Bethany Lutheran Church and School
Overland Park, KS
Youth Protection Policy

Introduction

Bethany Lutheran Church and School seeks to provide a safe and secure place for all children and adults who attend or who participate in youth and/or school activities. This Youth Protection Policy applies to all volunteer and paid workers of Bethany who supervise and/or participate in youth and/or school activities. For the purposes of this policy, the word "school" includes Bethany's preschool and MDO programs, as well as the K-8 elementary school.

Worker Application

All workers – both paid and volunteer - will complete the following procedures when serving and/or supervising any church or school sponsored youth and child activities:

1. Those desiring to serve by leading or supervising children must be individually approved by the group/individuals responsible for the respective areas of ministry and will participate in and complete any necessary training before beginning their position.

2. Information for a background check must be submitted online at https://www.ministryopportunities.org/BethanyLSKS before driving and/or supervising children or youth at Bethany Lutheran Church and School. Bethany reserves the right to run background checks (including criminal records and driving records) on any and all volunteers and paid workers.

3. Criminal background checks remain current for 2 years. We will run checks every other school year, no matter the time of year of the check. If more than 2 years have elapsed since the most recent check, a new one will be completed. Bethany reserves the right to run checks more frequently, if needed.

Transporting Bethany Youth

Driving information must be submitted annually for any individual operating a vehicle and transporting youth to, from and/or during a Bethany Lutheran Church or School event. A more extensive driving check may be completed, as needed. Drivers must have liability insurance in order to transport youth. For communication purposes, a phone must be in each vehicle transporting Bethany youth; however, texting and non-emergency phone calls are prohibited while driving. All passengers must wear seat belts and all child safety seat laws must be followed. Drivers must follow all traffic laws while transporting Bethany youth. Drivers will be provided with emergency contact information for all youth riding in their vehicle.

- Criteria to be eligible to drive youth for a Bethany Lutheran Church or School event include the following:
    - No more than one at-fault accident in the past year
    - No convictions for DUI in the last 5 years
    - No more than one speeding ticket in the past year. No excessive speeding tickets (+20 mph over the limit) in the past year.

Child Safety

Any volunteer or paid worker who has been convicted of a crime against a child will not provide care in any church or school sponsored activity or program for children or youth. Other convictions will be addressed by the administrator of the program, in consultation with the senior pastor.

For the protection of the worker and the children, it is advised that adults who were victims of childhood abuse consult with a pastor in order to ensure their appropriate level of recovery for work with children.

On occasion, guests to the church or school may share in an activity or lead an activity with the youth of Bethany. Not all cases require the completion of a background check; however, these leaders would always participate with a Bethany Lutheran Church or School approved staff worker or volunteer present and may not have ongoing contact with children or youth.

All applications and results of screenings will be kept confidential and shall be retained in a locked file in the church, school or preschool/MDO office. Files will also be secured online through our provider account.

Supervision

Those caring for the youth of Bethany are never to threaten physical harm, hit, shake, or otherwise physically discipline children in their care. Disciplinary problems should be reported to the worker's coordinator/supervisor, the individual responsible for the ministry area, and/or to the parent or guardian. Those working with the youth of Bethany should always keep in mind the safety of both the child and the worker, avoiding situations that are uncomfortable for either party, especially in regard to touching, lap sitting, and restroom assistance. Be sure children go into restroom stalls alone, with adults waiting outside the main door.

Adult supervisors of youth activities are held to the highest standards of behavior. As such, all those dealing with the youth of Bethany, both paid and volunteer, must refrain from using tobacco of any kind while on the premises of Bethany and/or during youth events, and may not possess, dispense or use any controlled substance. The use of alcohol or being under the influence of alcohol while supervising youth is prohibited.

If an accident or injury occurs while supervising youth, the adult in charge must complete an accident report form and submit it to the coordinator or administrator of the program in which the accident/injury occurred. Forms are available from the church, school and preschool office.

Mandatory Reporter Law (K.S.A. 38-2223)

When a volunteer or employee of Bethany suspects that child abuse (child neglect or physical, emotional and/or sexual abuse) is taking or has taken place, this must be reported. The reporter should call the Kansas Protection Reporting Center at 1.800.922.5330 and should also let his/her supervisor at Bethany know that the report was made. Failure to report this information is a Class B misdemeanor. Reporters have immunity from any civil liability that might otherwise be incurred or imposed. More information can be found at http://www.dcf.ks.gov/services/pps/Pages/KIPS/KIPSWebIntake.aspx

Internal Action

Any allegation of abuse or molestation will be taken seriously by ministry leaders.

- Any employee of the ministry who is the subject of an investigation will be removed from their position, with pay, pending completion of the investigation. Substantiated allegations will result in immediate dismissal in accordance with organizational employment practices, with law enforcement handling any further prosecution.
- Any volunteer worker who is the subject of an investigation will be removed from their position pending completion of the investigation. Substantiated allegations will result in permanent removal from volunteering with Bethany's children and youth, with law enforcement handling any further prosecution.