

Resolution No. _____

**ST. MARTIN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
CHILDREN AND YOUTH PROGRAM VOLUNTEER POLICY**

A. Purpose

The primary purpose of this policy is to maintain a safe environment for those children and youth participating in St. Martin's children and youth program. Compliance with this policy will also help protect St. Martin's and its adult volunteers from unfounded charges and legal liability.

B. Open Program

All aspects of the St. Martin's children and youth programs are open to observation by parents and congregational leaders at any time.

C. Screening

An adult volunteer who regularly works with children and youth at St. Martin's must be at least 21 years old and must have been an active member of St. Martin's for at least six months. Before working with children or youth and on or before August 31 of each following year, each such adult volunteer must submit a personal information and self-disclosure form and must authorize a background check (see Appendix A). Information obtained from background checks will be treated as confidential. The senior pastor will be responsible for reviewing the information submitted and approving each adult volunteer. No adult volunteer may regularly work with children and youth at St. Martin's without the prior approval of the senior pastor.

D. History of Sexual Misconduct

Any adult who has been convicted of sexual misconduct or abuse may not participate in any capacity in St. Martin's programs for children or youth.

E. Two-deep Leadership

At least two adults who are St. Martin's staff members or screened adult volunteers must be present at each children or youth program activity from its beginning until all participants have been released to a parent or another approved person. An adult who is at least 18 years old and who has not been screened may assist in an activity, if at least two adults who are St. Martin's staff members or screened adult volunteers are also present.

F. One-on-One Interaction

When a planned one-on-one meeting between an adult volunteer and a minor (such as for counseling purposes) takes place in the church building, the meeting must be in a room with an unobstructed window or an open door and a St. Martin's staff member or a screened adult volunteer must be in the same area of the church, although not necessarily in the same room. Unplanned individual contact during program activities outside the church (such as for counseling purposes) must be done in view of a program staff member, another adult volunteer or another minor. Planned individual

contact outside the church building may only occur in public places and with the prior consent of the minor and parent or guardian. An adult volunteer should not meet alone with a minor in a private place for any reason.

G. Respect of Privacy

Adult volunteers need to respect the privacy of minors in situations such as use of rest rooms, changing into swimming suits, or taking showers on overnight outings, and intrude only insofar as health and safety require. Adult volunteers also need to protect their own privacy in similar situations.

H. Separate Accommodations

A minimum of two adults who are St. Martin's staff members or screened adult volunteers must be present at an overnight activity. If participants are both male and female, the adults must be male and female. Males and females will sleep in separate areas. Adult volunteers should avoid occupying the same bed as a minor, with the exception of a parent or guardian.

I. Transportation

When the church provides transportation to a child or youth program activity, the following requirements apply:

1. The driver must be a St. Martin's staff member, a screened adult volunteer or a parent.
2. The driver must have a valid Texas drivers license.
3. The driver must have proof of insurance that meets the State of Texas requirements.
4. The driver must not have had a driver's license revoked or suspended within the last five years for any reason.
5. The number of passengers in a vehicle may not exceed the number of working passenger seat restraints.
6. The driver and all passengers must wear seat restraints at all times.
7. The driver must have a copy of and follow the Transportation Safety Guidelines (see Appendix B)
8. A parent or guardian must sign a consent form (see Appendix C).
9. An adult volunteer should avoid being alone in a car with a minor.

J. Constructive Discipline

Discipline used in church activities should be constructive and should reflect the accepting and loving environment that Christ intended for us to have with each other. Corporal punishment is never permitted.

K. No Hazing or Disrespectful Behavior

Hazing and initiations are prohibited and may not be included as part of any St. Martin's child or youth program activity. Bullying, discriminatory jokes or comments, and other behavior that is disrespectful of others is not allowed.

L. No Sexual Behavior

No sexual contact is permitted at child and youth program activities. Other behaviors that do not involve physical contact, but are abusive, such as sexual comments, the showing of sexual materials, and the exposure of sexual parts, are also prohibited.

M. Gifts

Adult volunteers shall not give personal gifts or money to individual children or youth without first notifying the parents and a St. Martin's staff member. Gifts to entire classes or groups are acceptable.

N. Reporting of Violations of These Rules

Any suspected violations of this policy should be reported to the program staff or pastoral staff immediately. Suspected child abuse or neglect shall be reported in accordance with Chapter 261 of the Texas Family Code.

O. Training

Training shall be made available to all volunteers working with youth and children at least once a year. A copy of this policy shall be provided annually to every adult volunteer working with children or youth.

P. Congregational Awareness and Review

A copy of this policy will be available on the congregation's website and/or in the church office at all times.

Q. Effective Date

Section C shall become effective on August 1, 2005. All other provisions of this Policy shall become effective on August 1, 2006.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Council of St. Martin's Evangelical Lutheran Church on this _____ day of _____, 2005.

Ann Henry, Secretary

APPENDIX A

CHILDREN AND YOUTH PROGRAM VOLUNTEER FORM

Thank you for your interest in working with the young people of St. Martin's. Your involvement with the young people of St. Martin's is vital to a successful children and youth ministry. This form will help us to get to know you better so that we can give our young people the best possible experience in their faith journey. We hope and pray that God will lead and guide us in our ministry together.

Personal Information

Name	
Address	
Home Phone	
Work Phone	
E-mail	
Occupation	
Employer	
Hobbies/ Interests	
Birth Date	

How long have you been an active member of St. Martin's? _____

Please list the States that you have lived in since you were 18 years old. _____

Do you have any training that would assist you in your ministry with children and youth?

- CPR training
- First aid training
- Other _____

When could you be available to help with the program?

- Wednesday nights
- Sunday mornings
- Sunday afternoons or evenings
- Overnight trips
- Other _____

Volunteer Experience

Please describe any previous volunteer experience.

Criminal Charges/Convictions

Have you ever been charged with or convicted of child abuse, neglect, or a crime involving actual or attempted molestation of a minor?

- Yes
- No

Have you ever been charged with or convicted of any other crime?

- Yes
- No

If you answer yes to either question, you will need to need to provide complete a form describing those convictions or charges (attached as Appendix D).

Transportation Information

Do you have a vehicle you would be willing to use to transport children or youth to a program activity?

- Yes
- No

If yes, how many seats with passenger restraints does this vehicle have? _____

Do you have a valid Texas drivers license?

- Yes
- No

If you answered yes to the first question, please attached a copy.

Has your drivers license been revoked or suspended within the last 5 years for any reason?

- Yes
- No

Do you have proof of insurance that meets the State of Texas requirements?

- Yes
- No

If you answered yes to the first question, please attach a copy.

Applicant's Statement

I herby acknowledge that this Volunteer Form is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and agree to sign a form authorizing a background check.

I have been provided with a copy of the St. Martin's Lutheran Church Children and Youth Program Volunteer Policy, and I agree to abide by that Policy.

Print Name: _____

APPENDIX B

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY GUIDELINES

A. Requirements for Drivers

1. Each driver must be a screened adult volunteer or a parent.
2. Each driver must have a valid Texas drivers license.
3. Each driver must have proof of insurance that meets the State of Texas requirements.
4. The driver must not have had a driver's license revoked or suspended within the last five years for any reason.

B. Seat Restraints

1. The number of passengers in a vehicle may not exceed the number of working passenger seat restraints.
2. The driver and all passengers must wear seat restraints at all times.

B. Emergency Preparedness

Each vehicle shall have a copy of these Travel Safety Guidelines, an emergency medical kit, a cell phone, and a consent form for each passenger who is a child or youth.

C. Traveling in Groups

If more than one vehicle is involved in providing transportation to the activity:

1. Don't leave until every driver has: directions; a map; a phone number at the destination; the cell phone numbers of other drivers; and the license plate numbers of the other drivers.
2. Drive with headlights on at all times.
3. Do not put passengers at risk in order to drive in a group.
9. An adult volunteer should avoid being alone in a car with a minor.

D. In Case of an Accident

1. Check for any injured persons.

2. If anyone is injured, make them as comfortable as possible. **DO NOT ATTEMPT TO MOVE THE INJURED PERSON.** Keep him or her warm. Administer first aid only if you have the proper training.
3. Do not leave the injured person unattended!
4. Call 911 for an ambulance. Don't forget to give the location clearly and distinctly. Do not hang up until they tell you to.
5. Call police or fire departments as necessary.
6. Get the name, phone number, driver's license number, license plate number, VIN number, and insurance information for other parties involved with the accident.
7. Get the names and telephone numbers of any witnesses.
8. Call a pastor or a St. Martin's staff member and inform them of the accident and the well being of all persons involved. Since you may be understandably upset, let the pastor or a St. Martin's staff member and allow them to explain the status of the situation to any injured person's family.
9. Cooperate with police and fire department investigators.
10. Inform your insurance agent of the accident and provide him or her with the information you have gathered.