



NEW LIFE CHURCH

RISK MANAGEMENT



New Life Church Safety and Risk Management Policies and Procedures

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Introduction

We believe that people matter to God, and therefore we consider it our responsibility to do everything we can to care for and insure the safety and good health of our infants, children and youth. People trust us with their children, so we must always remember that our treatment of them should exemplify the love of the Lord and also comply with the laws of the land.

Ministry to children and youth at NLC is a dynamic team effort. It takes the efforts and dedication of many people to carry out this ministry—staff members, parents and volunteers! We are here to come alongside the parents in their biblical teaching and encouragement of their children. We desire to see the children of NLC grow and take their place in our congregation and world as ministers of the Good News of Jesus Christ.

It is our desire that all who serve at NLC would do so in a safe manner with the protection of all our children in mind. We have been called by God to serve Him and to minister and provide a safe and wholesome environment for the infants, children and youth that He places in our care.

This handbook contains the policies and procedures of our church, as well as many helpful suggestions for ministering to our young people. Whether you are the parent of a child in our program, a staff member, or a volunteer who serves in one of our many ministries to children and youth, it is important that you read this handbook. The safety, well-being, and faith development of our young people depend on our consistent and loving application of these principles.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide policies and procedures for the Children and Youth Ministry of NLC. Changes may be made from time to time in the policies and procedures contained in this handbook without prior written or oral notice. If you have any questions regarding anything in this handbook, please feel free to contact the Children's Ministry Coordinator in person, by phone, or email.

It is a requirement that you, as a minister who cares for infants, children or youth in any capacity, read this document and sign the enclosed agreements saying that you understand and will comply with the standards set forth. You will be meeting with a designated person to discuss and review these policies and procedures.

Thank you for partnering with us in making NLC a safe place for all!

Pastor Chris Van Bogelen
Associate and Administrative Pastor

Pastor Dale Swanson
Lead Pastor

Section 1 – Child Safety Policies and Procedures

Duties and Expectations for Paid and Volunteer Workers

Our ministry to babies, children and youth is one of the most important aspects of our church family life. We will always treat babies, children and youth with love, respect, compassion, kindness and fairness.

All Nursery Ministers, Teachers, Youth Leaders and Assistants will be faithful attendees of NLC for a minimum of six months before applying to serve with our infants, children and youth. All individuals desiring to serve must first:

- Fill out an application
- Provide photo identification
- Be willing to submit to a background check and fingerprinting
- Be willing to provide references and past church history
- Be willing to attend a face to face interview with a designated leader
- All individuals desiring to serve must sign a *Declaration of Moral Integrity* and be willing to submit to the statement found on that declaration
- Attend a training class and mandatory ministry meeting.

Classroom Discipline

****At no time should workers use any form of physical discipline when correcting a child. I.e. No spanking, standing in a corner, etc.**

- The only time it is appropriate to gently restrain a child is when he/she is physically hurting themselves or others.

Note: Team Leaders may visit all classrooms unannounced at any time. All classrooms have cameras *with audio and video running at all time* for the safety of our teachers and our children.

Guidelines for Dealing with Behavior Issues:

Nursery:

1. If a baby is crying excessively, uncontrollably or is inconsolable for more than 15-20 minutes you should call for a parent. If you are able to console the child and the crying is not uncontrollable, you should try to avoid calling the parent. But you will use your best judgment.
2. If a toddler is overly aggressive, move them to another part of the room and distract them with a toy.
3. If you are unsure how to manage a problem, you can call for the nursery coordinator or a pastor to assist you.

Pre K – 6th:

Step 1: If a child is having a difficult time in class (talking while teacher is talking, not following directions, etc.) remove the child from the classroom, explain to the child what is expected of him, and pray with him. No further action needs to be taken. Let the CM Director know.

Step 2: If the behavior continues the following week, remove the child from the classroom again, pray with the child and alert the parent of the problem. Explain that you and the child are working on it. Let the CM Director know.

Step 3: If the child's behavior issue continues into the 3rd week, the teacher will arrange a brief conference with the parent on the lawn after church. The teacher, parent, and child—along with the CM director -- will agree upon plan of action. Remind the child that if the behavior continues he will spend the remainder of the class time with his parents in the sanctuary. Pray with the family. Make a note for next week's teaching team.

Step 4: If the behavior continues after the parent/child conference, and the plan implemented has failed to show results, the child will sit with his parent in the sanctuary. Following the service, speak with the child and the CM director together and let the child know that he will have a one week hiatus from Sunday School. The child will need to sit with their parent the following week at church. Pray with family. The following Sunday the Teacher should send a postcard saying "we missed you"! Make a note for next week's teaching team

Step 5: One week out of Sunday School

Step 6: The child returns to class, gets a fresh start, prays with teacher, and asks for forgiveness.

Reporting Procedures

Reporting Physical or Sexual Abuse

- Licensed Pastors must report abuse to authorities. In the event that a child confides in you concerning abuse that has been done against them, you must contact your CM Director, Assistant Director, or Pastoral Staff immediately.
- If a child confides in you about a personal situation, your confidentiality is critical. Report it, along with any details given you by the child/youth, to your CM Director, Assistant Director, or Pastoral Staff only. **Do not discuss the issue with those that are serving with you or anyone else.** Pastoral Staff will handle the situation.
- Anyone with suspicions or concerns, in regards to the safety and the wellbeing of others, needs to voice that concern to the CM Director, Assistant Director, or Pastoral Staff **only**.

Bathroom Procedures

- Children aged 2 years to Kindergarten need to be accompanied to the bathroom by adult or assigned helper, leave the door slightly ajar and wait outside the door. If a child needs assistance with buttons or zippers, ask the child to come near the door. If a child needs assistance in the bathroom, leave the door wide open. A male may not assist a child inside the bathroom. No one should be in the bathroom with the door closed. It's best practice for the teacher or helper to take **two** children to the bathroom at the same time.
- Children 1st-3rd grade must be accompanied to the bathroom by adult or assigned helper. It's best practice for the teacher or helper to take **two** children to the bathroom at the same time.
- J-12 children (grades 4th-6th) may go to the restroom one at a time by themselves, with the classroom door opened so that the teacher can see down the hall.

Classroom or Group Oversight

- “Two Adult “ Rule: The general rule regarding adequate adult supervision is, “more is better” and never less than two.
- Minors: Minors may not serve as the primary teacher in our Children’s Ministry classes. Minors must be at least 3 years older than the children they are helping.
- Youth must never be alone, riding in a car, or in any situation, with a Youth Leader of the opposite sex.

Showing Kids We Care/Boundaries for Showing Affection

In our ministry it is important for us to show affection. But we must use wisdom and discretion in doing so. We will use hugs and speak positive words of encouragement.

Hugs

Hugs are a great way to show affection. Some children and youth do not like to be hugged and we will respect their feelings. With young children, bend down to their level and ask if you may give them a hug. Show them respect and give them a choice; a hug, a high five, or a handshake. If they are non-responsive, don’t force it. When giving hugs, a simple boundary to remember is avoid contact with anyone on the upper legs, thighs, or any part that a full bathing suit would cover.

High Five’s say “you care”, “you are important” and “good job”. A handshake, pat on the back and joining hands when we pray, helps us communicate important messages. Wrestling for fun is not appropriate inside play. Picking small children up in play would constitute wrestling. It is impossible to not touch children in the bath suit zone when wrestling! **Do no wrestle with the children in the classroom or if parent is not present.**

Words

Prov. 24:3 (NLT) *“A house is built by wisdom and becomes strong through good sense. Through knowledge it’s rooms are filled with all sorts of precious riches and valuables.”* Your words are weighty, so choose your words carefully when addressing children and youth. Your words need to be “life giving.” Sarcasm, sexually suggestive, degrading or humiliating language and name-calling (even in the name of teasing) is inappropriate. We don’t need to use questionable or “one the edge” words or humor to make a point. “Potty talk” or crude references to bodily functions are unacceptable. Children and youth will live up (or step down) to the standards that we set. We want to speak life-giving words, encouragement and affirmation over all of the children we minister to. When recognizing positive behavior or when feeling appreciation for a youth or child, verbalize it.

Kisses/Close Contact

We must use discretion in how we display affection, avoiding the “appearance of evil” (I Thess. 5:22). Romans 16:6 instructed that believers “greet each other with a holy kiss”, and this form of greeting was an appropriate greeting for the culture of that day. The message a kiss communicates in our culture is loaded. **NO** kisses. Also, be aware of your physical presence. If you are standing or sitting too close to a child or youth, and they seem to be feeling uncomfortable, just move back. Respect the feelings of others. **Never** demand that a child show affection. Similarly there should be no public display of affection among the children or youth.

Consider Child/Youth Safety

Always think through activities, games, etc. in detail, with safety in mind.

- Be aware of the area that you will be utilizing for games and look for potential trouble and/or dangers.
- Be sure to communicate the boundaries to children and/or youth and enforce them.
- Always set ground rules for games and activities and enforce them.
- Adults must always supervise children or youth, in all activities. You are responsible to keep them safe.

Community of Trust

We communicate with our congregation that we are a community of trust, and that we are not lacking in safeguards for the proper care for infants, children and youth. Their safety is of utmost importance. Through the implementation of our Child/Youth Safety Program we are communicating that we at NLC, take safety seriously. Be ready to reassure parents, or guardians, that their child's/youth's wellbeing is of the utmost importance to us.

Prayer

Prayer over your students, your lesson and your classroom is imperative. Inviting the Holy Spirit and His presence into your classroom will make a great difference. Doing things God's way ensures success.

Registration & Check In

A parent or guardian will bring their child(ren) to the check-in table in the lobby. The parent will sign-in their child(ren). Any allergies or special instructions should be noted in the computer system and on their name-tag sticker. Every child must be signed in by their parent or guardian. Only the person with the child's matching number sticker will be allowed to retrieve the child from the classroom. If the parent/guardian does not have their sticker, the classroom volunteer should get the children's director or other pastoral staff to release the child. Volunteers are never to release a child to anyone who does not have a sticker.

Nursery Guidelines:

Ministering to Distressed Infants/Toddlers and Parent or Guardians

Receiving an infant or toddler who cries when the parent/guardian attempts to leave can be upsetting to everyone. Ask the parent/guardian if they'd like you to help by taking the child from them. Reassure them that this is a normal response when separating from a loved one in a new environment. Reassure the parent that you will care for their child and comfort him, but if the child is inconsolable after a reasonable amount of time (usually 15-20 min.), you will call for them, unless they tell us not to. First and foremost, pray for God's peace and comfort for the child, acknowledge to the child that you understand that they are sad but reassure the child that he is OK. Distraction is a tool that can help the child forget their distress. Hold the baby unless he acts like he wants to be put down. Usually walking around is the most effective for of consolation for a baby, sometimes changing position and/or rocking helps. Worship music can also be helpful.

Nursery Minister to Infant/Toddler Ratio

One adult must never be alone with a child. The minister to child ratio should be 1 adult minister to 2 babies. Assistants must be Jr. High aged or older to help. Junior Volunteers must always serve with an adult.

Diapers

Every child's diaper should be changed before they are released back to their parents, unless otherwise noted on by parent, or if child becomes very upset. Be sure to explain to parents that their child's diaper wasn't changed and why.

When changing diapers:

- There must be at least **two** Nursery Ministers in the room while diapers are being changed.
- Use a diaper from the child's own diaper bag. If a diaper wasn't provided, then use one from our supply.
- Wear a fresh pair of disposable gloves and discard after each diaper change.
- A fresh wax paper sheet must be placed on the changing table for each child, and then discarded after each change.
- Place dirty diaper in an individual plastic bag, located on the 2nd shelf of the changing table and discard in the trash.
- Be sure to wash your hands after each change.
- At the end of each service, please tie up the trash bag and discard in the outside dumpster.

Bodily Fluids

In the event of a baby vomiting or bleeding, you must wear disposable gloves to clean up. Avoid contact with fluids. Use Clean Up Kit to deal with fluids. If it is an incident other than normal infant spitting up, please fill out incident report and turn it in to the Nursery Director.

Toys

Disinfect all toys that have been in a baby's mouths. If you see a baby leave a toy that has been in their mouth, remove it to be disinfected. Clean all dirty toys with soap and water and place on counter until dry.

Section 2 – Illness, Accident and Emergency Policies and Procedures

Top Safety Issues for NLC

Keep ministry areas clean and free of hazards. Make sure nothing is blocking doors or windows or in the way of foot traffic. Make sure chairs and tables are safe. If using portable fans or heaters they must be placed in a safe area, not accessible to the children.

In the event of an incident where blood or bodily fluids are spilled, know where the **Emergency Clean-up** kits are located. (In the kitchen downstairs). These are to be used to clean up any bodily fluids:

- You must put on protective gloves before assisting the injured person or cleaning the spill (located in the Emergency Clean-up kit).
- Please direct those in your care out of the classroom or area.



- Report incident to the Nursery Director. Fill out the incident form (located with the kits) and turn in to Pastoral Staff or Ministry Leader immediately following the incident.

Location of First Aid Kits

Fully stocked first aid kits are located in the kitchen and each classroom.

The most important preventative measure to the spread of infectious disease is hand washing. **Note:** We are not legally permitted to administer medical treatment of any kind, such as administering medications or medical advice etc. This however, does not apply to life or death situations such as the need for CPR or trauma care. In the event of an emergency please stay with the individual and have someone notify parent/guardian or responsible adult, Pastoral Staff or Directors, and when necessary, call 911.

When to call 911

- When the person is unconscious or has difficulty breathing.
- When the person is bleeding severely or has possible broken bones.
- If a person has injuries to the head, neck or back.
- If a person has pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen.
- When a person has seizures, severe headache, or slurred speech.
- If a person appears to be poisoned, passing or vomiting blood.

Illness/Wellness Procedures

Illness: Children with the following symptoms should be cared for in their own homes, so as not to expose other children:

- A temperature above 98.6
- Cold symptoms such as, runny nose (nasal drip with any color), congestion or chronic cough due to cold or flu.
- Diarrhea or vomiting within the last 24 hours.
- Any rash or skin condition (unless deemed non-contagious by a physician.)
- Symptoms of eye infection such as swollen, runny or red eyes.

Fire Extinguishers

Familiarize yourself with the location of our fire extinguishers and their proper usage. They are located in the kitchen, downstairs hallway and upstairs hallway.

Exits

Be familiar with exits and alternate exits in the event of an emergency. See Site Map.

Earthquake or Disasters

- Stay Calm
- Move children and yourself away from windows, TV sets, shelving, etc.
- In the event of an earthquake seek cover in doorway or under a table.

Appliances and Electrical Equipment

Vacuum cleaners, electrical equipment and ovens must be used with care. Report any frayed cords or damaged equipment.

Damaged Doors and Windows

Damaged doors and windows need to be reported immediately to Pastoral Staff or Overseer. In the event of an unsafe environment, remove those in your charge from the area and contact one of the above people for assistance.

Stairways

Since we have several stairways, and they can be hazardous, it is necessary to have adult supervision of these areas. Encourage the use of handrails and have children stay to one side and do not allow pushing, shoving or running.

Section 3 – Field Trips/Special Events/Transportation

Activities and field trips

Proper supervision of any church sponsored activity is crucial to its success and safety. Usually, such activities are a way to build goodwill or relationship with the community. When planning a field trip or special function the church should take a proactive posture in assessing these three criteria:

- What can go wrong?
- If something does happen, how will we respond?
- What is the plan in the event of an emergency?

Keeping these three issues in mind, consider the following basic guidelines when planning an event, whether it be on church property or at an off-site location.

1. Choose your volunteers wisely.
 - Screen your volunteers
 - Present a list of preferred volunteers to the Ministry Overseer for approval.
 - Drivers must be at least 25 years old, have a valid CA driver's license and be insured.
2. Evaluate and assess location/facilities and equipment.
 - Facilities should be accessible to people with disabilities
 - Anticipate potential safety hazards
 - Periodically check safety and performance of equipment.
 - Determine transportation and parking needs.

3. Prepare people for the event.

- Make sure all children have a signed release form which explains the activity and rules of conduct and that the information is readily available.
- Meet with volunteers and discuss risks and procedures for handling problems or emergencies. Verify that vendors and outside contractors have insurance coverage.
- Prepare clean-up crews and person(s) to secure facilities when the activity is over.

Transportation

Whether using a church owned vehicle, a leased vehicle, car pools, or a church member's vehicle, it is important to consider several factors before determining who will drive:

- Have drivers been instructed what to do in case of an emergency?
- Drivers will be required to show proof of insurance before they are able to transport people to or from the function.
- Seat belts are required for each person in the vehicle. No exceptions!

NOTE: If an accident should occur, and it is the other driver's fault, then his/her policy would be primary. Foursquare does NOT cover people driving to and from church. This scenario only applies to transporting people to and from a specific church sponsored activity or the situation where a church has a specific bus ministry and it picks up people at home and takes them to the church sponsored activity.

Section 4 – Youth Ministry

YOUTH MINISTRY

The Youth Pastor will be responsible for ensuring that our Youth Ministry area is monitored during Sunday Classes or Youth programming. This will include unobserved monitoring of staff members, volunteers and youth in the youth classrooms. No youth will ever be left unattended or unsupervised during youth ministry programming or meetings.

Youth Ministry staff members or volunteers are prohibited from being alone with an individual youth in any room or building. In the event a staff member or volunteer finds himself/herself alone with a single youth, that staff member or volunteer will take the youth to a room or building occupied by others, or to a location easily observed by others. (Example: If a youth desires additional conversation or counsel with a staff member or volunteer after regular programming has concluded, move to an adjoining room where other staff members are present.) After every programming event, staff members and volunteers must ensure every room and restroom is checked prior to leaving. Any two youth together in an unseen or less easily viewed area should be redirected to another (more open) area.

STAFF TO YOUTH RATIO

Our church is committed to providing adequate staff and volunteer supervision in all Youth Ministry activities and programs. NLC recommends that the primary youth leader/pastor be at least 5 years older than the oldest youth, and any main helpers be 1 year post high school.

Accordingly, the following ratios will be observed for Youth Ministry activities and programs: For groups up to and including 30 youth, there will be a minimum of 2 **adult leaders**



or volunteers supervising. For groups larger than 30 youth, there will be a minimum of 3 staff members or volunteers supervising.

For every additional 15 youth, 1 staff member or volunteer will be required.

*The above ratios are minimum recommendations. Where supervision is concerned, more is generally better.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

It is the policy of NLC that staff members and volunteers are prohibited from using physical discipline in any way for behavior management of children or youth. If a youth is consistently unruly or fails to comply with verbal warnings or instructions from staff/volunteers, that youth will be asked to leave (if not endangered by doing so) or the youth's parent will be contacted to pick up the youth. In the event of a fight or physical altercation, staff/volunteer will verbally redirect youth involved and will try to avoid physical intervention unless intervention is necessary to protect someone who is in danger of serious injury.

Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported immediately to parents.

INTOXICANTS

Staff and volunteers are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drugs while in any of our church facilities, while traveling with youth, or while working with or supervising youth.

Any youth under the influence of drugs or alcohol will be immediately sent home with a parent.

NUDITY

Staff and volunteers in our youth ministry should never be nude in the presence of youth in their care. In the event there is a situation that calls for the possibility of nudity (i.e. changing clothes during a pool party, weekend or overnight retreat, etc.), staff member/volunteer will submit a plan for approval to his/her supervisor concerning arrangements for showering or changing clothes with adults and youth separate.

ONE TO ONE INTERACTIONS WITH YOUTH

We recognize that meeting the emotional needs of youth may occasionally require staff member and volunteers to minister to them on an individual basis. Staff members and volunteers should observe the following guideline when interacting with youth:

1. Staff members and volunteers should conduct one to one meetings with an individual Youth at a time when others are present and where interactions can be easily observed.
2. One to One meetings should occur between members of the same sex.

Car Travel

Staff members and volunteers may from time to time be in a position to provide transportation for youth. The following guidelines should be strictly observed when workers are involved in the transportation of youth:

1. Youth should be transported directly to their destination. Unauthorized stops to a non-public place should be avoided. Best practices of ministry recommend two adults in every car. Never should there be a youth alone with an adult of the opposite gender in a vehicle.
2. Staff members and volunteers should avoid physical contact with youth while in vehicles.
3. No cell phones may be utilized by the driver

PARENTAL CONTACT

Parents who leave a youth in the care of our youth program will be contacted if their child becomes ill or injured or has a severe discipline problem. Therefore you must have contact information for all youth at all times.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parents are encouraged to visit any and all services and programs in which their youth is involved at our church. Parents have an open invitation to observe all programs and activities in which their Youth is involved. However, parents who desire to participate in or have continuous, ongoing contact with Youth Ministry programs will be required to complete our volunteer application and screening process.

PHYSICAL CONTACT

Our church is committed to protecting youth in its care. The physical contact policy for our youth promotes a positive, nurturing, yet safe environment.

1. Side hugs, pats on the back and other forms of appropriate physical affection between staff and volunteers and youth are important and suitable in a church setting.
2. Close hugging or other further displays of affection are not allowed.
3. Physical contact should always be for the benefit of the youth and never based on the emotional need of the staff or volunteers
4. Physical contact should only be given in observable places or when other people are nearby.
5. Never force physical contact or touch on any reluctant youth. A youth's preferences must always be respected.
6. Youth staff and volunteers are responsible for protecting all of the youth from unwanted physical touch from others, especially other students.

SEXUALLY ORIENTED CONVERSATIONS

Staff members and volunteers should not engage in sexually oriented conversations with youth and are not permitted to discuss any inappropriate or explicit information about their personal relationships, dating or sexual activities with any youth in the program. However, it is expected that from time to time the youth ministry discussions may address age appropriate issues related to purity, sex and human sexuality. These lessons will convey the church's views on these topics, and parents will be notified in advance of these lessons.

SLEEPING ARRANGEMENTS

It is anticipated that certain Youth Ministry Activities will involve overnight sleeping arrangements. The following rules will be followed:

1. The 2 adult non-related rule must be followed.
2. Overnight sleeping arrangements must be approved by the Pastor and have signed approval by the parents



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3. As long as any youth is awake, one of the leaders must also remain awake and monitoring behavior.
4. No "R" rated movies are permitted. PG-13 movies should be approved by the pastor or parents. Youth staff and leaders will use good judgment.
5. In the event of a sleepover on church property or a house, boys and girls will sleep in separate rooms and be supervised by leaders of the same sex.



I have read and understand the Risk Management and Safety Manual and agree to abide by the safety standards of New Life church.

Volunteer Signature

Date

Printed Name

Parent Signature (if volunteer is under 18 years old)