

Child Care and Safety Policy and Procedures for Living Hope Christian Church

Introduction: Living Hope Christian Church cares about children and establishes these policies and procedures to do what we can to assure their safety while in our care. This document will address 3 issues:

- i. How those working with children and adolescents are selected and processed
- ii. Policies for the supervision of children
- iii. Procedures for reporting allegations of abuse.

Selection of Those Working with Children and Adolescence:

All individuals serving in ministries working with children (Nursery, Sunday School, AWANA, and Teen Ministry) will fill out an application, providing reference, and answering whether they have ever had any allegations of abuse or neglect waged against them.

After an application is completed, the ministry head will conduct a personal interview.

To serve in children's ministries, one must be a member of LHCC for one year (or six months if reference of former church work can be provided that satisfies the balance of six months).

All those working with persons younger than 18 will have their names subject to an NCIC background check.

Policies for Supervision of Children:

Each group of children should have at least two workers present at all times with at least one being an Adult. The other may be 13 years old or older. Church workers **MUST** avoid being alone with a single child at all times and should avoid being alone with children if possible.

For children, infant through kindergarten age, the desirable ratio is one worker for every five children. For grades one through six, the desired ratio is one worker for each eight children. For teens, the desired ratio is one adult per ten adolescents in church and local activities and one adult per six for out of town activities.

All those working with children should remain in public areas where both the youth and the adult can be seen by other people. When taking children to the rest room, workers should stay out of the rest room and wait for the children to finish. If assistance needs to be given, another worker should be sought, or if that is not possible, the child's parent needs to be notified of the assistance given.

If one on one contact outside of church is necessary or requested, parental permission is required as well as notifying the pastor. Females will minister to females and males will minister to males. Meetings are to be held in public places. For teen activities that involve both genders, both genders must be present in the leadership. When away from direct supervision, teens should be in groups of at least two.

All drivers providing transportation for youth activities must be at least 21 years of age and be able to produce a valid driver's license and proof of vehicle insurance.

Procedures for reporting allegations of abuse

All allegations of abuse will be treated seriously and sensitively. The attention will be given to privacy and confidentiality.

The line of reporting will be such:

- Any worker, who hears an allegation of abuse, must bring the matter to the head of the ministry. They are not to try to ask the victim questions or investigate what happened.
- The head of the ministry will then bring it to the pastor or elders attention.
- The elders will then conduct a preliminary investigation to assess the facts of the matter.
- Local police will be contacted to report any abuse, as well as our insurance company and legal advisor.

All actions and statements by representatives of the church will be documented within 24 hours of the allegation. Care will be shown to the one bringing the allegation with the goal of not further traumatizing them with blame or disbelief.

Conclusion:

We establish these policies to best protect the children that God gives us care of. All children's workers must sign that they have read, understood and will follow these policies and procedures as part of their application process. It is the responsibility of the pastor, elders, deacons and ministry heads to assure that they are carried out.