

Living Water Evangelical Church

Children Protection Policy

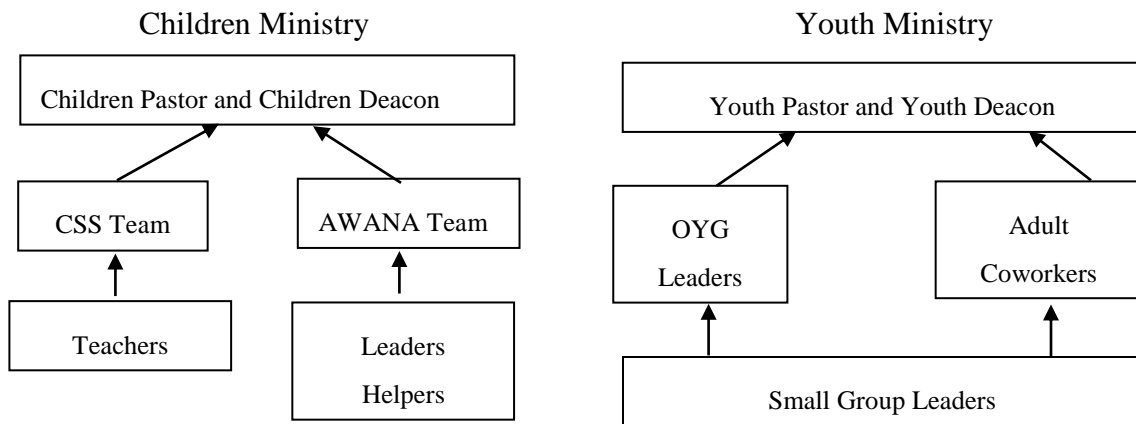
I. Introduction

Numerous contacts with minor occur in youth and children ministries at Living Water Evangelical Church every year. Because of this, the following values have become necessary in order to best serve the youth and children at LWEC Church:

1. **To Protect God’s Children** – The creation of a secure, safe environment for our youth and children is of utmost importance. (Matt. 18:1-6)
2. **Legal Protection of the Church** – There are several liability factors that dictate how we process our volunteers and paperwork.
3. **Ministry Support** – To support the youth and children ministries in their recruitment of the best people possible to serve our children, we are implementing these procedures.
4. **To Raise Awareness Level** – A child protection program heightens awareness and understanding but is not intended to cause undue suspicion.

II. Personnel

1. Reporting structure: The children and youth ministries involve the Children Pastor and Youth Pastor, the Children and Youth Deacons, coworker teams for each ministry, and employees and volunteers. The reporting structures are illustrated in the following diagrams.



In the above charts, CSS stands for Children Sunday School and OYG stands for Overflow Youth Group.

2. Personnel screening

- a. All persons who are involved in activities in children and youth ministries at Living Water Evangelical Church must undergo personnel screening regardless of whether they are an employee or a volunteer (including regular and temporary volunteer).
 - i. An employee is defined as a staff member of the church.
 - ii. A regular volunteer is defined as a volunteer in children and/or youth ministries that conducts program activity during church’s regular

operations, which consists of Sunday school teachers, AWANA leaders and helpers, OYG leaders, adult coworkers, and small group leaders.

- iii. A temporary volunteer is defined as a volunteer in children and/or youth ministries that conducts program activities during the church's special events, which consists of but not limited to Evangelistic events, Mission conference, LWEC Summer retreat, Welcome new comers event, and Christmas celebration.
- iv. Personnel Screening includes
 - a) Completion of the "Application for Workers in Youth and Children Ministry CONFIDENTIAL" (Appendix I) or "Application for Temporary Volunteers in Youth and Children Ministry CONFIDENTIAL" (Appendix II) forms by the candidate, or
 - b) Completion of a Student Volunteer Covenant (Appendix III) by the candidate if under 18
 - c) A personal interview between the candidate and the persons specified in Item II-2-b
 - d) Reference checks
 - e) When appropriate, a criminal records check
- b. Personnel screening is conducted by the Youth Pastor, Youth Deacon, Children Pastor, Children Deacon, and a designated Pastor from the Chinese congregation. Important personal characteristics for these persons include
 - i. Spiritual gift of discernment
 - ii. Professional training
 - iii. Gifts in counseling
 - iv. Age and life experience
 - v. Shepherding skills

3. Personnel Training

- a. All employees and volunteers must receive standard training provided by the Youth Pastor and Children Pastor.
- b. The completion of training shall be documented by the Youth and Children Deacons.
- c. A handbook shall be distributed to all staff and volunteers.
- d. After receiving the standard training, all employees and volunteers should review this policy and the handbook every year. This activity should be recorded in the employee's annual self-evaluation every year.
- e. Training guidelines for Youth Ministry are detailed in section VI.

III. Child ID and security system

1. Child/parent identification system requires parents of children from birth to age seven to provide identification for childcare or Sunday School drop-off and pick up.
2. Parents will be informed by the Children Pastor of any emergency that may befall their child via screen notification during the sermon.

IV. Incident reporting

1. If an abusive incident is suspected, personnel of the youth ministry shall report it to the Youth Pastor; and personnel of the children ministry shall report it to the Children Pastor.

2. Upon receiving the report of an incident, the Youth Pastor and Children Pastor are responsible for investigating the incident and making decision of appropriate responses. Possible responses include: dismissing the accusation, providing additional training, taking a disciplinary action, and reporting the incident to state authorities.
3. The Youth Pastor and Children Pastor shall document the incident and send the document to the Administration Deacon for record keeping.
4. If the incident is deemed necessary to be reported to authorities, the Youth Pastor and Children Pastor are responsible for filing the report, notifying the parents, and serving as the liaison to the family and to the accused individual(s). The Administration Deacon is responsible for reporting the incident to the insurance company. The Chair of BOD is responsible for being the spokesperson for the church, consulting with attorney, and serving as the only person responding to the media.

V. Confidential documents

1. All documents generated by the personnel screening in II-2-a and incident report in IV-3 are confidential.
2. Only persons specified in II-2-b and the Administration Deacon have access to confidential documents.
3. All confidential documents shall be scanned and the scanned files shall be sent to the Administration Deacon for safekeeping. The original documents shall be destroyed. The scanner used for scanning confidential documents shall not have the capability of altering images.

VI. Proper conduct of adult leaders of the Youth Ministry

1. The two-adult rule: Two adults may meet together with one student or at least two students with one adult. An adult should never be alone with a student in a private place, home, or car, etc. This applies to both opposite genders and same genders.
2. Parental permission must be obtained before an adult interacts with a student personally.
3. If a student of the opposite sex begins to confide personal information with an adult leader, the leader shall lead the student to a leader of his/her own sex.
4. An adult leader shall guard his/her words and actions so that they are never misunderstood as angry, abusive or flirting.

Specific Guidelines for Youth Employee and Volunteers:

All youth employee and volunteers are to follow the General Guidelines in addition to the following

5. Team leadership: Teams of adults (preferably male and female) will supervise activities. This policy provides for more than one adult to help ensure appropriate levels of supervision.
6. Overnight Activities: At least two adults will supervise overnight activities. If the participants are male and female, then male and female chaperons must be present. If these conditions cannot be met, then the event should be postponed. It is never appropriate for an adult chaperon who is not a family member to share a bed with a youth. Experienced adult workers should be included with adults who are newcomers to youth ministry. The ratio of adult to youth must be 1:8.
7. Individual Counseling: Team counseling is preferable whenever possible. When team counseling sessions are not feasible, notify another adult of the location and with whom you are meeting. Counseling should be done in a public place where private

conversations are possible but occur in full view of others. The leader must guard carefully to avoid seclusion. If possible, have female adults counsel female youths and males counsel males. A male/female team is generally appropriate for counseling either gender.

8. Long-Term Counseling: Persons working with youth should not meet with youth more than two times to discuss the same issue. Persons working with youth are not prepared or supported for long-term counseling or formal therapy. Adult leaders are encouraged to refer youth who they suspect have a serious need for counseling to professionals in the community. Questions about referral must be discussed promptly with the Youth Pastor.
9. This paragraph is limited to informal contact. Informal Contact: Informal contact refers to phone calls, letters, or face-to-face contact between an adult worker and a youth, or use of the nursery or other rooms when they are not scheduled for use (i.e. weddings, funerals, special holiday services etc.) In the case of informal contact with youth, the church recognizes that informal contact between worker and youth frequently occurs. For example, employees or volunteers may hire teens as baby sitters for their own children, or may see kids during social events with the child's family. This interaction is usually legitimate and beneficial. However, employees and volunteers should seek permission of parents before having informal contact with their youth. The employees and volunteers should clearly let the parent know the nature of the contact and that it is not part of church activity. Parents are responsible for monitoring this informal contact.
10. Transportation To and From Meetings: Transportation to and from meetings is not part of church or youth group activities. Parents are responsible for providing or arranging for this transportation. If a leader does transport a youth at the parent's request, this should be recognized as informal contact, and the guidelines for informal contact should be followed.
11. Transportation as a Part of Church Programs: The church may from time to time provide transportation as an official part of church activities. For example, the church may provide transportation to out-of-town events or field trips. When youth are transported as a part of out-of-town events or field trips activities, all guidelines will apply.
12. Confidentiality: Workers of youth must report to the Youth Pastor if a minor discusses harming himself or others, committing a crime, or being abused. Youth worker must inform the youth that any discussion regarding harming himself/herself or others, committing a crime, or being abused will be discussed with the Youth Pastor, senior Pastor, BOD, and possibly the police. There are limits to confidentiality when working with youth. Questions about such cases or other issues of confidentiality must be discussed promptly with the BOD chair or Senior Pastor who will also protect the confidential nature of the discussion. Conferring with the BOD chair or the minister on sensitive issues is not considered breaking a confidence.
13. Youth Supervising Youth: Minors may help adults lead youth activities only under the direct leadership of adults. A minor may not be used to meet the team leadership or team counseling guidelines discussed above.
14. Gifts: Persons working with youth are generally discouraged from giving personal gifts or money to youth. When the giving of personal gifts is desired, the worker must first notify parents and the Youth Pastor. Gifts can be easily misinterpreted. Gifts given to groups of young people are appropriate, such as graduation presents or awards for participation.

15. Dating or Sexual Involvement: No adult worker is to date a youth or be romantically or sexually involved with a youth.
16. An adult leader is never permitted to hit, slap, humiliate or unnecessarily restrain a student.

Appendix I

Living Water Evangelical Church APPLICATION FOR WORKERS IN YOUTH AND CHILDREN MINISTRY CONFIDENTIAL

This application is to be completed by all applicants for any position (volunteer or compensated) involving the supervision or custody of minors. This is not an employment application form. Persons seeking a position in the church as a paid employee will be required to complete an employment application in addition to this screening form. It is being used to help the church provide a safe and secure environment for those children and youth who participate in our programs and use our facilities.

General Information

Date _____
Name _____ Maiden Name _____
Address _____
City, State, Zip _____
Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____
Date of Birth _____ Place of Birth _____
Social Security # _____ Driver's Lic. # _____

(*Identity must be confirmed with a state driver's license or other photographic identification.)

Let Us Get to Know You . . .

How long have you been attending LWEC? _____
Do you regularly attend weekend services? _____ Mid Week Community? _____

Have you personally accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior and are you committed to having the character of Jesus live through you? YES/NO

Tell us about your spiritual journey to date:

“I have chosen to volunteer to work with youth at LWEC because”

Personal References. List 3 adults you’ve known for at least one year, who are not related to you and have a definite knowledge of your character and ability to work with children.

1. LWEC Church Staff, Leadership Team Member, Bible Study or Ministry Leader

Name _____ Nature of Association _____
Address _____ Length of Time Known _____
City _____ Zip _____ Occupation _____
Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____

2. Employer or Fellow Employee

Name _____ Nature of Association _____
Address _____ Length of Time Known _____
City _____ Zip _____ Occupation _____
Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____

3. Social Friend or Neighbor

Name _____ Nature of Association _____
Address _____ Length of Time Known _____
City _____ Zip _____ Occupation _____
Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____

Previous Addresses

If you have lived at your current address for less than seven years, provide information on all addresses during that period.

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Dates ____ - ____
Address _____ City _____ State _____ Dates ____ - ____
Address _____ City _____ State _____ Dates ____ - ____

Present Employment

Employer _____ Supervisor _____
Address _____ Employment Date _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Full time _____ Part time _____
Your position _____

Military Service

Branch _____ Enlist Date _____ Discharge Date _____

Education Please check the highest grade completed

High School College – 2 years College – 4 years Graduate School

Personal Situations

Are you . . . Single Married Widowed Divorced

Do you have children of your own? _____

Have you ever been convicted of or pleaded guilty to a crime?

_____ (attach a separate page, if necessary) _____

_____ No

If there has been alcohol abuse, drug abuse, physical or sexual abuse in your family background, what steps have you taken to minimize the impact that those issues will create for you, both now and in the future? _____

of work performed, and dates) _____

List all previous non-church work involving youth (list each organization's name and address, type of work performed, and dates) _____

Applicant's Statement

The information contained in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge. I authorize any references or churches listed in this application to give you any information (including opinions) that they have regarding my character and fitness for children or youth work. In consideration of the receipt and evaluation of this application by LWEC, I hereby release any individual, church, youth organization, charity, employer, reference or any other person or organization, including record custodians, both collectively and individually, from any and all liability for damages of whatever kind or 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. I waive any right that I may have to inspect any information provided about me by any person or organization identified by me in this application.

Should my application be accepted, I agree to refrain from unscriptural conduct in the performance of my services on behalf of the church.

I further 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.

Applicant's Signature _____

Date _____

Witness _____

Date _____

REQUEST FOR CRIMINAL RECORDS CHECK AND AUTHORIZATION

IMPORTANT: THIS SECTION MUST BE COMPLETED BY EVERY APPLICANT, REGARDLESS OF CRIMINAL RECORD.

I hereby request and authorize the release of any information which pertains to any record of convictions contained in law enforcement files or in any criminal file maintained on me whether local, state or national. I hereby release local, state and national law enforcement agencies from any and all liability resulting from such disclosure.

Signature

Print Name

Print maiden name, if applicable

Print all aliases

Date of Birth

Place of birth

Driver's license number and state

Social Security Number

Today's date

Record sent to:

Name _____

Address _____

Appendix II

Living Water Evangelical Church APPLICATION FOR TEMPORARY VOLUNTEERS IN YOUTH AND CHILDREN MINISTRY CONFIDENTIAL

This application (Temporary Volunteer Application) is to be completed by all applicants for any temporary volunteer position as defined by LWEC Children Protection Policy involving the supervision or custody of minors during special events and summer retreat. This is being used to help the church provide a safe and secure environment for those children and youth who participate in our programs and use our facilities. LWEC reserves the right to conduct background and/or reference check. This form is required if you

- 1) Have never signed the Regular Volunteer Application form, or
- 2) Have never signed this form, or
- 3) Have not signed the form in last three calendar years

General Information

Date _____

Name _____ (Chinese/English)

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____

Date of Birth _____

Social Security # _____ Driver's Lic. # _____

(*Identity must be confirmed with a state driver's license or other photographic identification.)

Let Us Get to Know You

Have you personally accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior and are you committed to having the character of Jesus live through you? YES/NO

How long have you been attending LWEC? Not attending,
1-5 months, more than 6 months

Have you ever been accused, charged or alleged to have committed any act of neglecting, abusing or molesting any child? YES/NO

Have you ever been convicted of or pleaded guilty to a crime? YES/NO

Have you ever been concerned that you may have an addiction to drugs, alcohol, pornography or any other addiction; or have you ever been treated for psychiatric disorder? YES/NO

Is there any circumstance or pattern in your life which would make it inappropriate for you to serve with minors or would compromise the integrity of LWEC ? YES/NO

Personal References.

List 1 adult you've known for at least one year, who are not related to you and have a definite knowledge of your character and ability to work with children.

LWEC Church Staff, Leadership Team Member, Bible Study or Ministry Leader

Name _____ Fellowship group _____
Home or Cell Phone _____ Length of Time Known _____

Statement

The information contained in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge. I authorize any references or churches listed in this application to give you any information (including opinions) that they have regarding my character and fitness for children or youth work. I further state that I have carefully read the foregoing release and know the contents thereof and I sign this release as my own free act.

Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

REQUEST FOR CRIMINAL RECORDS CHECK AND AUTHORIZATION

IMPORTANT: THIS SECTION MUST BE COMPLETED BY EVERY APPLICANT, REGARDLESS OF CRIMINAL RECORD.

I hereby request and authorize the release of any information which pertains to any record of convictions contained in law enforcement files or in any criminal file maintained on me whether local, state or national. I hereby release local, state and national law enforcement agencies from any and all liability resulting from such disclosure.

Signature

Print Name

Parent Signature

Parent Print Name

Print all aliases

Date of Birth

Place of birth

Driver's license number and state

Social Security Number

Today's date

Record sent to:

Name _____

Address _____

Appendix III

Living Water Evangelical Church

VOLUNTEER COVENANT

For Youth Who Are Serving

- ✓ I understand that in my serving role I am doing work for the Kingdom of God. I agree to conduct myself in a manner that will be pleasing to Jesus Christ.
- ✓ I understand that as a young volunteer I am here to assist in carrying out the mission of the ministry that I volunteered to serve with. I understand that considerable responsibility comes with providing a safe and enjoyable time for people involved in this ministry, as well as for people attending church-wide events or ministry functions.
- ✓ I understand that once I am assigned to a serving team, this will be my team for the duration of the ministry session, unless discussed with my ministry leader. I understand that as a young volunteer, I am a vital part of the team, therefore, the adult leaders must be able to count on me.
- ✓ I understand how important it is to contact my ministry leaders to notify them if I will not be able to serve. I understand that leaders need to know two days prior to my serving time that I will be absent, unless my absence is due to illness or unexpected change in family plans, and then I will contact my leader as soon as possible.
- ✓ I understand that as I help in my ministry I am expected to treat others as Jesus would treat them if He were here in my place. This includes leaders, parents, children and other young volunteers. When new or difficult circumstances arise, I will ask myself "What would Jesus do?" I understand that the adults in this ministry are there to assist me, and if I need help discerning what the appropriate way to proceed is, I am committed to seeking their assistance.
- ✓ I understand the importance of being fed spiritually, emotionally, and relationally. I know that learning the principles in the Bible and growing more like Jesus is important to my growth. I understand that the best way to achieve this growth is

through regular personal devotions, attendance in a small group and church services.

- ✓ I understand that my ministry leaders will provide me with additional training and coaching intended for the growth of my abilities in the areas of service and relationships.
- ✓ I understand that if at any time my conduct becomes less than what is expected of me, corrective action steps will be taken. These steps may include oral warning with instruction on how to conduct myself, written warning, parental notification, and if necessary, dismissal from the ministry.
- ✓ I understand that if I am aware of someone who I think is being abused (or who has been abused), even if it didn't happen at the church, I will let my ministry staff person know about it. No one should ever be abused and we want to be able to help these children. The church has people who are specially trained to handle these situations. REMEMBER: You will never be in trouble for reporting abuse.

I understand the expectations that Living Water Evangelical Church has of me as a young volunteer on the front and back of this page and I am committed to doing my best to fill these expectations.

Volunteer Name _____

Volunteer Signature _____

Date _____

I understand the commitment that Living Water Evangelical Church expects of my son/daughter and I accept the responsibility of keeping him/her accountable in fulfilling these expectations.

Parent/Guardian Name _____

Parents/Guardian Signature _____

Date _____

APPENDIX IV

PERSONAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How long have you been coming to LWEC? What are the circumstances that brought you to LWEC?

2. What is your church background?

3. How and when did you hear the gospel message and how did it affect you?

4. Tell me a little about your family background growing up (father, mother, sister, brother).

5. Tell me something about yourself. Are you married? Do you have any children? Are you working? Describe a typical week for you and/or your family.

6. Have you served anywhere in LWEC before? Where and how long? What did you like and/or dislike about serving?

7. Have you had any experience with children? What outside organizations involving minors have you served with?

8. Why are you investigating this ministry for serving?

9. Who are the references that you gave us? (Make sure we have adequate information.)

10. Is there any circumstance or any individual who could provide a reason or which would make it inappropriate for you to serve with kids or would compromise the integrity of LWEC?

11. Additional comments:

Appendix V

REFERENCE CHECK

Applicant's Name: _____

Applicant's Social Security Number: _____

(The Social Security Number is included here to insure the form is filled with the right subject)

Name of Reference: _____ Phone Number: _____

Interviewer Name: _____

Date/Time of Interview: _____ In person: _____ By phone: _____

1. Introduce yourself to the reference and explain why you are calling him. Also, explain the need for investigating the person's background and reference (i.e., security of the children). Finally, assure the person the responses will remain confidential.
2. Qualify the reference. Find out how long the reference has known the applicant, whether their relationship is social or professional, and the strength of the relationship – a continuum from very close friend to distant acquaintance. If they don't know applicant, tell them to do the best they can. Call applicant and get another name and number, if needed.
3. How well does the applicant get along with other social acquaintances/fellow workers/bosses/employees, etc.? Get the reference to be as descriptive as possible. Do they get along with adults?
4. How well does the reference rate the applicant's emotional maturity? Why? Ask for examples of situations that caused the reference to arrive at the conclusion, whether it is a positive or negative one. (Do they lose their temper, able to handle change, use inappropriate reactions to children's behavior, etc. – ask for examples.)
5. Ask the reference if he has ever observed the applicant interact with children. How often? Ask the reference to describe the applicant's ability to relate to, and care for, children. Press for details.

6. How does the reference rate the applicant's ability to follow through on his commitments? Again, ask for specific examples that lead to the conclusion.
7. Do you have personal knowledge, or have you ever heard, of the applicant having any problems with drugs or alcohol? Get details.
8. Has the reference ever heard of the applicant being accused of child abuse or any criminal offense more serious than minor traffic violations? Get details.
9. Would the reference entrust the care of his child to the applicant without any concern, reservations or hesitation? (NOTE: Listen carefully to any hesitation and ask follow-up questions if the person seems uncertain.)
10. Is there any circumstance or pattern in the life of the applicant which would make it inappropriate for the applicant to work with minors or would compromise the integrity of LWEC?
11. Is there anything that the interviewer did not ask that the reference thinks is important for the interviewer to know about the applicant.

These statements are general. Do not use word for word. Be natural. We do not need "nice" things, but character references. Use N/O if not observed.