



THE LIVING ROOM COMMUNITY CHURCH

Sexual Abuse Prevention Policy

We believe that all children and youth are made in the image of God. With this as our basis, The Living Room Community Church believes that it is vitally important to take decisive steps to ensure that the church and its programs, to the best of our ability, provide a safe and nurturing environment for all children and youth.

Policy Statement:

Children are never responsible for causing abuse and, as minors, they are neither legally nor morally capable of consenting to abusive behavior. We, as a church, have a responsibility to implement practices and procedures that have been shown to minimize the chances of abuse occurring at the church or any of its activities. This policy is made up of three categories of practices and procedures.

1. Provisions for screening volunteers and employees who serve in Children's and Youth Ministries.
2. Guidelines for supervising participants in all Children's and Youth Ministry activities that take place on or off church premises.
3. A communication plan for educating the church family, employees, ministry leaders, and ministry volunteers about the reality of child abuse and strategies for prevention.

Provisions for Screening:

Any volunteer who works with children and/or youth will be subject to the following screening process. All employees who work with children and/or youth will be subject to letters *c-f* and all sub-points therein:

- a. Be an active attender of TLR for a minimum of six months, unless an exception is recommended by the Family Life Pastor and approved by the Elders;
- b. Complete a written application provided by TLR and return it to the Family Life Pastor or his designee;
- c. Attend an orientation session;
- d. Attend annual training;
- e. Support and comply with this policy and any additional requirements established for specific volunteer service opportunities in which the volunteer is participating; and,
- f. Give signed consent to TLR to conduct a criminal background check through an approved external vendor. All background checks are conducted in accordance with



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applicable federal, state, and local laws. TLR uses the following guidelines to determine when to conduct criminal background checks, what automatically disqualifies volunteers and employees from service with children and/or youth, and how TLR will treat the information learned from criminal background checks.

1. Any individual who expresses interest in volunteering in Children's or Youth Ministries and whose volunteer service is anticipated to include ten (10) or more hours of service per year with our children and/or youth will be subject to a criminal background check.
2. At its sole discretion, TLR can request a volunteer consent to a criminal background check even if the volunteer anticipates serving less than ten (10) hours per year with children or youth.
3. Providing false information or omitting material information from the Background Screening Consent Form is grounds for automatic exclusion from participation in the Children's and/or Youth Ministry programs, regardless of the results of the background check.
4. The following offenses will automatically disqualify individuals from serving with children and/or youth:
 - a. Any crime committed against a minor
5. TLR will use its best effort to keep any information provided in connection with or obtained pursuant to a background check confidential. This information will only be specifically revealed on a "need to know" basis, and generally only the Lead Pastor, Executive Pastor, and Family Life Pastor will have access to this information.

Guidelines for Supervision:

Children

All Children's programs will provide no less than two adults, or one adult and two teens to supervise the activities of children. All volunteers and employees interacting with children must observe the two-adult or circle-of-three rule, meaning that workers must avoid, whenever possible, one-on-one situations with children.

In addition, TLR has adopted the following procedures to help ensure the safety and well-being of our children and prevent abuse to the best of our ability:



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Infant-Pre-K

- a. Children under the age of 5 (boys and girls) will be accompanied to the restroom and assisted, as needed, by an approved adult female employee or volunteer. The employee or volunteer will wait outside the door while the child uses the restroom, and if the child requires assistance, they will assure that the entrance door to the restroom is open as they step into the bathroom space with one foot to assist the child as needed.
- b. Employees and volunteers should never touch a child's private areas except as absolutely necessary, as in the case of changing a diaper. All diaper changes should be conducted in an area that is highly visible and has at least one other approved employee or volunteer adult present.

Grades K-5

- a. While participating in Sunday morning programs, children will only use the restrooms in the secured elementary area. Only one male and one female child will be dismissed to their respective restroom at a time. The teacher or class volunteer will step to the threshold between the classroom and the hallway entrance in order to visually assure the child has safely entered and exited the restroom alone and without incident.
- b. Employees and volunteers are only to release children to the care of their parents, guardians, or persons specifically authorized to pick up the children.

Youth

Youth programs will generally adhere to the two-adult or circle-of-three (at least two minors present with one adult volunteer) rule for all onsite and offsite programs. In addition, the youth programs will adhere to the following standards:

- a. No adult employee or volunteer may be in a car alone with a minor (regardless of gender) before, during, or after a TLR sponsored event, unless they are a parent, legal guardian, or approved family member.
- b. Ministry leaders must make sure that in situations where personal vehicles are utilized for ministry events, each vehicle adheres to the two-adult or circle of three rule.

While the two-adult and/or circle-of-three rule is applicable in most instances, there are specific instances where the ministry leader in coordination with the Family Life Pastor can make exceptions. These include:



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- a. Meeting with a youth one-on-one for mentoring and/or counseling. In this instance, the following guidelines are to be followed:
 - The meeting should be conducted between an adult and youth of the same gender; and,
 - The meeting must take place in a public place with high visibility (i.e. a coffee shop); and,
 - The adult and youth must each arrive and leave the premises separately.
- b. An employee of the church meeting with a youth for mentoring and/or counseling on the church campus. In such instances, meetings will happen in an office with unobstructed glass in the door providing both visibility and appropriate privacy.
- c. Going to a school event to support a student in a sanctioned school event that is open to the public.

Communication Plan:

TLR's communication strategy for implementation and improvement of this policy includes:

- a. Notifying the church family that we have developed a policy;
- b. Making the policy available to TLR members on our website;
- c. Regular training/orientation for new volunteers;
- d. Yearly training for ministry leaders, volunteers, and employees who serve in Children's and Youth Ministries; and,
- e. A yearly review of this policy by Elders and Pastors of TLR.