

Macedonia Evangelical Lutheran Church

Child Protection Policy

*“Let the little children come to Me and do not hinder them,
for the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these”
Mark 10:14*

The purpose of this document is to ensure that our children and youth are protected and their parents/guardians and those who work with them understand the proper procedures and the reasons behind them. If we are all committed to these principles and guidelines we can keep Macedonia a safe and loving environment. Communication among all parties is central to making this work.

Policy Statement

In keeping with the covenant of baptism, the congregation of Macedonia Evangelical Lutheran Church (MELC) has committed itself and its resources to nurturing our children. We promise our children that we will provide the structure, education, and the policies that will keep them safe from harm and abuse. In that context, we will screen and train staff and volunteers according to the following policy. Each volunteer shall abide by the policies of Macedonia Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Child Protection Policy and Program Definitions

Adequate Personnel means at least two adults whose screening and training under the Child Protection Policy of Macedonia Evangelical Lutheran Church is current. The purpose of having *adequate personnel* present is to ensure compliance with this Policy, primarily to avoid situations where a child/youth is one-on-one with an adult not related to the child/youth.

Child/Youth: Although the State of North Carolina defines a child as anyone from birth to age eighteen, Macedonia Evangelical Lutheran Church differentiates between children and youth in its programming. For purposes of this Policy, all persons below 12 years of age are referred to as *children*, and those of ages 12 to 18 years are referred to as *youth*.

Child Abuse means action or inaction by a parent, leader, advisor, teacher, helper or other person that harms or threatens to harm a child/youth's physical and/or mental health and well-being. Child abuse may include physical abuse, sexual abuse, and/or emotional or verbal abuse.

CPP or Policy means Child Protection Policy.

MELC means Macedonia Evangelical Lutheran Church, Inc.

ELCA means Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the national body of which MELC is a member

Ministry means a program area or activity administered by MELC to teach God's word, carry out God's work in the community, and nurture both members and the community at large.

We means the leadership of MELC, including, but not limited to, called rostered ministers, paid staff members, Church Council, and officers of MELC." Called rostered ministers, by the ELCA's (our national body) definition, include any pastors or deacons.

For Parents

The key to any relationship is communication. We encourage you to get to know your child/youth's teachers or leaders. Find out who your son or daughter is spending time with at church. While we do everything possible to ensure safety within the various ministries, you are the best advocate for your son or daughter. If you believe your child/youth is experiencing any form of mistreatment, please contact the ministry or your child's group leader directly. We ask this, as we may not be aware of the situation with your child and will want to address it. You always have the option to talk to the pastor or council president if that would be more appropriate.

Any member of the congregation, volunteer or paid employee who has been convicted of a crime against a child or of a violent crime against another adult will not provide service in a church-sponsored activity or program for children/youth.

You may feel confident that the staff and leaders in each ministry hold the safety of your child in the highest regard. We take great care to provide a safe environment while your child/youth is involved in ministry.

These guidelines are by no means exhaustive. Please feel free to contact the ministry or your child/youth's leader anytime with questions or concerns or contact the staff member directly at 336-227-5554. Any questions may be directed to the pastor or Church Council president.

For Staff and Volunteers

Realize that the screening process is for the protection of the children, Macedonia and you, yourself. In these times, we must do everything we can to protect our children and, almost as importantly, to be seen taking these measures. That is to demonstrate that we take the safety of children and youth seriously.

Never be alone with a child to whom you are not related. There are a few exceptions to this rule but it is central to the entire policy. It is not only for the child's protection but potentially for yours as far as liability is concerned.

The Process

The Christian Education Committee oversees the Child Protection Policy which includes administrative tasks (processing of background checks and information, document maintenance and review, communications to the congregation such as bulletin and newsletter articles, letters, emails, phone tree, other announcements) regarding the policy, communication of and orientation to the policy and procedures to appropriate leadership personnel (persons in charge of or leading a ministry area, program and/or event where children and/or youth are involved), and overseeing the adherence to the policy by leadership personnel.

The policy shall be communicated to parents, new teachers, and volunteers on the first day of Sunday School in September. A packet of forms with a cover letter (Child Protection Policy & related forms, youth group permission forms), identified with children and youth names, to be completed by parents/guardians and volunteers shall be prepared and ready to distribute. The week following the first Sunday of Sunday School, packets with names not distributed will be sent to the households named.

Labeled three ring binders will be prepared which will include actively approved volunteers and a copy of the current Child Protection Policy with addendum forms and permission forms as needed for the following ministry areas and leadership persons:

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- Sunday School/VBS/Christmas Pageant/Christian Education
– binder to be kept in SS office
- Youth Group – binder is to be kept by the youth leader.
- Worship & Music/Children & Youth Choirs/Director of Music
– binder is to be kept in the choir room
- Church Office- binder

Ongoing Review and Administration

To make sure this policy is current and responsive to changes a Child Protection committee will be established to meet annually in March for such reviews. The committee shall be chaired by the vice president of Church Council and consist of the pastor and one each from the following committees who deal with children or youth: Christian Education, Worship and Music, and Youth. If there is a paid youth director on staff, that person shall serve on this committee. The function of this committee is to review these policies and to deal with any issues that may arise from them.

Components of the Child Protection Policy

Everyone desiring to work with children or youth at Macedonia Evangelical Lutheran Church, whether paid staff or volunteer, goes through our approved training and screening program. Our program has four components:

1. Screening 2. Training 3. Supervision 4. Reporting

1. Screening

All those working with children or youth will be screened every 3 years following a process which will include:

- Completion of screening application
- Criminal background checks
- Completion of the MELC training course

Macedonia has contracted with **Protect My Ministry** to handle the screening process.

The only people who will be aware of a failed background check are the pastor and the Christian Education chairperson. The pastor will follow up a failed background check.

Background screening of youth is optional.

Alternative Screening

- Joint activities with other churches at MELC:
 - MELC will accept screening certification from the other churches involved.
- Joint activities with other churches at facilities other than MELC:
 - MELC adults are expected to satisfy MELC CPP requirements. Other churches are expected to satisfy their own screening processes.
- Outside groups using MELC facilities
 - Outside groups involving children and/or youth using MELC facilities are expected to have their own CPP and to have read the MELC Child Protection Policy.

2. Training

Training is provided by **Protect My Ministry** who does our screenings. Training shall be required of all who work with children or youth. It shall be renewed every 3 years. Training will include review of this document.

3. The Supervision of Children and Youth

The goal of supervision is to ensure that the interactions taking place between leaders, advisors, teachers, parents/guardians and the child/youth are appropriate and above reproach. Ministry leaders are the primary supervisors, but we all have a role in keeping one another accountable.

General Supervision Standards

- It is the responsibility of the ministry providing the church activity or program to make certain that proper supervision is in place in accordance with these policies.
- At least two adults or one adult and one youth, who is at least 3 years older than those participating, will be present to supervise all activities involving children/youth. *For activities such as Sunday School, one adult/teacher can be in a room with unscheduled visits by the Superintendent or other leader.*
- At least two adults or one adult and one youth must be provided and maintained before and after an event until all children/youth are in the custody of their parents or guardians. Youth who are driving will be an exception.
- Parental Release Forms : A Blanket Permission-Release Form will be filled out every year. For any off-site activity involving children/youth a Permission-Release Form will need to be filled out.
- MELC rooms used for children/youth will have doors equipped with windows or the door must remain open.
- *Before and after events or activities, children/youth are the responsibility of their parent(s) or guardians. It is the parent(s) responsibility to drop off and pick up their child(ren) in a timely manner. Parents must ensure that there are adequate personnel on site before leaving their child. If someone other than the parent/guardian will pick up a child, it should be submitted in writing. Exceptions to this should be submitted in writing by parent/guardian.*
- **Volunteers** must avoid being alone with a child/youth.
- Child/youth personal information will be kept in confidence. It will only be released to authorized individuals on a need-to-know basis.

Situational Supervision Standards

Overnights

- Any activity involving a sleepover requires a signed permission slip.
- Adults are prohibited from sleeping in the same beds, sleeping bags, tents, hotel rooms unless the adult is an immediate family member of all children or youth in the bed, sleeping bag, tent, hotel room or other room. It is acceptable to have multiple adults sleep with all the children or youth participating in one open space such as a church basement or camp lodge.
- There will be a minimum of two adult leaders of different genders if the youth are comprised of both genders for overnight events.
- Adult leaders are prohibited from dressing, undressing, bathing, or showering in the presence of children or youth.

Driving

- All drivers must be at least 21 years of age, have a valid driver's license and carry their own motor vehicle insurance, or be listed on a family automobile policy as a NAMED insured.
- No youth shall drive themselves to any off-site event, unless approved by the MELC event leader. The youth is subject to the following conditions.
 - The youth may not drive any other participants, other than siblings, to, from, or during the event.
 - If permission to drive has been granted to a youth, they must communicate with the adult leaders their arrivals and departures.

4. Reporting

Any instance of child abuse or alleged child abuse occurring in connection with any church-related activity must be reported in accordance with the procedures described below.

Reporting Procedures

- Immediately ensure the safety of the child or youth.
- Report the incident immediately to either the pastor and or youth pastor, but do not leave the child alone while doing so.
- Make notes as appropriate as to what was seen or heard.
- Do not discuss the incident with anyone other than the pastor, youth pastor or member of the Church Council to whom the incident or allegation was reported.

Additional Steps in the event of allegations of abuse.

- Do not confront the alleged perpetrator.
- Any employee or volunteer worker accused of abuse will be removed immediately from contact with children until an investigation by the proper authorities is concluded. While the investigation is conducted the privacy of the accused is to be protected. The results of the investigation will determine if the person is reinstated or released.
- Either the pastor and/or the Church Council will determine the appropriate action for MELC to take, which may include any one or more of the following:
 1. Notify the child's parent(s) or guardian(s)
 2. Complete the Accident, Allegation, Incident Report Form
 3. Contact the police.
 4. Notify the church's insurance carrier.
 5. Communicate with members of the church where appropriate.

Forms

- CPP-1 Volunteer Information Form for Persons Working with Children and Youth
- CPP-2 Blanket Permission-Release Form
- CPP-3 Update to The Volunteer Information Form for Persons Working with Children and Youth
- CPP-4 Permission-Release Form
- CPP-5 Daily Event Registration Form (for VBS or similar events.)
- CPP-6 Accident/Incident Report Form

MACEDONIA EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

VOLUNTEER INFORMATION FORM FOR PERSONS WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The congregation of Macedonia Evangelical Lutheran Church is committed to providing a nurturing, safe, and secure environment for all children, youth and volunteers who participate in ministries and activities sponsored by our church. Thank you for helping us fulfill this commitment by providing us with the information requested in this form.

VOLUNTEER POSITION APPLIED FOR		DATE	
NAME		DATE OF BIRTH	
ADDRESS			
HOME PHONE	CELL PHONE		WORK PHONE
SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER		DRIVER'S LICENSE NUMBER	
STATE ISSUED			
HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN A MEMBER OF MACEDONIA?			
HAVE YOU EVER BEEN CONVICTED OF OR PLEADED GUILTY TO A CRIME INVOLVING SEXUAL MISCONDUCT? IF YES, PLEASE EXPLAIN.		YES ___ NO ___	
HAVE YOU EVER BEEN SUED IN A CIVIL ACTION WHERE THE ALLEGATIONS INCLUDED SEXUAL MISCONDUCT? IF YES, EXPLAIN		YES ___ NO ___	
HAS YOUR DRIVER'S LICENSE EVER BEEN SUSPENDED OR REVOKED? IF YES, EXPLAIN		YES ___ NO ___	
LIST ALL PREVIOUS WORK OR VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE YOU HAVE INVOLVING CHILDREN AND/OR YOUTH			

LIST ANY APPLICABLE TRAINING YOU HAVE HAD

The information contained in this form is correct to the best of my knowledge. I authorize verification of the information contained in this form. I understand a criminal background check may be performed. Such information obtained by Macedonia will be treated confidentially. I hereby release any individual, church, or organization from any and all liability for damages which may result to me, my heirs, or family for compliance with this authorization.

I agree to be bound by the policies and procedures of Macedonia Evangelical Lutheran Church especially the Child Protection Policy which I have read.

In the event allegations of criminal or sexual misconduct arise regarding my conduct while I serve in the above described capacity(ies), the church will fully cooperate with any investigation

SIGNATURE	DATE

BLANKET PERMISSION-RELEASE FORM

MACEDONIA EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH, BURLINGTON, NC

I give my permission for my child(ren) named below to participate in activities with Macedonia Evangelical Lutheran Church away from the church grounds (hayrides, bowling, putt-putt, etc.) during the year _____. I understand that the group may be traveling by van or private vehicles on occasion. Advance notice will be given when an activity will be away from the church grounds. A contact number will be given to parents/guardians. Every effort for safety will be taken.

I hereby release Macedonia Evangelical Lutheran Church, its staff, and event leaders from responsibility and liability for any injury or illness that my child may sustain during any activity. In the event of an extreme emergency, I hereby authorize an adult leader, when the parent is unavailable, as agent for me, to consent to any X-ray, examination, medical, dental or surgical diagnosis; treatment and hospital care advised and supervised by a physician, surgeon, or dentist (as appropriate) licensed to practice under the laws of the state where the services are rendered. I expect to be contacted as soon as possible.

Signature of Parent/Guardian **Date Signed**

INFORMATION WE NEED ABOUT YOUR CHILD(REN)

Child/Youth Name(s)	Date of Birth	Grade
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
Parents or Guardians	Cell Phone	
1.		
2.		
Address	Home Phone	
Other Non-Medical Information You Think We Should Know		

MEDICAL INFORMATION

Health Insurance Company	Policy Number	Group Number (if needed)
Doctor's Name		Phone
Child 1 Name	Special Needs, Allergies, Medication, etc.	
Child 2 Name	Special Needs, Allergies, Medication, etc.	
Child 3 Name	Special Needs, Allergies, Medication, etc.	
Child 4 Name	Special Needs, Allergies, Medication, etc.	

Form Completed By _____ Date _____

MACEDONIA EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

UPDATE TO THE VOLUNTEER INFORMATION FORM FOR PERSONS WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH

UPDATES WILL TAKE PLACE EVERY YEAR.

I originally completed the "Volunteer Information Form for Persons Working with Children and Youth" on _____ . I understand this information is to be updated (annually/biannually). I have reviewed the original form.

___ There are **no** changes to update.

___ There are changes which I document below

The above information is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

_____ Date _____

PERMISSION-RELEASE FORM

MACEDONIA EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

BURLINGTON, NC

YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Name _____ Phone Number _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY/ZIP _____

I give permission for my above-named child to join the ____ (1) ____ of Macedonia Evangelical Lutheran Church, Burlington, NC on the ____ (2) ____ at/to ____ (3) ____ on ____ (4) ____ . I understand that the group will be traveling in ____ (5) ____ . I also understand that the cost of ____ (6) ____ includes ____ (7) ____ but does not include ____

(8) ____ . Every effort for safety will be taken; nonetheless, I hereby release Macedonia Evangelical Lutheran Church, Burlington, NC, its staff and advisors, from responsibility and liability for any injury or illness that my child may sustain during this activity. In the event of any emergency, I hereby authorize an adult leader of this activity, as agent for me, to consent to any X-ray examination; medical, dental or surgical diagnosis; treatment; and hospital care advised and supervised by a physician, surgeon or dentist (as appropriate) licensed to practice under the laws of the state where the services are rendered. I expect to be contacted as soon as possible.

SIGNATURE OF PARENT OR GUARDIAN _____

DATE _____

EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBER(S) _____

MEDICAL INFORMATION (Required for overnight trips)

ALLERGIES _____

MEDICATIONS BEING TAKEN _____

PHYSICAL OR MENTAL HANDICAPS OR LIMITATIONS _____

MEDICAL INSURANCE COMPANY _____

POLICY NUMBER _____ GROUP NUMBER _____

FAMILY PHYSICIAN _____ PHONE NUMBER _____

(Return top portion to the church)

(Keep bottom portion for your reference)

TO BE COMPLETED BY MACEDONIA EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH, BURLINGTON, NC

- (1) NAME OF GROUP _____
- (2) NAME OF ACTIVITY _____
- (3) LOCATION _____ PHONE NUMBER _____
- (4) DATES AND TIMES _____
- (5) TRANSPORTATION _____
- (6) COST _____ (Financial aid available)
- (7) INCLUDED IN COST _____
- (8) WHAT TO BRING _____

MACEDONIA EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH ACCIDENT, ALLEGATION, AND INCIDENT REPORT FORM

Date: ____/____/____ Name of Preparer: _____

Please check which is being reported:

Accident Allegation Known Incident

Other: _____

Date of event: ____/____/____

Place of event: _____

Date and time incident was first reported: ____/____/____ Time: ____:____ AM PM

Who made you aware of this event: _____

Name(s) of child(ren)/youth involved: _____

Please describe the event as you saw it or as it was reported to you: (Use reverse, if necessary)

Did anyone else witness the incident/accident/allegation (list names): _____

Describe any visible physical injuries observed: _____

If injuries were treated, describe treatment and by whom: _____

