

New Life in Christ Church Child Protection Policy

Then children were brought to him that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples rebuked the people, but Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.

(Matthew 19 :13-14, ESV)

Beloved,

We at New Life in Christ Church (NLICC) believe that children are a sacred trust given to us by a just and loving God. We have the enormous opportunity to help children see their dignity as a child created in God's image and to point them to eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ. This time of life is critical for children as statistics show that most professing adults made decisions to follow Christ as children.

We are committed to providing a nurturing and vibrant Christian environment that will foster our children's faith for a lifetime of walking with God (Psalm 78:5-8) and discipleship to Jesus Christ (Matthew 19:14; 28:19-20).

Child sexual abuse is one of the greatest threats to our mission to disciple children. It communicates lies about the love of God, children's value as human beings, and the trustworthiness of Jesus Christ. To that end, NLICC will work for the safety, welfare, and protection of all children and youth with whom we come into contact, and we commit ourselves to high standards of child protection within our own programs and activities.

In an effort to reduce the possibility that any child or youth will be subjected to sexual abuse, NLICC has established this policy to increase awareness within our ministry to ensure the security and welfare of the children and the volunteers who work with them.

The policy also addresses vitally important topics including the warning signs of abuse, how to respond to abuse allegations and care for victims, and how to report abuse disclosures.

Any concerns or questions about the implementation of the plan should be directed to a pastor or the Session of the church.

Thank you for your ministry to children and for your commitment to their safety.

Faithfully Yours in the discipleship of children,
New Life in Christ Church

"Behold, children are a gift of the LORD." (Psalm 127:3, NASB)

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Policy Section One: The Foundation

Chapter One: Defining Child Sexual Abuse

O LORD, you hear the desire of the afflicted; you will strengthen their heart; you will incline your ear to do justice to the fatherless and the oppressed, so that man who is of the earth may strike terror no more. (Psalm. 10:17-18, ESV)

Definitions are important. When it comes to identifying child sexual abuse, New Life in Christ Church (NLICC) will use the following definitions.

Child: NLICC considers any person younger than 18 years to be a child.

Ministry Related Programs: This policy applies to all ministries involving children.

Sexual Abuse: physical contact with a sexual or intimate part of the body, or other forms of sexual activity, conducted without consent, or engaged in for the purpose of sexual gratification or to degrade, injure or control. Sexual abuse is a sin against God and includes, but is not limited to, violations of the seventh commandment (on sexual sin) and the fifth commandment (as it especially deals with violations of power and control).

Physical contact includes, but is not limited to:

- Touching, grabbing, patting, slapping, pinching, rubbing, fondling, groping, poking, or other forms of contact, whether over or under clothing.
- Rubbing one's genital area up against another person or touching another person with one's genitals, whether over or under clothing. This includes instances when an individual acts as though the rubbing was inadvertent but in fact it was intentional.
- Sexual intercourse of any kind.

Sexual or intimate body parts include, but are not limited to:

- Breasts
- Buttocks
- Genitals
- Groin area
- Mouth
- Upper thighs

Other forms of sexual activity include, but are not limited to:

- Photographing, videotaping, or making any other visual, descriptive, or auditory recording of sexual activity or the sexual or intimate parts of a person's body.
- Displaying to another any writings, photograph, videotape, or other visual or auditory recording of sexual activity or the sexual or intimate parts of a person's body.

Lack of consent includes, but is not limited to:

- Explicit indication of lack of consent
- Physical/verbal force or intimidation, whether express or implicit
- Circumstances making it obvious that consent has not been granted, such as:
 - If one individual is an adult and one individual is a child, since children cannot legally consent to sexual activity with an adult.
 - Being too intoxicated/impaired to say “no”
 - Being asleep
 - Lack of knowledge of the activity's occurrence
 - Otherwise not having the physical or mental capacity to consent

Chapter Two: Indicators and Impact of Abuse

Again, I observed all the oppression that takes place under the sun.

I saw the tears of the oppressed, with no one to comfort them.

The oppressors have great power, and their victims are helpless. (Ecclesiastes. 4:1a, NLT)

As the church's front-line for children's and youth programming and pastoral counseling, church staff and volunteers may find themselves in the unique position to detect child sexual abuse.

Though a child's injuries may be hidden from the untrained eye, child sexual abuse can result in immediate and/or lasting impact in all realms of the person's well-being.

Because child sexual abuse is typically accompanied with symptoms, we have identified common Indicators of child sexual abuse and child maltreatment are listed in Appendix 1.

Look to the right and see: there is none who takes notice of me; no refuge remains to me; no one cares for my soul. (Psalm 142:4, ESV)

Chapter Three: Perpetrators of Child Maltreatment

It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were cast into the sea than that he should cause one of these little ones to sin. (Luke 17:2. ESV)

If you exploit them in any way and they cry out to me, then I will certainly hear their cry. (Exodus 22:23, NLT)

People who sexually abuse children utilize authority, trust, or physical force/threats to gain access and control over children so they can perpetrate the abuse. The three primary categories of people who sexually abuse children are the stranger, the acquaintance, and the intra-familial offender.

- Stranger offenders are people that the child has never seen, or people with whom the child has had only minimal prior interactions. Stranger offenders secure access and control over children with authority, trust, and physical force/threats but most frequently utilize physical force/threats and are the smallest category of offenders.
- Acquaintance offenders are non-family members—such as a family friend, clergy member, next-door neighbor, pediatrician, teacher, or church volunteer—who is acquainted with the child or the child’s parents. Acquaintance offenders generally prefer to leverage trust to gain access and control. To secure this trust, the acquaintance offender grooms child victims by providing a variety of services and gifts, including but not limited to attention, affection, kindness, privileges, recognition, alcohol, drugs, money, and pornography. The trust that develops as a result of the grooming process will often reduce the child’s inhibitions and increase the offender’s control over the child. This toxic trust eventually renders the child virtually helpless, creating an environment for ongoing abuse, while increasing the likelihood that the victim will remain silent.
- Intra-familial offenders are related to the victim and are people who usually, but not always, live in the same house as the victim. The intra-familial offender is generally considered the largest of the three child molester categories. Because of greater accessibility, intra-familial victims tend to be overall younger than non-familial victims. The primary challenge for the intra-familial is not access, but the ability to exert sufficient control in order to both abuse and silence the victim. A seemingly greater correlation and interplay exists between the use of trust, authority, and physical force utilized by the intra-familial offender.

Policy Section Two: Protective Practices

Chapter Four: Screening

NLICC aims to hire employees and recruit volunteers to work with children who fit our

vision of “building the kingdom by training leaders”, who are supportive of our theological conviction, and are committed to creating a safe environment for children to grow as disciples.

In keeping with our commitment to protecting children in our care, we screen everyone who works with our children. Employees and volunteers of NLICC will be members of NLICC and will submit a written application (Appendix 2), undergo a background check and an interview with a pastor and the ministry leader for which he is serving. Non-members may serve in some ministries with approval from the ministry director with knowledge of the pastoral staff. They will also submit an application, background check, and interview. All potential employees will also undergo an internet/social media search and reference checks.

If the screening process yields information that an individual abused a child in any way or has been convicted of a violent and/or sexual crime, that individual may not work with children in any capacity, and NLICC will contact a credible child

protection ministry for guidance about how to proceed. If the screening process shows that a candidate has ever been accused of a violent and/or sexual crime OR convicted of any other type of crime, NLICC will consult with a credible child protection ministry to assess the situation.

Chapter Five: Safe Behaviors

*Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.
(1 Corinthians 4:2, NIV)*

NLICC believes that children participating in church sponsored programs must be protected and that appropriate personal relationships between our staff/volunteers and children foster the growth of our covenant community in Christ.

Supervision. Because most child abuse happens in isolated situations and because most adults seeking to harm a child prefer to do so in private, NLICC requires two adults to supervise all youth events including, but not limited to, classes and groups that meet on Sundays (children and youth), Tuesdays (choir and drama), and Wednesday night (Pioneer Girls and Boys Brigade). Two unrelated adults are required to supervise youth events that are not observable and interruptible, including, but not limited to, offsite church events.

Christ Covenant School allows one teacher in the classroom so long as the activity is observable and interruptible and an administrator is present in the building.

In the course of mentoring and counseling, the more an interaction is observable and interruptible the better. When adults spend time with a child, the adults will inform both

the Child's caregiver and their supervisor of each meeting. The adult and child will meet at a time and place where the caregiver or supervisor can interrupt the time or observe the time from a distance. Furthermore, the meeting will take place at a place with high visibility.

The CPP recognizes that on occasion and in special, limited circumstances, it may be appropriate for a child to spend time with a NLICC staff member or volunteer in a private home. If such circumstances arise in the context of a NLICC ministry, or at the direction of the Session (e.g. a Commission), the NLICC staff member or volunteer must have the consent of the child's parent or caregiver. In such

circumstances, the CPP contemplates that the NLICC staff member or volunteer will not be the only adult in the private home, and all interactions with the child shall take place in an open, observable, and interruptible area and all interactions shall comply with other provisions of Chapter 6 (Safe Behaviors) and other relevant provisions of the CPP.

Ministry leaders seeking youth to babysit for ministries must coordinate with the Session for selecting qualified child care providers.

Though the wisdom of policies contained in the CPP are at least generally applicable in all circumstances of adult/child interactions, the CPP should not be read to cover adult/child interactions that take place outside of NLICC ministry-related programs-this includes child care in home care groups.

Touch. A healthy and caring touch communicates value to a child, but abusive touching causes harm. The following guidelines apply to appropriate touching at NLIC.

- Touch shall be open rather than secretive. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.
- Touch should be in response to the needs of the child, and not the needs of the adult.
- Touch should be age-appropriate and generally initiated by the child rather than the adult. It should be with the child's permission and any resistance from the child should be respected.
- Touch should always communicate respect for the child. Adults should avoid doing things of a personal nature for children that they are able to do for themselves, including dressing, bathing, etc.
- Adults and other youth or children should not hit, slap, pinch, push, hold against their will, or otherwise assault children.

The following signs of affection are generally appropriate within specific contexts:

- verbal praise, side hugs, shoulder to shoulder hugs, pats on the shoulder, back, or head (when culturally appropriate).
- For smaller children, touching their hands, faces, shoulders and arms, arms around their shoulders, hugs, or holding them when others are present.

The following behaviors between staff or volunteers and children are inappropriate or may be perceived as inappropriate and shall not be engaged in:

- touching buttocks, chests, genital areas, or thighs;
- showing affection in isolated areas or when alone with a child;
- sleeping in bed with a child;
- inappropriate comments that relate to physique or body development;

- flirtatious or seductive looks;
- any form of affection that is unwanted by the child;
- showing sexually-suggestive videos or playing sexually-suggestive games with any child;
- any behavior that could be interpreted as sexual in nature.

Volunteers shall monitor each other in the area of physical contact, helping each other by pointing out anything that could be misinterpreted.

Gifts. Staff and volunteers are prohibited from displaying favoritism towards a child or group of children and may not give gifts to individual children, unless the gifts are:

- Able to be given to other children at other times for similar reasons (e.g., gifts to graduating seniors; a new Bible for students entering middle school; end of the year “thank you” gifts to older children who volunteered in the nursery)
- Signed from the church rather than the individual
- Given together with another non-family volunteer

Personal Attention. In cases where staff and/or volunteers believe that a child would benefit from extra attention:

- Staff and/or volunteers should be able to articulate a clear reason for providing extra attention to a
- child that focuses on the child’s needs, not staff needs.
- Staff and/or volunteers must receive authorization from the Session before providing extra attention to a child.
- When possible, the Session might organize a rotation of staff and volunteers so that extra attention is not provided solely by one individual.
- Staff and/or volunteers providing extra attention must always abide by the Policy (e.g., meet in observable and interruptible spaces).
- Session members should occasionally supervise by dropping by unexpectedly during outings or meetings.
- The Session should periodically reevaluate the situation to determine if extra attention is still necessary.

NLICC encourages positive verbal interactions, including:

- Encouragement
- Kind words
- Positive reinforcement
- Appropriate jokes

NLICC prohibits:

- Sexually-suggestive language, racy jokes, sexual innuendo, descriptions of sexual experiences/habits
- Uploading, downloading, or viewing of pornography
- Music, videos games, and movies with sexual themes

Teaching. If the church staff or volunteers want to give a lecture or organize a program to help youth understand age-appropriate questions about their body or sexuality, the event must be planned in advance and parents notified beforehand. When children or teens raise questions about their body or sexuality, NLICC volunteers and staff may answer the question at hand in an age-appropriate way and inform the teen's parent as well as a supervisor.

Chapter Six: Interactive Guidelines and Routine Protective Measures

"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake." (Psalm 23:1-3, ESV)

At the beginning of each ministry year, NLICC will register any child who attends activities and programs. The registration will record who may safely pick up a child from an event, any allergies and/or medical concerns the church needs to know about. Attendance will be taken at all events. Once children's attendance is recorded for an event, it is the leader's responsibility to supervise those children from the time they are dropped off until the time they are picked up by a caregiver. Children in fifth grade and older can be released without parental sign-out on Sunday morning/evening, Tuesday evening and Wednesday evening on-site activities.

A designated volunteer will ensure all unused closets and rooms are locked.

A designated volunteer will be present in the foyer for check in/out and registering.

The Director of Child Protection assists with background checks and training and informs the Session and ministry leaders of compliance before the start of every ministry season. The Director can be reached for questions at cp@nlicc.org.

Policy Section Three: Responding to Policy Violations and Child Sexual Abuse

Chapter Seven: Policy Violations

While *not all policy violations are reportable events*, NLICC takes violations seriously. Any staff, volunteer, parent or church member who witnesses a violation is expected to respond in an appropriate way. NLICC expects all adults to practice bystander intervention when they see a policy violation (generally by indicating what the correct behavior is in the given situation, though other actions may be necessary).

Appendix Five includes a decision tree as a *proposed* guideline for handling violations.

Policy Exceptions:

Policy exceptions should be rare. NLICC allows Policy exceptions that are pre-approved or for emergencies. All exceptions should be documented using Policy Exception Request Form or Notification Form: Necessary Deviation from Policy found in Forms in Appendix 3 by the Session.

Chapter Eight: Limited Access Agreements

"For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death. For see what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you, but also what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what punishment! At every point you have proved yourselves innocent in the matter." (2 Corinthians 7:10-11, ESV)

"And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil." (Matthew 6:13, ESV)

NLICC utilizes Limited Access Agreements to clarify safe behavior around children for community members who have engaged in concerning or risky behavior, violated the Policy repeatedly, or have offenses on their background check that are not related to children (e.g. stealing, drug use, DUI, et cetera).

A Limited Access Agreement is a written and agreed-upon boundary between an individual and NLICC wherein we outline specific concerns about an individual's behavior, detail appropriate behavior toward children, and plan ongoing accountability for the individual. Limited Access Agreements apply to members of a church community. They do not apply to known offenders or church staff members.

If a convicted offender wants to join NLICC's community, we will contact a credible child protection ministry on how to best interact with a known sex offender.

Similarly, if an individual has been credibly accused of child sexual abuse or any form of child maltreatment but has not yet or was not convicted, we will contact a credible child protection ministry on how to best proceed.

If a staff member violates the Policy, they will be formally warned and then fired if the violation occurs again.

Chapter Nine: Reporting

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.

Therefore, whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer.

Therefore, one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. (Romans 13:1-5 ESV)

The sexual abuse of a child is a sin against a Holy God, and it is also a serious crime. Reporting suspected child abuse to the legal authorities can save a child's life. In contrast, silence about suspected abuse brings incredible harm to victims and emboldens offenders.

Virginia law states “Any person 18 years of age or older associated with or employed by any public or private organization responsible for the care, custody or control of children” is a mandated reporter. In Virginia, church volunteers who work with children are considered mandated reporters and are legally required to report suspected child abuse or neglect to Child Protective Services. This duty applies when they have “reason to suspect” that a child is being abused or neglected, regardless of whether the information was shared in a confidential setting.

The various types of criminal sexual assault are defined in the Code of Virginia, 18.2 Article 7 (<https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacodefull/title18.2/chapter4/article7/>).

Reports can be made by calling Virginia’s Child Abuse hotline (1-800-552-7096). They are also available to answer questions if you are unsure about reporting. The pastoral staff of NLICC is available to help with reporting as needed.

The closest child advocacy center to NLICC is Safe Harbor Child Advocacy Center in Fredericksburg (540-891-6280). If anyone has questions concerning a child’s safety, we encourage that person to reach out to the child advocacy center or call Virginia’s Child Abuse Hotline (1-800-552-7096).

After a church member has reported abuse, NLICC asks that they notify a pastor, and that the pastor complete a Child Safety Incident Report Form found at Appendix 4.

Chapter Ten: Independent Review

"Abstain from all appearance of evil." (1 Thessalonians 5:22, KJV)

Under the following circumstances, NLICC will consult with a credible child protection ministry to determine if an independent review should be pursued:

1. When a suspicion of child sexual abuse is reported to the civil authorities and they decline to investigate or prosecute the alleged abuses.
2. A district attorney has not pursued legal prosecution because no suspected criminal behavior is reported; however, the Session believes the individual’s behavior might still violate the church policy, be immoral, be inappropriate, or be unsafe.

If an investigation is deemed necessary, NLICC will retain an organization that meets the following criteria:

1. Completely independent of NLICC
2. Experienced in proper investigation techniques
3. Up-to-date on child maltreatment research

Policy Section Four: Supporting Survivors

Chapter Eleven: Sexual Abuse Disclosure

"Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger." (James 1:19, ESV)

Because children and adult survivors are reluctant to disclose sexual abuse, NLICC acknowledges that when survivors choose to do so, they need our community's utmost support.

When children disclose, they almost always do so tentatively or by accident, and may later recant even when there is proof that sexual abuse occurred. If questioned directly, many child victims may deny the abuse. When children disclose intentionally, children may first test the adult's reaction by pretending that

the abuse happened to a friend or by supplying only a small bit of information. If a child discloses abuse to you, following are helpful tips on how to respond in the moment:

- Stay calm.
- Show love and respect for the child.
- Thank the child for telling you and praise the child’s courage.
- If the child expresses guilt or concerns about getting in trouble, reassure the child that no matter what happened he or she is not to blame.
- If the child expresses concern about not being believed, reassure the child that you believe him/her.
- Allow the child to talk freely; do not interrupt, ask the child to repeat words, or probe for details. Use open-ended questions such as “What happened next?”
- Do not offer false assurances, such as promising to keep the child’s disclosure a
 - secret.
- Let the child know what to expect next and incorporate their input where possible.
- Protect the child immediately from the suspected offender.
- Report the abuse to authorities and your supervisors/church leaders.
- Document the disclosure and your report.
- Protect the child’s right to privacy and avoid the urge to turn indiscriminately to colleagues, friends, or family for advice. Instead turn to professionals experienced in handling cases of child sexual abuse and to carefully selected individuals who can provide assistance and support to the child and you.

Responding to Abuse Disclosures

Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person. (Colossians. 4:6, ESV)

Receiving an adult’s abuse disclosure is an honor, not a burden; it is a sign of trust. Victims often choose to disclose their abuse years, even decades, after it occurred. NLICC encourages anyone receiving an adult’s abuse disclosure to be guided by the following responses:

DO Say	DON'T Say
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Do speak words of openness and acceptance with humility such as:	Do not speak reactionary words that can appear judgmental or unbelieving such as:
Thank you for telling me.	Why are you telling me this?
I'm glad you're safe now.	Why didn't you (scream/stop him etc.)
You did the right thing (asking for help/telling me/reporting the abuse etc.).	What do you mean when you say he abused you? What exactly did he do?
I'm glad you're talking with me.	Tell me more details about what happened.
I'm sorry this happened to you. How can I help?	Why did he do that to you? Had you done something to make him think that was okay?
Take as much time as you need.	You need to forgive and move on.
Things may never be the same, but they can get better.	Don't worry, it's going to be all right.
I am here.	It'll take some time, but you'll get over it.
I stand with you. This congregation stands with you.	Calm down and try to relax.
	Try to be strong.
The following should only be said if the victim indicates these concerns are on his/her mind.	It was so long ago, why are you still letting your abuser win by hanging on to it? Let it go.
It is okay to be angry.	You should get on with your life.
It is okay to still love your abuser.	Time heals all wounds.
It's understandable you're feeling that way.	Out of tragedies good things happen.
Your reaction is not an uncommon response.	You're lucky that _____ didn't happen.

Chapter Twelve: Supporting Survivors

"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me." (Psalm 23:4)

If NLICC becomes aware that a child has been, or is suspected to have been, abused,

they will take the following steps to clearly communicate support for the child and the child's family:¹

Terminate/Suspend. Immediately suspend or terminate the alleged perpetrator of abuse from any church positions s/he may hold, pending the results of an investigation. Assign a liaison to maintain contact with the alleged perpetrator and act, if necessary, according to the Book of Church Order (BCO) of the Presbyterian Church of America.

Support Person. A member of the church's Session/diaconate will be designated as a "Support Person(s)" and will reach out to the child and the child's family² within 24 hours of learning about the abuse to express the church's unequivocal support. Understanding that abuse can have an ongoing impact on a child and a child's family, the Support Person will seek permission from the child and the child's family to continue offering support on an ongoing basis. This support will include:

- Showing up
- Listening
- Affirming
- Offering to accompany the child/family in filing a police report, meeting with Child Protective Services, to court hearings or trial and other related meetings, interviews, or hearings
- Asking the child and the child's family how else the church can offer support

Support Persons will understand the limitations of their role and will not offer therapeutic, legal or other expert advice, but will instead function as members of a multidisciplinary team, working, when possible, to support and complement the efforts of involved professionals to support the child and family. For instance, a child who has been abused may have theological questions or experience spiritual injuries, but at the same time, may find comfort in spirituality, prayer, and other forms of religious engagement. The pastor has a unique role to fill here and will make himself available to provide regular ongoing pastoral support to the child and the child's family.

¹ These steps are in addition to the steps outlined above in "Policy Violations" and "Reporting" to protect abused children from further abuse.

² In most cases the Support Person will reach out to the child and the child's family. However, in some instances it may be appropriate to reach out and offer support only to the child (e.g., a teenager who has been abused by both parents), while abiding by the "Safe Behaviors" outlined in this Policy.

Support Persons will be careful to avoid causing further harm, and under no circumstances—even when the abuse is alleged and not proven—will Support Individuals:

- Place any portion of blame for the abuse on the child or the child's family
- Probe for intimate details of the abuse
- Express disbelief of the child
- Attempt to silence the child or the child's family in any way or for any reason
- Encourage noncompliance with the law
- Express support of the perpetrator
- Urge reconciliation with or forgiveness of the perpetrator

Mental Health Treatment. The church may offer to help the family find a qualified counselor with expertise treating victims of abuse and their family members.

Public Support. The church is committed to protecting the privacy of all victims of child abuse. We also understand that all too often child victims of abuse are publicly marginalized while communities rally to protect abusers. In the event that a victim of abuse is publicly attacked or disparaged for the abuse or their response to the abuse, the church leadership will – with the victim's permission – make a public statement denouncing and prohibiting such treatment of the victim and urge the community to offer support instead. If the disparagement occurs privately, the church leadership will communicate the same message privately to the relevant individuals.

Creating a Culture of Ongoing Support for Victims of Childhood Abuse

Our church aims to create a space that is safe for all victims of childhood abuse – both those

we know about and those we don't. To this end, the church will:

- Create and distribute a referral list of local organizations and counselors who specialize in sexual abuse prevention and treatment
- Publicize the Policy, communicating that this institution takes child protection seriously and does not tolerate abuse
- Speak about child abuse publicly and often

- Post the contact information for church leaders who are available to answer questions about our child protection policy

Policy Section Five: Living the Policy

Chapter Thirteen: Training and Dissemination

This Policy shall be disseminated widely to the church community through publications, public discussion, educational opportunities, sermons, training programs and other appropriate means of communication that will raise awareness and create a safe environment for our children. Specifically:

- The most current version of the Policy will be posted on the church's website
- Printed Policies will be available in the church's main office
- We will speak about Child Protection during Discipleship Sunday
- As part of regular training, educate employees and volunteers through a briefing sheet

NLICC requires all staff and volunteers working with children, parents, and church leaders to affirm that they have received and read this Policy and we ask that all staff and volunteers commit to the Policy, as well as these statements:

- I will treat all children with purity and righteousness, according to the commandments of Scripture (particularly as described in Chapters 1, 5, 6)
- I will abide by the two adult supervision policy (as described in Chapter 5)
- I will make known any concerns of sexual abuse to the authorities or to church leadership (as described in Chapter 9)

Agreement to these items is-a precondition to receiving access to children. It is a precondition for staff to begin their positions.

Chapter Fourteen: Evaluating and Updating the Policy

The Session will review the feedback and update the policy as necessary. Policy concerns/questions can be addressed to any Session member or by email at cp@nlicc.org

New Life In Christ

Child Protection Policy

Incident reports will be reviewed by the Session quarterly, and the Session will update the policy as necessary.

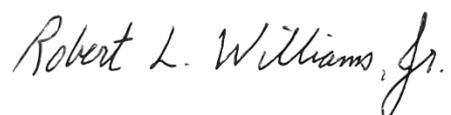
The full policy will be reviewed and updated every 3 years.

Chapter Fifteen: Miscellaneous

1. NLICC forbids the photography of children in classroom activities including the nursery. NLICC may authorize an individual to photograph a special activity.
2. Volunteers under the age of eighteen may only work in a ministry activity if approved by the ministry leader.
3. Parachurch activities (e.g. Capernaum. FAYM) must submit their child protection policy when contracting facility use from NLICC.

This policy is adopted by action of the New Life in Christ Church Session this 1st day of August 2025.

This Policy was last reviewed by: the New Life in Christ Church Session.



Robert L. Williams, Jr.

Clerk of the Session

Appendix One: Indicators of Abuse [Ref: Chap. 2, p. 6]

We want to be attentive to children and aware that they may be victims of child abuse. The following list of indicators is provided for information and education. While most may be obvious, it is important to label these indicators as potential signs.

Consider the possibility of sexual abuse if a child has:

- Torn, stained, or bloody underclothing
- Difficulty, pain or blood in the genital area when walking, sitting, or using the bathroom
- Discharge from the penis or vagina
- Injuries (e.g., bruises, tearing, bleeding), itching, or swelling in the genital, vaginal, or anal area
- Urinary tract infections, yeast infections, sexually transmitted diseases
- Pregnancy

It is atypical for children to engage in the following sexual behaviors:

- Placing mouth on sex part
- Asking others to engage in sexual acts
- Trying to have intercourse or imitating intercourse
- Undressing others, especially if done forcefully
- Imitating sexual positions with dolls

- Inserting an object into vagina or anus, especially if child continues to do so despite pain
- Manually stimulating or having oral or genital contact with pets
- Making sexual sounds
- Inserting tongue in mouth when kissing

Emotional or behavioral sign of child sexual abuse may include:

- Depression: emotionless or passive behavior; withdraw from family, friends, church, or school; exhibiting low self-esteem or self-loathing
- Lack of attachment to a caregiver; displaying distrust or wariness at the approach of adults, caregivers, or specific people; fear of going home that may manifest by arriving at youth groups early, staying late, and appearing frightened or upset when it is time to return home
- Being constantly watchful, as though preparing for something bad to happen
- Sudden changes in behavior, including academic changes
- Extremes in behavior, such as over-compliance, over-achieving or demanding behavior, extreme passivity, or behaving more responsibly than would be expected of a child of that age
- Aggressive, destructive (e.g., fire-setting), demanding, or disruptive behavior; frequent and inexplicable anger, rebellion, or running away
- Self-degradation; self-injury (e.g., “cutting”) or wearing sleeves on hot days (to hide bruising or other injuries); suicide attempts
- Delays in emotional, cognitive, physical, or academic development
- Unwillingness to change for or participate in certain youth department activities such as gym night or swim program
- Being inappropriately adult (e.g., parenting other children) or infantile (e.g., rocking or head-banging)
- Bed-wetting in children who have previously outgrown it; nightmares; difficulty sleeping
- Exhibiting high anxiety, including through physical problems associated with anxiety, such as chronic stomach pain or headaches
- Frequent, unexplained headaches

Consider the possibility of physical abuse if you notice:

- Frequent injuries of any kind (e.g., bruises, cuts, fractures, burns)

- Especially if the child is unable to provide an adequate explanation of the cause of injury
- These injuries may appear in distinctive patterns such as grab marks, human bite marks, cigarette burns, or impressions of other instruments
- Pay particular attention to injuries that present on both sides of the head or body, as accidental injuries typically only affect one side of the body

Consider the possibility of neglect if a child:

- Is obviously malnourished, listless, or fatigued
- Begs, steals, or hoards food or complains frequently of hunger
- Is consistently dirty or has severe body odor
- Lacks sufficient clothing for the weather
- Untreated illness, injuries, health (e.g., unfilled cavities) or serious educational needs
- Broken or missing eyeglasses, hearing aid, or other necessary aids or equipment
- Has an untreated need for glasses, dental care, or other medical attention
- Stays at school outside of school hours
- Frequently absent or significant academic struggles
- Is inappropriately left unsupervised
- Abuses alcohol or other drugs

Emotional or behavioral sign of child sexual abuse may include:

- Depression: emotionless or passive behavior; withdraw from family, friends, church, or school; exhibiting low self-esteem or self-loathing
- Lack of attachment to a caregiver; displaying distrust or wariness at the approach of adults, caregivers, or specific people; fear of going home that may manifest by arriving at youth groups early, staying late, and appearing frightened or upset when it is time to return home
- Being constantly watchful, as though preparing for something bad to happen
- Sudden changes in behavior, including academic changes
- Extremes in behavior, such as over-compliance, over-achieving or demanding behavior, extreme passivity, or behaving more responsibly than would be expected of a child of that age

- Aggressive, destructive (e.g., fire-setting), demanding, or disruptive behavior; frequent and inexplicable anger, rebellion, or running away
- Self-degradation; self-injury (e.g., “cutting”) or wearing sleeves on hot days (to hide
- bruising or other injuries); suicide attempts
- Delays in emotional, cognitive, physical, or academic development
- Unwillingness to change for or participate in certain youth department activities such as gym night or swim program
- Being inappropriately adult (e.g., parenting other children) or infantile (e.g., rocking or head-banging)
- Bed-wetting in children who have previously outgrown it; nightmares; difficulty sleeping
- Exhibiting high anxiety, including through physical problems associated with anxiety, such as chronic stomach pain or headaches
- Frequent, unexplained headaches

Appendix Two: Written Application [Ref: Chap. 4, p. 8]

Name:
DOB:
Email:
Phone:

Address:
What is your experience working with children/teens (teaching, coaching, etc.)? Briefly describe:
In what specific ministry(ies) within NLICC are you interested in serving (teaching Sunday School; nursery; Boy's Brigade/Pioneer Girls; Vacation Bible School; Junior Worship; Youth Group; etc.)
<p>NLICC requires all staff and volunteers working with children, parents, and church leaders to affirm that they have received and read this Policy and we ask that all staff and volunteers commit to the Policy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I will treat all children with purity and righteousness, according to the commandments of Scripture (particularly as described in Chapters 1, 5, 6). • I will abide by the two adult supervision policy (as described in Chapter 5). • I will make known any concerns of sexual abuse to the authorities or to church leadership (as described in Chapter 9). <p>Agreement to these items is-a precondition to receiving access to children.</p> <p>I have read the most current version of NLICC Child Protection Plan and agree to abide by the provisions stated therein.</p> <p>Signature:</p> <p>As an organization we are concerned about our children and students and their well-being. Is there anything in your past or present that would prohibit you from effectively working with children and/or students? If yes, please explain</p>

DISCLOSURE AND AUTHORIZATION – BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION

The information contained in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge. I hereby authorize NLICC and its designated agents and representatives to conduct a comprehensive review of my background, causing a report to be generated for employment and/or volunteer purposes.

I understand that the scope of the report may include, but is not limited to the following areas: verification of social security number; current and previous residences; employment history, credit history, education background, character references; drug testing, civil and criminal history records from any criminal justice agency in any or all federal, state, county jurisdictions; driving records, birth records, and any other public records.

I further authorize any individual, company, firm, corporation, or public agency (including the Social Security Administration and law enforcement agencies) to divulge any and all information, verbal or written, pertaining to me, to NLICC or its agents. I further authorize the complete release of any records or data pertaining to me which the individual, firm, corporation, or public agency may have, to include information or data received from other sources.

I hereby release NLICC, the Social Security Administration, and its agents, officials, representative, or assigned agencies, including officers, employees, or related personnel both individually and collectively, from any and all liability for damages of whatever kind, which may, at any time, result to me, my heirs, family, or associates because of compliance with this authorization and request to release.

I understand that I have the right, upon written request made within a reasonable amount time after the receipt of this notice, to request disclosure of the nature and scope of any investigative consumer report to Protect My Ministry, LLC., 14499 N. Dale Mabry Hwy., Suite 201 South, Tampa, FL 33618 or 1-800-319-5581. For information about Protect My Ministry's privacy practices, see www.protectmyministry.com

Appendix Three: Policy Exception Forms [Ref: Chap. 8, p. 15]

Policy Exception Request Form

Date:
Last Name, First Name. Phone. Email.
Relevant Policy Section
Relevant Policy Language
Exception Requested
Please explain why you believe this exception is necessary.
Is this request ongoing or time limited? If time limited, please list the relevant date(s) below. Ongoing Time limited. Request is for the following date(s)/program(s):
Has anyone on the church's Session or staff preapproved this request? No Yes. Permission received from _____ on _____ .

Notification Form: Necessary Deviation from Policy

Date:
Last name, first name. Phone. Email.
Policy section:
Policy language:
Please list any Policy deviations and explain the circumstances that necessitated these deviations.
On what date did this occur?
Who else was present when this occurred?
Did anyone specifically object to the deviation? If so, please list their names below:
Please share anything else you would like the Session to know.

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Note: This form is different than the Incident Reporting form, where a third-party report a violation of the Policy by another. Here the individual who deviated from the Policy is submitting the form himself and explaining the reason why it was necessary to deviate.

This sort of person – one who knows the Policy, understands when it needs to be broken, and alerts the Session when it is – is not the person we are concerned about.

Appendix Four: Child Safety Incident Report [Ref: Chap. 9, p. 18]

This form should be used to report to the Session any violation of the Child Safety Policy, boundary violations, disclosures of abuse, child safety concerns, or other behavior or allegations of behavior that might jeopardize the safety of a child. Proof or direct knowledge of a behavior or incident is not necessary to submit this form, and as such some lines on this form may not be applicable to you. Provide whatever information you do have, and where extra space is needed, please continue below the line or attach an additional sheet.

1. Date(s) of incident/behavior, if known
2. Name(s) and contact information of child(ren) harmed, potentially harmed, or otherwise adversely impacted by incident/behavior:

Unknown	Known (<i>fill out lines below</i>)		
Child 1	Parent(s)	Email	Phone
Child 2	Parent(s)	Email	Phone

1. Name(s) and contact information of individual(s) – adult or child – who accidentally or intentionally violated the Policy, or otherwise harmed, or potentially harmed (the above) child(ren), or who otherwise engaged in concerning behavior.

Unknown

Known (*fill out lines below*)

Individual 1	Parent(s) (if individual is a minor) Email	Phone
Individual 2	Parent(s) (if individual is a minor) Email	Phone

1. What Policy, if any, was violated?
2. Where did the incident/behavior occur?
3. Was there an ongoing activity at the time of the incident? If so, what?
4. Description of incident/behavior

Appendix Five: Suggested decision tree for handling policy violations Ref: Chap. 7, pg 10

