

# Bethlehem Lutheran Church

## SAFE HAVEN:

# Policy for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse

Adopted by BLC Church Council  
February 2011

Adapted from *Model Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse* developed by The Church Pension Group in partnership with The Nathan Network

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# Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children and Youth

Relationships among people are at the foundation of Christian ministry and as such are central to the life of the church. Defining healthy and safe relationships through policies and codes of conduct is not meant, in any way, to undermine the strength and importance of personal interaction in our ministries. Rather, it is to assist in more clearly defining behaviors and practices that allow the church to more fully demonstrate its love and compassion for children and youth in sincere and genuine relationships.

Relationships in ministry should, ideally, always be experienced as caring and without intention to do harm or allow harm to occur. This Code of Conduct has been adopted by Bethlehem Lutheran Church to help the congregation create safe environments for children and youth and for those who minister to them. All Church Personnel are asked to carefully consider each statement in the Code and within the Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse before agreeing to adhere to the statements and continue in service to the church.

- Church Personnel agree to do their best to prevent abuse and neglect among children and youth involved in church activities and services.
- Church Personnel agree to not physically, sexually or emotionally abuse or neglect a child or youth.
- Church Personnel agree to comply with the policies for general conduct with children and youth as defined in this document.
- All Church Personnel agree to comply with the Guidelines for Appropriate Affection with children and youth.
- In the event that Church Personnel observe any inappropriate behaviors or possible policy violations with respect to children or youth, said personnel agree to immediately report their observations.
- All Church Personnel acknowledge their obligation and responsibility to protect children and youth and agree to report known or suspected abuse of children or youth to appropriate church leaders and state authorities in accordance with these policies.
- Church Personnel understand that the church will not tolerate abuse of children and youth and agree to honor this position in spirit and in action.

# General Definitions

## A. Church Personnel

For purposes of this policy, the following are included in the definition of Church Personnel when they are functioning in their respective roles for BLC:

1. All clergy whether stipendiary, non-stipendiary, or who are otherwise engaged in ministry or service to the church.
2. All paid personnel whether employed in areas of ministry or other kinds of services by the synod, its congregations, schools or other agencies.
3. Those who contract their services to the synod, its congregations, schools or other agencies.
4. Volunteers, including any person who enters into or offers him/herself for a church related service, or who actually assists with or performs a service, whether or not they have been selected or assigned to do so. Volunteers include members of advisory boards, councils, congregational committees, Bishop's Committees, and boards of directors.

## B. Children and Youth

A *child* is defined as anyone under the age of 12 years. A *youth* is defined as anyone who is at least 12 years old, but not yet 18 years old. A youth may also be an individual who is 18 years old or older, but still in high school.

## C. Church Personnel who Regularly Work With or Around Children or Youth

For purposes of this policy, the following are included in the definition of *Church Personnel who Regularly Work With or Around Children or Youth*:

1. All clergy whether stipendiary, non-stipendiary, or who otherwise are engaged in ministry or service to the church.
2. All paid or volunteer Church Personnel whose work regularly takes them throughout the facility or grounds or who have keys giving them access to the buildings on the grounds.
3. All persons who supervise (or assist with supervising) children or youth other than Sunday school teachers, in ministries, programs or activities more often than occasionally.
4. All persons who provide transportation to children or youth without other adults in the vehicle more often than occasionally.
5. Any paid personnel whose living quarters are on the grounds of the church or other related agency.
6. All council or committee members or other members of similar decision-making groups who have the authority to approve the creation of ministries, programs or activities for children or youth.

Examples of Church Personnel who *Regularly Work With or Around Children or Youth* include, but are not limited to:

- Lay youth ministers
- Volunteer youth leaders
- Children's or youth choir directors
- Organists who work with children or youth
- All Church Personnel who work or assist in the nursery more than four times a year
- All Church Personnel who work in the nursery if they are the only person over 21 present at any time
- All staff, whether volunteer or paid, at church camps
- Adults who participate in overnight activities with children or youth more than twice a year

#### **D. Church Personnel who Occasionally Work With or Around Children or Youth**

For purposes of this policy, the following are included in the definition of Church Personnel who *Occasionally Work With or Around Children or Youth*:

1. Sunday School Teachers
2. All persons who supervise or assist with supervising children or youth in ministries, programs or activities infrequently, generally no more than three times a year or for one program or activity during a year lasting less than a month (e.g. assisting with preparation for the Christmas pageant, teaching one "unit" of Sunday School for a month)
3. All persons who provide transportation to children or youth without other adults in the vehicle infrequently, generally no more than three times a year
4. All persons who work or assist in the nursery four or fewer times a year, whether on an emergency basis or otherwise
5. Adults who participate in overnight activities with children or youth once or twice a year

#### **E. Types of Abuse**

1. Physical abuse is non-accidental injury, which is intentionally inflicted upon a child or youth.
2. Sexual abuse perpetrated by an adult is any contact or activity of a sexual nature that occurs between a child or youth and an adult. This includes any activity, which is meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of the adult, child or youth.
3. Sexual abuse perpetrated by another child or youth is any contact or activity of a sexual nature that occurs between a child or youth and another child or youth when there is no consent, when consent is not possible, or when one child or youth has power over the other child or youth. This includes any activity which is meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of any of the children or youth.
4. Emotional abuse is mental or emotional injury to a child or youth that results in an observable and material impairment in the child or youth's growth, development or psychological functioning.
5. Neglect is the failure to provide for a child or youth's basic needs or the failure to protect a child or youth from harm.
6. Economic exploitation is the deliberate misplacement, exploitation, or wrongful temporary or permanent use of a child or youth's belongings or money.

# Safeguards for Children and Youth

## A. Screening and Selection

1. Any and all Church Personnel who *Regularly Work With or Around Children or Youth* shall be screened and selected utilizing at least the following:
  - a. **A Standard Application** completed by the applicant that includes an authorization for the release of information to conduct background checks and a signature on the **Code of Conduct** (Appendix E).
  - b. **Criminal Records Check** in any state where the applicant has resided during the past seven (7) years, and other states, if any, as determined by the church.
  - c. **Sexual Offender Registry Check** in any state where the applicant has resided during the past seven (7) years.
  - d. **Individual Interview** with the applicant, at the discretion of the Senior Pastor.
  - e. **Driving or Motor Vehicle Records Check** if the person may be transporting children or youth.
2. Any and all Church Personnel who *Occasionally Work With or Around Children or Youth* shall be screened and selected utilizing at least the following:
  - a. **A Standard Application** completed by the applicant that includes an acknowledgment for the release of information to conduct background checks and the **Code of Conduct** (Appendix E).
  - b. **Individual Interview** with the applicant, at the discretion of the Senior Pastor.
  - c. **Driving or Motor Vehicle Records Check** if the person will be transporting children or youth.
3. All information gathered about an applicant will be carefully reviewed and evaluated by the Senior Pastor to make a determination, in consultation with others as necessary (for example the Director of Youth and Household Ministry, the Director of Education, or the Council President) as to whether or not the person is appropriate to work with children or youth.
4. Church Personnel who work with or around children or youth must have a personnel file that is kept where other church records are kept.
5. Criminal records checks and sexual offender registry checks will be conducted every five (5) years for *Church Personnel who Regularly Work With or Around Children or Youth*.
6. Church Personnel who transfer within the Rocky Mountain Synod and apply (or are asked to apply) for, or who undertake a position working with or around children or youth, are required to undergo the same screening and selection process as outlined in Section A. 1–5 above. This requirement may be met through a transfer of a copy of their personnel file to the new congregation, school, agency, or program together with completion of a new application, individual interview and reference checks with the congregations, schools, agencies or other programs for which the applicant has worked with or around children or youth since the screening was last done as shown in the applicant's personnel file.

## B. Education and Training Requirements

1. Two hours of child abuse prevention education and training is required for all *Church Personnel who Regularly Work With or Around Children or Youth*. This training will be provided by Bethlehem Lutheran Church twice annually, once before Lent and once before the start of Sunday School.
2. One hour of child abuse awareness education and training is required for all *Church Personnel who Occasionally Work With or Around Children or Youth* before they start their work with children or youth.
3. Church Personnel who are responsible for screening, selection and supervision of others in programs for children and youth are required to complete an additional three (3) hours of specialized education and training in screening, selection and monitoring every five (5) years.

### C. Monitoring and Supervision of Programs

The structural guidelines and standards are covered in both this **Monitoring and Supervision** section and in the following section, **General Conduct for the Protection of Children and Youth**. The behaviors and interactions of persons with children and youth that need to be monitored and supervised are covered in the section on **General Conduct for the Protection of Children and Youth** (see D. below) and in the **Guidelines for Appropriate Affection** (Appendix A).

1. Every program for children and youth must have established ratios for adults and children. (1:12 when other programs are running simultaneously on the church property, 2:12 when this is the only programming running on church property, 1:5 when off property. Additionally at least one male and one female leader are required for all off-property co-ed events, activities, and retreats. See 8. below.) Compliance with the established ratios are required at all times.
2. It is expected that when Church Personnel are meeting in a one-on-one situation with a youth or child, that meeting is taking place in a public environment where both parties can be clearly seen. If the adult will be driving the youth to or from this meeting, additional permission from a parent must be obtained.
3. Church Personnel over the age of 21 must directly supervise Church Personnel under the age of 18 and be physically present during all activities.
4. An up-to-date list of approved congregation-sponsored programs for children and youth will be maintained in the church office or other place where church records are kept.
5. Church Personnel are not permitted to develop new activities for children and youth without approval from the Director of Education, Director of Youth and Household Ministry, or the Senior Pastor. Requests to develop new activities should be submitted in writing to the above staff. The staff will consider whether the plan for a new activity includes adequate adult supervision.
6. Each program will develop age-appropriate procedures to ensure the safety of children and youth using restrooms and showers or baths.
7. When supervising or assisting private activities such as dressing, showering or diapering infants or children, Church Personnel will remain in an area observable by other adults or work in pairs.
8. At least two unrelated Church Personnel must supervise activities. When both boys and girls are participating, male and female adults must be present.

### D. General Conduct for the Protection of Children and Youth

The following guidelines are intended to assist Church Personnel in monitoring and supervising behaviors and interactions with children and youth to identify and stop those that may be inherently harmful to children or youth, that are the type used by child molesters to groom children, youth and their parents, or that may create the conditions where abuse can occur more easily. These guidelines should also be used to make decisions about interactions with children and youth in church-sponsored and affiliated programs. They are not designed or intended to address interactions within families. When exceptions to these guidelines must be made, they should be reported to the supervisor of the Church Personnel making the exception as soon as possible.

1. All Church Personnel who work with children or youth must agree to comply with the Bethlehem Lutheran Church **Guidelines for Appropriate Affection** (Appendix A).
2. No person will be allowed to volunteer to *Regularly or Occasionally Work with Children or Youth* until the person has been known to the clergy and has become a member of the Congregation, or at the discretion of the Senior Pastor.
3. Programs for infants and children under six (6) years old will have procedures to ensure that children are released only to their parents or legal guardians or those designated by them.
4. Church Personnel are prohibited from the use, possession, distribution, or being under the influence of

alcohol, illegal drugs, or the misuse of legal drugs while participating in or assisting with programs or activities specifically for children or youth.

5. Parents or guardians must complete written permission forms before Church Personnel transport children and youth for a church sponsored activity or for any purpose on more than an occasional basis.
6. Church Personnel will respond to children and youth with respect, consideration and equal treatment, regardless of sex, race, religion, sexual orientation, culture or socio-economic status. Church Personnel will portray a positive role model for children and youth by maintaining an attitude of respect, patience, and maturity. They will avoid even the appearance of favoritism.
7. One-to-one counseling with children or youth will be done in an open or public or other place where private conversations are possible but occur in full view of others.
8. Church Personnel are prohibited from dating or becoming romantically involved with a child or youth.
9. Church Personnel are prohibited from having sexual contact with a child or youth.
10. Church Personnel are prohibited from possessing any sexually oriented materials (magazines, cards, videos, films, clothing etc.) on church property or in the presence of children or youth except as expressly permitted as part of a pre-authorized educational program.
11. Church Personnel are prohibited from using the Internet to view or download any sexually oriented materials on church property or in the presence of children or youth.
12. Church Personnel are prohibited from discussing their own sexual activities, including dreams and fantasies, or discussing their use of sexually oriented or explicit materials such as pornography, videos or materials on or from the Internet, with children or youth.
13. Church Personnel are prohibited from sleeping in the same beds, or sleeping bags, while in a tents, hotel rooms or other rooms with children or youth even if the adult is an immediate family member of all children or youth in the bed, sleeping bag, tent, hotel room or other room, per ELCA and Rocky Mountain Synod guidelines.
14. Church Personnel are prohibited from dressing, undressing, bathing, or showering in the presence of children or youth.
15. Church Personnel are prohibited from using physical punishment in any way for behavior management of children and youth. No form of physical discipline is acceptable. This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force. Physical force may only be used to stop a behavior that may cause immediate harm to the individual or to a child, youth or others.
16. Church Personnel are prohibited from using harsh language, degrading punishment, or mechanical restraint such as rope or tape for behavior management.
17. Church Personnel are prohibited from participating in or allowing others to conduct any hazing activities relating to children's or youth ministry or camp activities.

# Responding to Problems

## A. Reporting Inappropriate Behaviors or Policy Violations with Children or Youth

1. When Church Personnel observe any inappropriate behaviors, behaviors that are inconsistent with the **Guidelines for Appropriate Affection**, or which may violate any provision of these **Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse**, they must immediately report their observations. Examples of inappropriate behaviors or policy violations would be seeking private time with children or youth, taking children or youth on over-night trips without other adults, swearing or making suggestive comments to children or youth, or selecting or using staff or volunteers without the required screening.
2. Such inappropriate behaviors or possible policy violations that relate to interactions with children or youth should be reported in one of the following ways:
  - a. A telephone call or meeting with the immediate supervisor of the person
  - b. A telephone call or meeting with the Senior Pastor
  - c. A telephone call or meeting with a Council President if the person is the Senior Pastor
  - d. A telephone call, meeting or fax to the Bishop of the Rocky Mountain Synod
  - e. Submit a **Notice of Concern** (Appendix B), signed or unsigned, to the Bishop of the Rocky Mountain Synod
3. All reports of inappropriate behavior or policy violations with children or youth will be taken seriously.

## B. Reporting Suspected Abuse of Children or Youth

1. All staff and regular volunteers working with children or youth are required by this policy to report known or suspected abuse of children or youth to the appropriate state authorities.
2. Failure to report suspected abuse of children or youth may be a crime. Reports may be made confidentially or anonymously. Every state provides immunity from civil liability for persons required to report suspected abuse in good faith and without malice. Simply stated, "in good faith" means that the person submitting the report believes what he or she is reporting to be true.
3. In addition to reporting to the state authorities, Church Personnel are required to report any suspected or known abuse of children or youth that may have been perpetrated by Church Personnel directly to the Senior Pastor of Bethlehem Lutheran Church so that immediate and proper steps may be taken to ensure the safety of alleged victims.
4. Reports of suspected or known abuse that involve Church Personnel may be reported to the Rocky Mountain Synod in the following ways:
  - a. A telephone call, meeting or fax to the Bishop
  - b. A telephone call or meeting with the Senior Pastor, if the Senior Pastor is not the person of concern
  - c. Submit a **Notice of Concern** (Appendix B), signed or unsigned, to the Bishop
5. The Rocky Mountain Synod and Bethlehem Lutheran Church will cooperate with any investigation by state authorities to the fullest extent appropriate and inform authorities that a concurrent internal investigation will be directed by the Rocky Mountain Synod of the ELCA.

# APPENDIX A

## Guidelines for Appropriate Affection

The Rocky Mountain Synod and Bethlehem Lutheran Church are committed to creating and promoting a positive, nurturing environment for our children's and youth ministries that protect our children and youth from abuse and our Church Personnel from misunderstandings. When creating safe boundaries for children and youth, it is important to establish what types of affection are appropriate and inappropriate, otherwise that decision is left to each individual. Stating which behaviors are appropriate and inappropriate allows Church Personnel to comfortably show positive affection in ministry, and yet identify individuals who are not maintaining safe boundaries with children or youth. These guidelines are based, in large part, on avoiding behaviors known to be used by child molesters to groom children or youth and their parents for future abuse. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by all Church Personnel working around or with children or youth.

1. Love and affection are part of church life and ministry. There are many ways to demonstrate affection yet maintain positive and safe boundaries. Some POSITIVE and APPROPRIATE forms of affection include:

- Brief hugs
- Pats on the shoulder or back
- Handshakes
- "High-fives" and hand slapping
- Verbal praise
- Touching hands, faces, shoulders and arms of children or youth
- Arms around shoulders
- Holding hands while walking with small children
- Sitting beside small children
- Kneeling or bending down for hugs with small children
- Holding hands during prayer
- Pats on the head when culturally appropriate (for example, this gesture should typically be avoided in some Asian communities).

2. The following forms of affection are considered INAPPROPRIATE with children and youth in ministry setting because many of them are the behaviors that child molesters use to groom children or youth and their parents for later molestation or can be, in and of themselves, forms of sexual abuse:

- Inappropriate or lengthy embraces
- Kisses on the mouth
- Holding children over three years old on the lap
- Touching bottoms, chests or genital areas (other than for appropriate diapering or toileting of infants and toddlers)
- Showing affection in isolated areas such as bedrooms, closets, staff-only areas or other private rooms
- Occupying a bed with a child or youth
- Touching knees or legs of children or youth
- Wrestling with children or youth
- Tickling children or youth
- Piggyback rides
- Any type of massage given by a child or youth to an adult
- Any type of massage given by an adult to a child or youth
- Any form of unwanted affection
- Comments or compliments (spoken, written, or electronic) that relate to physique or body development (for example, "You sure are developing," or "You look really hot in those jeans.")
- Snapping bras, giving wedgies, or similar touch of underwear whether or not it is covered by other clothing
- Private meals with individual children or youth

# APPENDIX B

## Confidential Notice of Concern

Individual(s) of Concern: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of occurrence: \_\_\_\_\_

Time of occurrence: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Concern (check all that apply):

Inappropriate behavior with a child or youth

Policy violation with a child or youth

Possible risk of abuse

Other concern: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Describe the situation: What happened, where it happened, when it happened, who was involved, who was present, who was notified? If reported to the State, what was their recommendation about investigating? *Attach additional pages if needed.*
2. Has this situation ever occurred previously? *Attach additional pages if needed.*
3. What action was taken? How was the situation handled, who was involved, who was questioned, were police called? *Attach additional pages if needed.*
4. What is the follow-up plan? Does anyone else need to be notified? Will the situation need monitoring? Would you like someone to call you to discuss this situation? *Attach additional pages if needed.*

Submitted by (Please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewed by: \_\_\_\_\_

Upon completion, please submit to Pastor Mark Peterson or Deaconess Kristen Baltrum

## **APPENDIX C**

### **State of Colorado Child Welfare Related Websites**

A complete list of all State of Colorado websites related to child welfare—including how to report child abuse, state criminal records, and the sex offender registry—can be obtained in the Bethlehem Lutheran Church office.

# APPENDIX D

## Safe Haven for Children

### 1. ELCA Churchwide Assembly Action CA99.03.03 *(Passed by the 1999 Churchwide Assembly in Denver, Colorado )*

#### Whereas

Whereas, Jesus modeled a concern for children when he said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs" (Mark 10:14, NRSV);

Whereas, more than 14 million children under age 18 and five million under age six in the U.S. live in poverty, a deplorable condition made more severe by reductions in public assistance (U.S. Bureau of Census, unpublished data, March 1998);

Whereas, 4.2 million children experience severe to moderate hunger (U.S. Department of Agriculture);

Whereas, 11.3 million children through age 18 have no health insurance (Children's Defense Fund, 1997 census data);

Whereas, homelessness has increased disproportionately among children (study of the National Coalition for the Homeless);

Whereas, every day more than three children die as a result of abuse or neglect (National Committee to Prevent Child Abuse, 1996 survey); and

Whereas, an average of 14 children die each day from gunfire (Children's Defense Fund); therefore, be it

#### Resolved

RESOLVED, that the 1999 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America urge congregations to work toward a Christ-centered, positive environment for children in families, congregations, and communities, and

1. pray for the well-being of all children, but in particular for the poorest and most at risk
2. declare our congregations as "safe havens" for all children
3. develop creative programs to meet the needs of children in the congregation and community with special emphasis on those who are hungry, homeless, abused, lonely, and subject to violence
4. advocate in collaboration with advocacy offices of this church in support of public policy that advances the well-being of children and their families and in opposition to policies that harm them, and
5. work collaboratively with other congregations, Lutheran social ministry organizations, and groups that strive to help children thrive.

## **2. RESOLUTION #3: Safe Haven Guidelines for Children, Youth and Adults within Each Congregation in the Rocky Mountain Synod** *(Adopted by the 2010 Rocky Mountain Synod Assembly)*

WHEREAS, in Baptism the congregation promises to support and pray for the baptized in a new life in Christ; and  
WHEREAS, through Baptism we are entrusted with the great responsibility to live together as God's faithful people; and  
WHEREAS, Jesus said, "Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God..." (Mark 19:14, Luke 18:16); and

WHEREAS, God calls us to be a cross-generational community of faith and because young people are the most important gifts God entrusts to us, therefore it is vital to our ministry with families, outreach to our neighbors and our testimony to the wider church and world that the church takes seriously its responsibility to protect its children and the adults who care for them so all may flourish physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually; and

WHEREAS, congregations are influential institutions in our communities, therefore every congregation needs guidelines in place to protect their children, youth, the vulnerable and adults from abuse of any kind; and

WHEREAS, creating a Safe Haven is a lifelong process of learning, caring and keeping our promises, therefore we desire our families, our immediate community, the wider church and the world to know we establish places where children are safe and we create ministry where children can flourish and adults are caring and trusted; and

WHEREAS, each congregation lives out its faith in a unique context and a unique community, therefore each congregation is encouraged to follow basic, general guidelines established by the synod, but each congregation's policy will be their own and like no other;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that each congregation will be encouraged to create a Safe Haven Team and to establish basic Safe Haven guidelines, unique to each congregation's context and ministry, by the date of the 2012 Rocky Mountain Synod assembly; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Rocky Mountain Synod will create a basic, but comprehensive, Safe Haven checklist; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that each congregation's Safe Haven team will use the Safe Haven guidelines, or checklist, established by the synod as a guide; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that each congregation will train the adults who work with children and the vulnerable in one's midst, to practice these Safe Haven guidelines regularly; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that each congregation will hold youth, young adults and adults accountable to the Safe Haven guidelines created by that congregation and unique to that congregation's context and ministry; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that each congregation will seek out ways to support families and educate new members related to the Safe Haven guidelines established by that congregation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Rocky Mountain Synod will provide synod-wide training to church leaders in "Safeguarding God's Children" an established and recognized training program in sexual abuse awareness, providing tools for clergy, Christian educators, youth ministers, nursery workers, council members and all who work with minors in our churches, to keep everyone safe.

1. There will be no direct impact on the synod budget. The approximate \$1,000 needed to provide the official "Safeguarding God's Children" training for congregational leaders throughout the synod will come from a minimum fee charged to participants. This is the official training program of the Episcopal church and utilized by synods and congregations in the ELCA. This training specifically relates to sexual abuse and will be only one part of the Safe Haven guidelines established and suggested for congregations. The goal is to also train our own "Safeguarding God's Children" trainers within and for our synod.

2. The Congregational Ministry Board will be responsible for the implementation of the resolution, under the direction of the Synod council, in cooperation with the Umbrella Team for synod youth gatherings, with support of the LYO Advisor, and with guidance from our Assistant to the Bishop for Youth & Household Ministry.

3. This resolution enhances and forwards the mission of the church and the Rocky Mountain Synod by every adult, every congregation, every ministry, boldly serving God's mission in Christ by taking seriously its responsibility to protect God's children, and the adults who care for them, so all may flourish physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually.

*Supported by the Congregational Ministry Board, the Umbrella Team for Senior High and Junior High/Middle School Gathering, the LYO Advisor, and the Assistant to the Bishop for Youth & Household Ministry.*

Additional information available at [www.rmselfca.org/ministries/faith\\_formation/safe\\_haven](http://www.rmselfca.org/ministries/faith_formation/safe_haven)

# APPENDIX E

## APPLICATION to work with children or youth of Bethlehem Lutheran Church

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Valid Until: \_\_\_\_\_

### Personal Information (Please print)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (home) \_\_\_\_\_ (work) \_\_\_\_\_ (cell) \_\_\_\_\_

Birth Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a member of this church? Yes No (circle one)  
*(BLC insurance will not protect nonmembers in the event of litigation.)*

If No, please indicate:

How long you have been attending BLC?: \_\_\_\_\_ years/months (approx.)

Name & address of church where you are a member: \_\_\_\_\_

List position(s) in which you wish to serve (e.g. Sunday School Teacher): \_\_\_\_\_

The date you are available to begin service: \_\_\_\_\_

The minimum length of commitment you can make: \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide **two personal references within BLC** who are well acquainted with you and **one non-BLC reference**. Do not list relatives. Please include complete addresses and telephone numbers where they may be reached.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Volunteer Statement (Read Carefully)**

*Read and initial each item to signify your agreement.*

\_\_\_\_\_ I give permission to any references, person or organization, whether identified in this application or not, to give BLC any information (including opinions) regarding my character and fitness for volunteer service.

\_\_\_\_\_ I release any individuals, church, reference, or any other person or organization, including record keepers, both collectively and individually, and whether or not identified in this application, from any liability for damages of whatever nature which may at any time result to me, my heirs, or family, on account of compliance or any attempts to comply with this authorization, excepting only the communication of knowingly false information.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that I may consult with an attorney before signing this document. A facsimile or photocopy of this authorization shall be as valid as the original.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that a criminal records check may be conducted on me, and I consent to any such check.

\_\_\_\_\_ I waive any right I may have to inspect any information provided about me by any person or organization described above.

\_\_\_\_\_ Should my application be accepted, I agree to be bound by the Bylaws and Policies of BLC in the performance of my services on behalf of the church.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have received a copy of the Policy on Sexual Misconduct of Bethlehem Lutheran Church and agree to abide by the policies and practices contained therein.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that a sexual relationship with a minor can lead to a felony conviction and imprisonment.

I also know that the church insurance policy may not provide legal defense in a sexual misconduct charge or pay any portion of a jury verdict assessed against me on account of such conduct. I state that I have carefully read the foregoing 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. I recognize that Bethlehem Lutheran Church (BLC) is relying on the accuracy of the information I provide on this application form. Accordingly, I attest and affirm that the information I have provided is absolutely true and correct.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## General Conduct for the Protection of Children and Youth

The disturbing and traumatic rise of physical and sexual abuse of children has claimed the attention of our nation and society. The following policies reflect our commitment to provide protective care of all children, youth, seniors, and the developmentally disabled and the volunteers who participate in church sponsored activities.

1. Anyone who has been convicted of either child sexual or physical abuse should not volunteer service in any church sponsored activity or program for children or youth.
2. Survivors of childhood sexual or physical abuse need the love and acceptance of this church family. Individuals who have such a history should discuss their desire to work with children or youth with one of our professional staff prior to engaging in any volunteer service.
3. Volunteers should observe the "two adult" rule.
4. Adult volunteers should immediately report any behaviors that seem abusive or inappropriate to their supervisor.

### **Please answer each question. Your response will be kept fully confidential.**

1. As a church volunteer, do you agree to the above church policies regarding working with youth or children? Yes No (circle one)

*You may prefer to answer the following question in confidence with one of our professional staff rather than answering it on this form. One of our pastors will be available to speak with you. Answering Yes (or leaving the following question unanswered), will not automatically disqualify you as an applicant for work with children or youth.*

2. Were you a victim of abuse or molestation? Yes No (circle one)

### **I have read the above policy and agree to observe the safeguards listed.**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children and Youth

*Read and initial each item to signify your agreement to comply with the statement.*

\_\_\_\_\_ I agree to do my best to prevent abuse and neglect among children and youth involved in church activities and services.

\_\_\_\_\_ I agree to not physically, sexually or emotionally abuse or neglect a child or youth.

\_\_\_\_\_ I agree to comply with the policies for **General Conduct for the Protection of Children and Youth** as defined in the **Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse**.

\_\_\_\_\_ I agree to comply with the **Guidelines for Appropriate Affection** with children and youth.

\_\_\_\_\_ In the event that I observe any inappropriate behaviors or possible policy violations with children or youth, I agree to immediately report my observations.

\_\_\_\_\_ I acknowledge my obligation and responsibility to protect children and youth and agree to report known or suspected abuse of children or youth to appropriate church leaders and state authorities in accordance with the **Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse**.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that the church will not tolerate abuse of children and youth and I agree to comply in spirit and in action with this position.

### **Acknowledgment, Release and Signature**

To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this application is complete and accurate. I understand that providing false information is grounds for not hiring me or choosing me for a volunteer position or for my discharge if I have already been hired or chosen. I authorize any person or organization, whether or not identified in this application, to provide any information concerning my previous employment, education, credit history, driving record, criminal conviction record, sexual offender registry or other qualifications for my employment or volunteering. I also authorize Bethlehem Lutheran Church to request and receive such information.

If hired or selected, I agree to be bound by Bethlehem Lutheran Church's policies and procedures, including but not limited to its **Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse** and **Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children and Youth**. I understand that these may be changed, withdrawn, added to or interpreted at any time at Bethlehem Lutheran Church's sole discretion and without prior notice to me. I also understand that my employment or volunteering may be terminated, or any offer or acceptance of employment or volunteering withdrawn, at any time, with or without cause, and with or without prior notice at the option of Bethlehem Lutheran Church or myself.

Nothing contained in this application or in any pre-employment or pre-volunteer communication is intended to or creates a contract between myself and Bethlehem Lutheran Church for employment, volunteering, or the provision of any benefit.

**I have read and understand the above provisions.**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_