call for proactive efforts to prevent child abuse from occurring within our church family. Even though no system is fail-safe, Liberty EFC's guidelines are designed to protect and promote growth for each child and adult involved. All workers, paid and volunteer, are expected to observe these guidelines.

Steps to take in the application process

We are grateful that you are desirous of applying to work in our children's or student ministries.

Here's what you need to do:

1. Read through this booklet in its entirety.
2. Complete the application form. Sample forms are included in this booklet.
3. Give completed application form to the appropriate Ministry Leader. Ministry Leader will get the application to the appropriate Staff Pastor.

Here's what we will do:

1. The appropriate Staff Pastor will review the application.
2. He will make contact with references listed as necessary.
3. He will ask follow-up questions of the applicant if necessary.
4. He will notify Ministry Leader and applicant (that's you) of approval.

Applicant's Statement:

(those who have a need to know in order to carry out their responsibilities for Liberty Evangelical Free Church or as required by law) will be able to review the form.

1. Have you every been convicted of, or pled guilty to child sexual abuse, physical abuse, incest, sexual molestation, improper advances or improprieties? Yes No
2. If you have ever been a victim of physical or sexual abuse, please contact the Senior Pastor. Abuse could have been over a period of time or one isolated incident. Being a survivor of physical or sexual abuse does not automatically disqualify a person from serving in Children/Youth Ministries.

For the protection of this church, for your protection, and for the safety of our children and youth, we request that you carefully read and sign the following:

I grant permission for church leadership to conduct an optional background check of my record and references.

I hereby release and hold harmless from all liability all persons, organizations, and other entities which provide references or information to Liberty Evangelical Free Church with regard to my background, fitness and character; provided they do so in good faith and without malice.

I hereby hold harmless from liability Liberty Evangelical Free Church, its pastors, staff, employees, and volunteers with regard to any decision that is made regarding my application. Should my application be accepted, I agree to uphold the By-laws and Statement of Faith of this church. Further, I agree to refrain from unscriptural conduct in the performance of my services, public or private, on behalf of this church.

I have read and I understand the Child Protection Plan and this application. I understand that this is a legally binding agreement that will be held in confidence.

Applicants Signature: _____

Date: _____ Date Of Birth: _____

Social Security Number: _____

Witnessed By: _____

Date: _____

1. Volunteer Screening

The Child Protection Plan of Liberty Evangelical Free Church is comprised of the following:

The following criteria will be mandatory for all Children and/or Student Ministry volunteers.

1. **Minimum Age:** All volunteers must be 18 years of age or older. Younger persons may assist adults, but they may not take the place of adult workers.
2. Before a volunteer can work with minors, applicants must complete a *Children's/Student Ministries Application Form* and complete and sign a *Safety/Security Guideline Form* giving permission to check references and background information. Application must be approved by the pastoral staff.
3. Individuals with a prior history of/or conviction for child molestation or abuse, regardless of conversion, will not be permitted to work with minors. *No exceptions will be made to this policy.*
4. Applicants must be a member of Liberty EFC or have been a regular attender of the church for at least six months. This serves to provide us with a reasonable period of observation.
5. **Criminal Background Check:** Required for paid staff positions with responsibilities in children's and youth ministries and supervision. For volunteer workers, the leader of the ministry in which the worker intends to work may request a Criminal Background Check. If requested, the volunteer shall comply with execution of any documents necessary to complete the request. A failure to comply with the request for a Criminal Background Check shall disqualify a volunteer from work in that ministry, until such

time as either the request for a Criminal Background Check is withdrawn by the leader of the ministry, or the applicant submits to such a Request.

2. Volunteer Supervision

For the protection of the children, families, and volunteers at Liberty, the following guidelines must be followed.

1. A volunteer shall never be alone with a minor of the opposite sex in a private setting, whether on Church property, in a vehicle, private home or elsewhere. A volunteer shall never be alone with a minor of the same sex without prior permission from the supervising pastor or the minor's parent/guardian. All classes and activities involving a minor child or children shall be "open door" meaning that workers and parents have the right to enter and observe the class or activity at any time without prior notice or permission.
2. Volunteers and/or staff persons shall not correct a minor with corporal or physical punishment.
3. Touching a minor's breasts, buttocks, genital area, inner thigh, or the clothing covering those areas of the body, is prohibited. The only exception to this rule is for the hygienic care necessary for infants and toddlers. For example: changing diapers or providing assistance in going to the toilet. When a volunteer is caring for a child who is in the process of toilet training, the volunteer may accompany the child to the restroom to assist, provided the door to the restroom is left open.
4. Any room in which a student or child activity or class occurs shall have a window in the door. If the room does not have a window in the door, the door shall be left open at all times.
5. The church will attempt to provide adequate staffing to

Personal References:

References: Please list three (3) people you have known for at least one year, who are not related to you and who have a definite knowledge of your character and qualifications to work with children/youth.

1). Social Friend or Neighbor:

Name: _____
Address: _____ Ph: _____
Occupation: _____ Length of time known: _____

2). Employer or Fellow Employee:

Name: _____
Address: _____ Ph: _____
Occupation: _____ Length of time known: _____

3). Ministry Co-Worker:

Name: _____
Address: _____ Ph: _____
Occupation: _____ Length of time known: _____

SAMPLE

Church And Ministry Information:

- Are you a member of Liberty Evangelical Free Church? Yes No
If not, how long have you been attending? _____
- Please list the two most recent churches you were a member of or regularly attended:

Church Name: _____ Dates Attended _____

Address: _____

Pastor's Name: _____

Ministry Positions held: _____

Church Name: _____ Dates Attended _____

Address: _____

Pastor's Name: _____

Ministry Positions held: _____

- Please list any previous non-church work with minors including the organization's name and address, description of work, and length of service:

- In which areas of ministry are you interested in serving at LEFC?

- Why are you interested in being involved in this ministry area?

help prevent uncomfortable circumstances from occurring. , except for emergency or temporary situations, the following ratios shall be adopted and utilized by the Church in staffing student activities and ministries: (see Worker to Child Ratios chart)

Worker To Child Ratios		
Ministry	Workers	Children
Infant Nursery*	2	8
Toddler Nursery*	2	12
Sunday School/Children's Ministry	2	18
Youth Programs	2	20

- Only post-high school age and older are to be helpers in the nurseries during the Sunday school hour.
-
- Activities outside of the premises of Liberty EFC must be approved by a member of the pastoral staff. A *Medical Permission Form* will be filled out by each student at the beginning of each year. A single *Auto Safety/Trip Planning Sheet* and a *Young Person's Agreement Form (activity release form)* for each participant must be completed and signed prior to any activity that meets any of the following three standards:
 - Trips that are estimated to be longer than 50 miles round trip.
 - Overnight events (in town or out), or...
 - Taking young people to participate in activities that may pose special hazards such as swimming, boating, camping, hiking, cycling, climbing/rope course, skiing, airplane flights or similar. (Extra supervision may be required depending on the activity.)
 - In an effort to ensure that the Liberty Evangelical Free Church Child Protection Policy is administered by staff and

volunteers in a manner to protect the best interests and welfare of the children served, additional training may be offered from time to time for staff and/or volunteers. Attendance at such training may be required by staff persons and/or volunteers if requested by the Elder Board in furtherance of this Child Protection Policy.

Information About Child Abuse

Child Abuse is defined in Iowa Code Section 232.68 as one or more of the following six categories: physical abuse, mental injury, denial of critical care, child prostitution, sexual abuse, or the presence of illegal drugs. A child is any person under the age of 18.

Physical Abuse constitutes "any non-accidental physical injury, or injury which is at variance with the history (explanation) given of it, suffered by a child (anyone under 18) as the result of acts or omissions of a person responsible for the care of the child." These may appear as bruises, burns, fractures, bites, cuts, sprains, internal injuries, auditory, dental, ocular, or brain damage. These may be accompanied by behavioral changes as well.

Sexual Abuse constitutes any incident of sexual contact and or interaction in which a child is used to sexually stimulate or gratify either the child or another person.

- Child sexual abuse may be *violent or non-violent*. All child sexual abuse is an exploitation of a child's vulnerability and powerlessness in which the abuser is fully responsible for the actions.
- Child sexual abuse is a *criminal behavior* that involves children in sexual behaviors for which they are not personally, socially, and developmentally ready.
- Child sexual abuse includes behaviors that involve *touching*

- Have you ever been convicted of a crime, other than a traffic citation?
 Yes No
If yes, what was the charge, and when did it occur? What did you do?

- Have you ever been charged with a crime involving abuse (whether physical, mental, or sexual) of a child? Yes No
If yes, when did this occur? _____
What was the outcome?

- Has a Complaint of child abuse ever been found against you by the Department of Human Services? Yes No
If yes, when did this occur? _____
What did you do?

- Have you ever been the victim of child abuse?
 Yes No

Please provide a brief description of your personal relationship with Jesus Christ (including how you learned about Jesus, when and why you committed your life to Him, and how your relationship with Jesus affects your daily life): _____

Application to Volunteer With Children and Students Liberty Evangelical Free Church

Personal Information:

This information form is part of an intentional process to provide a safe, caring, and secure environment for all children, youth, and adults who participate in ministries at Liberty EFC.

Date: _____
Name: _____ Phone: _____
Address: _____
Employment: _____ Phone: _____
 Single Married Divorced Remarried Widowed
—If married, spouse's name _____
Children's names and ages/grade level _____

- Are you and your spouse in agreement concerning your volunteering?
 Yes No
- Have you ever been employed in a position around children or youth?
 Yes No
If yes, please explain: _____

- Is there anything in your background that would help us determine your suitability to work with minors? Yes No
If yes, please explain: _____

(You may refuse to answer this question, or you may discuss your answer confidentially with the Pastor overseeing the ministry area for which you are applying.)

and *non-touching* aspects.

Touching

Fondling; oral, genital, and anal penetration; intercourse; and forcible rape

Non-Touching

Verbal comments; pornographic videos and pictures; exhibitionism; and having children witness sexual acts

3. Reporting Requirements

A volunteer is to report immediately to one of the Staff Pastors any and all suspected incidences of child abuse or child sexual abuse (touching or non-touching).

1. Upon any reasonable suspicion by a volunteer that a child has been abused as defined by the Policy, the volunteer shall report said abuse immediately (within 24 hours) to the Senior Pastor or Elder Appointed Representative. For purposes of implementation of this Policy, the Elder Board shall designate a member of the Board as the Representative to receive and investigate alleged violations of the Child Protection Policy.
2. The person hearing of the allegation should not attempt to investigate on his or her own. : "The Senior Pastor or Elder Appointed Representative shall be responsible for investigation of any alleged violation of the Child Protection Policy. Any person may report an alleged violation of the Child Protection Policy to the Senior Pastor or Elder Appointed Representative. All such reports shall be kept confidential by the recipient, unless disclosure is otherwise required by legal authority. The investigating agent shall make all efforts to ensure the confidentiality of the victim, suspected abuser, and reporter is preserved."

4. Response Plan (Staff Responsibility)

According to Iowa laws, staff and volunteers in a church are "permissive reporters", not "mandatory reporters". According to the Child Protection Plan of Liberty Evangelical Free Church, the Pastoral Staff will make all determinations regarding reporting accusations or suspicions to law enforcement agencies. By law, any citizen is permitted to do so. While you have this right, we would ask that you work with the staff in every way possible, without defying your conscience regarding your legal rights.

1. Upon receipt, whether verbally or in writing, of an alleged violation of the Child Protection Policy, the Senior Pastor or Elder Appointed Representative shall investigate the allegation.
2. Investigation may include, but is not limited to: contacting witnesses; obtaining written or verbal statements; seizing possession or control of exhibits or evidence; interviewing the suspected violator, complaining party, child, parents, or others; taking photographs or preparing other demonstrative evidence; performing any activity or function necessary to determine the validity of the alleged violation.
3. Confidentiality of the parties involved shall be preserved, to the extent legally possible, by the investigating party.
4. The Senior Pastor or Elder Appointed Representative shall refer the matter to the Department of Human Services (DHS) or other law enforcement upon a preliminary conclusion that a child has been a victim of "Child Abuse" in accordance with the definitions adopted herein. The Senior Pastor or Elder Appointed Representative, upon such a preliminary conclusion, shall contact the Church insurance company and counsel, if necessary.
5. The Senior Pastor or Elder Appointed Representative shall cooperate with DHS and/or law enforcement personnel in their investigation of the allegation.
6. If the Senior Pastor or Elder Appointed Representative

concludes, after investigation, that no violation of the Child Protection policy occurred, no report shall be made.

7. If the Senior Pastor or Elder Appointed Representative concludes, after investigation, that a violation of the Child Protection Policy has occurred, which does not constitute "Child Abuse" under the definitions adopted herein, the agent shall report his findings to the Elder Board, which shall then determine whether disciplinary action, including prohibition from continued volunteer activity, is deemed necessary and appropriate.
8. If an allegation is raised against a staff or volunteer, which the Senior Pastor or Elder Appointed Representative preliminarily concludes may constitute a substantial violation of the Child Protection Policy, the Senior Pastor or Elder Appointed Representative shall recommend to the Elder Board that said volunteer or staff person be suspended from his/her duties with regard to children (with or without pay, at the discretion of the Board) until the completion of the investigation by the Senior Pastor, Elder Appointed Representative, or law enforcement personnel.
9. During the investigation of an alleged violation of the Child Protection Policy, the Senior Pastor or Elder Appointed Representative shall advise the parents or guardian of the victim of the allegation, unless the parent/guardian is alleged to have committed the abuse. The parent/guardian retains the right, regardless of investigation by the Church agent, to report the allegation to the Department of Human Services or law enforcement.
10. The protection of the welfare and best interests of the child shall be paramount in any investigation by the Senior Pastor or Elder Appointed Representative.