

SAFETY FOR ALL

POLICY FOR PROTECTING THE CHILDREN, YOUTH AND LEADERS OF LIVING SPRINGS

(Not required for LIT helpers)

June 2026

Table of Contents

SECTION 1: PROTECT THROUGH AWARENESS..... 3

Introduction 3

Definitions 4

Symptoms of Abuse and Molestation 6

SECTION 2: SAFETY AND SUPERVISION..... 7

Security Clearance Process to Become a Volunteer 7

Supervising Classes and Events 9

Procedures For Receiving and Releasing Children and Students 12

Washroom Guidelines 13

Discipline Strategy 14

Proper Displays of Affection 16

Visitors and Special Guests 17

SECTION 3: HEALTH AND SAFELY GUIDELINES FOR KIDS’ MINISTRY AND/OR YOUTH..... 18

Health and Safety Guidelines 18

Photography and Videotaping Policy 19

Communication and Social Media Policy 19

SECTION 4: SPECIAL EVENTS..... 23

Special Events and Overnight Policies 23

Driving Students 24

Meeting with Students Outside of Regular Programming 24

SECTION 5: IN CASE OF EMERGENCY..... 26

Fire Safety Procedures 26

Lockdown Procedures 26

Missing Child 27

SECTION 6: REPORTING AND RESPONSE..... 28

Hearing an Allegation or Suspicion of Abuse 28

Reporting an Allegation of Abuse 30

SECTION 7: POLICY MONITORING..... 33

Compliance with the “Safety for All” Guidelines 33

Building and Facility Review 34

APPENDIX A. YOUTH TRANSPORTAIN POLICY..... 36

Driver Declaration Form	37
Parental Permission for OFF SITE FIELD TRIP/ PROCEDURE	38
APPENDIX B: YOUTH RETREAT PROCEDURES	39
APPENDIX C: COVENANT AGREEMENT	40

SECTION 1: PROTECT THROUGH AWARENESS

INTRODUCTION

Living Springs is committed to creating safe places for people to hear the message of Jesus. This includes safe spaces for children, students and vulnerable people. We recognize that we are a reflection of God's love to those in our care and we take our responsibility to them seriously. We view ourselves as partners with parents, seeking to provide quality care and instruction in our ministry to the family.

Churches have unique features that can make them susceptible to incidents where a child can be harmed – they can have large numbers of children, a possible shortage of willing workers, and a culture of trust that assumes no Christian could be suspect of such exploitation. Children are naturally trusting and impressionable and readily place their faith in adults who care for them. It is our God-given and legal responsibility to safeguard that trust.

We consider all forms of abuse to be a serious matter. Child abuse can leave scars that last a lifetime, and the effects of abuse are too often minimized or dismissed. The degree of damage that results from abuse depends upon several factors including the intensity, duration and frequency of the abuse, as well as the nature of the relationship of the perpetrator to the child. If the abuser is a known and trusted authority figure in the child's life, the degree of impact increases dramatically.

Living Springs is committed to providing a safe environment for children and students and maintains a policy of zero-tolerance for abuse, harassment, or neglect. All staff and volunteers who teach, care for, have access to, or have positions of trust with children, students, and/or vulnerable persons within Living Springs are required to follow the guidelines and procedures as defined in this document. Every activity involves some risk, but this plan is designed to prioritize the safety of children, students, and volunteers with the goal of making all programs and activities as safe as is reasonably possible.

The Safety for All policy is designed to protect children, students, and vulnerable persons from harm while also protecting staff and volunteers from false allegations through clear procedures, accountability, and appropriate supervision.

We want to thank The Meeting House for making available their policy as a resource for use within our context as we seek to protect all involved in ministry at Living Springs that Jesus might be imaged to all that take part.

DEFINITIONS

Unfortunately, child abuse and harm are not as rare as they should be in Alberta. In 2008, there were 14,403 substantiated cases of child abuse in Alberta. In 2016, 6,526 children 17 or younger were victims of police-reported violent crime causing death or bodily harm.

Abuse is primarily categorized as physical, sexual, emotional, or involving neglect. All child abuse involves the misuse of power. Misuse of power takes place when people take advantage of the authority or power they have over vulnerable people. Vulnerable people include adults with physical or mental disabilities and children (under age 18).

For the purposes of this document a **child** is defined as a person from birth to grade 6 (age 11 or 12). A **student** is defined as a person from grade 6 (age 11 or 12) to grade 12 (age 17 or 18). A **vulnerable person** is defined as any individual whose age, disability, illness, or circumstances make them more susceptible to harm, abuse, neglect, or exploitation and less able to protect their own interests. A **ministry leader** is defined as any employee, volunteer, intern, board member, elder, pastor, ministry leader, or other individual serving under the authority of Living Springs and subject to the requirements of this policy. (NOTE: Grade 6 is included in both child and student as they participate in both Kids' Ministry and Youth Ministry).

- **Physical abuse** includes any non-accidental action that causes or could cause physical harm to a child/student/vulnerable person such as, but not limited to, hitting, shaking, or the unreasonable use of force to restrain a child/student/vulnerable person.
- **Sexual abuse** includes using a child/student/vulnerable person for sexual purposes such as through sexual contact, inappropriate exposure to sexual activity or material, or exploitation through prostitution and related activities.
- **Emotional maltreatment** includes behaviours that harm a child's/student's/vulnerable person's development or sense of self-worth such as humiliation, rejection or withholding love or support. Witnessing or exposure to domestic violence is considered a form of emotional maltreatment under some legislation.
- **Neglect** includes the failure of a parent/guardian or care giver to provide a child's/student's basic needs such as for food, education, healthcare or supervision.
- **Harassment** involves persistently and wrongfully badgering a person with annoying, offensive, or troubling behaviour.

- **Improper discipline** includes any physical punishment, verbal or emotional abuse, or neglect. Corporal punishment is absolutely prohibited.
- **Grooming** involves any intentional cultivation of a relationship with a child, youth, or vulnerable person to gain trust, reduce inhibitions, and facilitate abuse, exploitation, or inappropriate conduct.
- **Emotional Dependency** involves an unhealthy reliance on another person for emotional support, approval, or guidance that may impair judgment, compromise boundaries, or increase vulnerability to manipulation or abuse.
- **Boundary Violations** includes any behaviour that exceeds appropriate ministry, relational, physical, emotional, or communication limits and creates a risk to the wellbeing of a child, student, vulnerable person, volunteer, or staff member.

SYMPTOMS OF ABUSE AND MOLESTATION

What constitutes reasonable grounds to report a suspicion of abuse?

Reasonable grounds are what an average person, given his or her training, background and experience, exercising normal and honest judgment, would assume to be an action that needs attention. No action would be taken against a person making a report unless it is made maliciously or without reasonable grounds for the belief.

The following characteristics may be indicators of abuse, although they are not necessarily proof. One sign alone does not constitute abuse and may simply be indicative of other issues. You need to ask God for discernment and wisdom as you watch for patterns or a combination of these warning signs. It is better to err on the side of caution and inform the supervising pastor of your concerns.

If concerned, reach out to the supervising pastor for your ministry. They will come along side and help you discern the situation and watch as well. This is not something you are asked to do alone.

Physical signs may include:

- lacerations and bruises
- recurring nightmares
- irritation, pain, regular discomfort, or injury to the genital area
- difficulty sitting
- torn or bloody underclothing
- venereal or sexually transmitted infection

Behavioural signs may include:

- anxiety when approaching a childcare area
- nervous, hostile, or rejecting behaviour toward one or more adults
- sexual self-consciousness
- acting out of sexual behaviours or other expressions of sexual knowledge beyond that appropriate for the child's age
- withdrawal from church, school, or sports activities
- withdrawal from friends and family

Child abuse can happen at home. Child abuse can happen at school. Child abuse can happen at church. Having been placed in positions of trust, it is our responsibility, before God and before the governing authorities, to be aware and prepared to create safe places for our children and students.

SECTION 2: SAFETY AND SUPERVISION

SECURITY CLEARANCE PROCESS TO BECOME A VOLUNTEER

Living Springs seeks to recruit ministry leaders who demonstrate Christian character, personal maturity, and a commitment to providing a safe environment for children and students. Completion of the screening process does not guarantee placement in ministry. Final approval is based on suitability for the role and the discretion of church leadership.

To protect our child/student/vulnerable people and to be protected from liability, Living Springs must take reasonable action in screening and supervising the volunteers involved with minors or vulnerable persons. All leadership positions must be approved by the supervisory staff member or director of the department involved. Each department must keep its volunteer roster updated to ensure the security clearance process is completed in a timely manner and our records are accurate.

In order for prospective ministry leaders to be “security cleared” individuals will submit/complete the following:

1. **Adhere to Six Month Rule:** This requires volunteers who desire to work with child/student/vulnerable people to have been regular attendees of Living Springs for a period of six months. Such a policy gives the church an additional opportunity to evaluate applicants and volunteers and will help to repel persons seeking immediate access to minors. (This provision may be waived if the prospective volunteer is transferring from another church of the same denomination and has a recommendation by a Pastor of that church.)
2. **Ministry Application Form:** We will require each volunteer to fill in a “serve” form found on the website and/or talk to a pastor about their desire to help in Kids’ Ministry.
3. **A Personal Conversation with the Ministry Director:** Each volunteer will have a conversation via email, phone, or in person about their desire to serve.
4. **Reference Checks:** Each paid staff and each volunteer working with children and/or youth will provide at least one personal references from sources who can speak to their overall integrity and previous work with children and/or students. Acceptable references may include the following.
 - Former Pastor or Ministry Leader
 - A volunteer who has worked with the person in a similar role as to the one applied for

- Current or previous employer
- Parents (for minors) – qualifies as one reference
- Teacher (for minors)
- Another person who has sufficient strength of relationship

5. **Police Records/Vulnerable Sector Check:** We will have each paid staff and each volunteer working with children and/or youth (18 years of age and older) submit a Police Record Check including Vulnerable Sector Check. These checks must be kept current and up to date (not expired). No one will be permitted to continue in their role with an expired security clearance but will be reinstated when a new check has been submitted. The checks are to be submitted as follows:

- All volunteers working with children, youth or vulnerable persons age 18+ will complete a Criminal Reference Check with Vulnerable Sector Check from their local police detachment.
- These are to be renewed every 5 years
- The check must be submitted within 60 days of issuance.
- Living Springs will keep in their possession the original copy as per insurance requirements
- All record checks are kept indefinitely in a secured, locked storage area as per insurance requirements.
- The information contained in these checks are considered strictly confidential. Only appropriate staff and relevant ministry leaders can be privy to the information.

If there is a record or information that raises some concern, the designated ministry leader and a Pastor will meet to discuss the matter after which the designated ministry leader will meet with the individual to discuss the offence. If the offence is anything other than abuse, the volunteer may proceed with ministry in the church provided both the Pastor and the ministry leader agree. The following are criteria considered when evaluating the information:

- The number and type of convictions
- The age and circumstances of the offender at the time of the offence
- The length of time between past criminal activity and the present
- The conduct and circumstances of the individual since the offence
- The likelihood of the individual repeating the offence

Individuals that have been accused, or convicted, or are under the suspicion of crimes against children, students, and/or vulnerable persons or who have been convicted of violent crimes or other relevant crimes will not have any involvement in ministries or programs where children, students or vulnerable persons participate.

Occasionally, a person guilty of child molestation in the past freely admit to a prior incident but insist that they have since had a conversion experience and that they now present no risk whatsoever. Our commitment to the safety of the children is our utmost priority. They will not be permitted to serve in a position involving access to children, students or vulnerable people. They should be encouraged to serve in other areas of the church. This is a reasonable accommodation of the individual's desire to serve at Living Springs.

6. **Training:** We will train all of our ministry leaders who work with children, students and vulnerable people to understand how to carry out our policies contained within this manual to prevent any type of abuse. This process will include a copy of Safety for All for each volunteer (digital copies are acceptable). There may be ongoing training for volunteers throughout the year.
7. **Final Approval from Church Leadership:** Ministry leaders must complete the security clearance process prior to being scheduled in a position of trust.
8. **Reasons for refusal:** Pastors and Ministry Leaders may refuse to place an applicant in their desired role. These reasons may include, but are not limited to, not complying with Safety For All policies, failure to complete screening requirements, a history of abuse against children, students, or vulnerable persons, or behaviour that raises concerns regarding safety, boundaries, or suitability for ministry.

SUPERVISING CLASSES AND EVENTS

All children and youth ministry programs are to be staffed by a team of qualified, security cleared ministry leaders. Programs that involve children/students must always include adequate supervision. Supervision should be maintained in Littles, Sprouts and BLAST before and after the event until all children are in the custody of their parents or legal guardians.

Children/students of any age are not permitted to leave the premises until the program concludes. Should a child/student leave the premises while a program is operating, their parents will be notified immediately. Youth students grade 6 and up are permitted to leave the premises after the program concludes, and it is the responsibility of the parent or legal guardian to ensure their student is picked up or has instructions to get home.

Youth programs that involve students grade 6 and up will ensure adequate supervision from the time of the start of the program to the completion of the program. When students leave the event location, supervision is the responsibility of the parent or legal guardian.

Our desire is to provide a safe, loving environment where the child/student feels comfortable and learning can take place. Therefore, we recommend the following guidelines:

1. **Two Leader Rule:** At least two leaders (non-related recommended) should be present during any child/student activity or transportation. Many of the supervision, visibility, and accountability practices outlined in this policy are intended not only to protect children and students, but also to protect ministry leaders from misunderstandings, unfounded allegations, and situations that could place either the child or the leader at risk. (In certain situations, exceptions may be allowed if covered by the “open door” policy or by having classrooms with windows and/or open doors. Retreats can follow the “Rule of Three” — see Appendix C for more details.)

2. **Open Door Policy:** If it is necessary that only one adult be alone in a room with children/students because volunteers have not arrived or are tending to an unforeseen issue, the door of that room must remain open at all times. This can only be for a short time and not for the duration of the class. We also recommend that all rooms have uncovered windows that will allow ministry staff to monitor group activities without interruption.

3. **Age Requirement:**

- At least one adult volunteer will be in the basement during Kids’ Ministry.
- All volunteers must be at least 4 years older than the children in the class they are supervising.
- Volunteers in Littles who are 9 or 10 years old but must be paired with a volunteer 16 years old or older.
- Volunteers between age 11 and 17 can volunteer together as long as there is another adult present in the basement during the class.
- Volunteers in BLAST can be as young as 15 years old
- Volunteers in Senior High Midweek must be at least 18 years old,
- Regardless of age, all volunteers must complete the entire volunteer application process.

4. **Staff Monitoring:**

- Before church services a security cleared staff or volunteer will survey the basement ensuring all appropriate doors are locked and the basement is clear of uncleared people.
- If there are any issues of concern the emergency pager will be activated and/or a Pastor will be contacted immediately.
- Before sending children to class, someone will ensure the class is properly staffed and supervised.

- Someone will have the emergency pager in case there are issues that come up during class.
- Twice during the gathering someone will do a walk-through of the basement to ensure check classrooms, bathrooms, and the kitchen area for any safety concerns and ensure that all other doors are locked. These checks will be documented with an initial in the safety logbook.

5. **Family Volunteer Teams:** Family ministry teams work well together and should be encouraged as a positive method of volunteering, however for the protection of the family unit, we recommend the presence of at least one other volunteer who is not related to the family. If that is not possible, doors will remain open, and windows will remain uncovered for the duration of the class.

6. **Adequate Supervision:** There are to be no children/students in the church building unsupervised. The supervisor needs to have sufficient charge of the group so that a positive environment is maintained. Supervisors should be sufficiently older to demand the respect required to maintain control.

7. **Required Ratios:** In order to provide a safe environment where a child/student can be properly cared for the following guideline and ratios are to be followed:

(minimum 2 volunteers in every room, unless room occupants are visible from the hall)

Age of Children/Students	Ratio
Littles	1:3
Sprouts	1:7
BLAST	1:15
Youth	1:15
Overnight Youth	1:10

Note: These ratios are the minimum requirements for security purposes only. They are not intended as standards for the number of children/students per small group

8. **Younger (LIT) helpers are not required to read and sign this document.** As such, it is the responsibility of the ministry leader to follow, teach, and oversee the policies for each class.

PROCEDURES FOR RECEIVING AND RELEASING CHILDREN AND STUDENTS

Procedures for all children and students:

- The names, addresses and phone numbers of parents and children/students must be carefully maintained in the church database.
- No child/student will be allowed to enter a classroom or attend an event without first being properly signed in. Children from infants to grade 6 will also receive a security name tag.
- No child/student will be allowed to be dropped off in a classroom or at an event without two security cleared volunteers present. If only one volunteer is present, the door must remain open until additional volunteers arrive.
- All ministry leaders working with children/students, and all visitors, must wear an approved Living Springs name badge which identifies them accordingly.
- A record of attendance of both children/students, ministry leaders and visiting adults will be taken every time a program is in session. This includes events and retreats.

Procedures for Littles and Sprouts:

- Children in Littles and Sprouts classes are only permitted to be picked up by someone with the necessary security code that matches their child's name tag issued at check-in. The stickers and codes are the responsibility of the person checking in their child. If they give the sticker code to someone else, it is assumed that person has permission to pick up their child. The sticker code is seen as proof of pick up by a trusted person.
- A release log will be kept of all Littles and Nursery children leaving their classes. This may be digital or hard copy.
- If a security tag is lost then the child will be released to a parent/guardian or representative only on the basis of providing proof of identity such as a home address, phone number, government issued photo I.D. (e.g., driver's license) or a witness who knows the parent. This will be done only at the discretion of ministry staff or if the child is old enough, consultation with that child to identify who should be picking them up. Contact information should be recorded from any adult picking up a child without a security tag and their signature will be recorded.
- Parents/guardians of children must not leave the church premises while their child is involved in Kids' Min programs unless written consent has been given by ministry staff. All parents/guardians will be required to leave an emergency contact number.

Procedures for BLAST and Youth:

- Children in BLAST and Youth may self check out. There is no formal process involved in children leaving the BLAST area.

WASHROOM GUIDELINES

Parents/guardians will be encouraged to take their child(ren) to visit the washroom or ensure that their child's diaper is dry prior to each class or service. This recommendation is to be communicated to parents/guardians at the beginning of each new school year and throughout the year to newcomers.

For Sprouts:

- Children are not to be sent to the washroom without supervision.
- The child's parent/guardian should handle washroom assistance whenever possible. This would require the parent/guardian to be paged.
- No ministry leader will ever be alone entering into a cubicle with a child and shut the door.
- If a volunteer or worker must assist:
 - The worker must be fully screened and therefore over the age of 18
 - A second unrelated screened worker must be present
 - Multiple children can be escorted at the same time but only one child may enter a stall at a time.
 - The volunteers will stand in the hallway and let the child(ren) enter the washroom unassisted.
 - No washroom assistance for pre-Grade 1 children is permitted. If a child needs emergency assistance one ministry leader may enter the washroom cubicle to assist keeping the outside washroom door propped open and in sight of the second ministry leader. The adult must stand in an open cubical doorway.

For BLAST:

- Children must ask to use the washroom
- Children will be permitted to use the washroom using the buddy system.
- Volunteers should be attentive to the time a child is away from the room and check on a child who is gone for longer than is considered reasonable.
- Ministry leaders are not to be alone with children in an unsupervised washroom and are never to enter into the cubicle with a child and shut the door.

For Youth:

- In order to prevent issues, we encourage that students in youth use the facilities prior to the start of a program.
- Ministry leaders are not to be alone with students in an unsupervised washroom.
- Ministry leaders should be attentive to the time a student is away from the group, and check on a student who is gone for longer than is considered reasonable.

Diaper Changing

Living Springs volunteers are not permitted to change the diapers of any children in their care. Instead, the volunteer should alert the parent through the pager system to perform the change.

DISCIPLINE STRATEGY

The word discipline does not mean punishment. It comes from the root word disciple, which means training that molds character, behaviour and values. God's definition of discipline is outlined in Hebrews 12:7-11:

Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father? If you are not disciplined—and everyone undergoes discipline—then you are not legitimate children at all. Moreover, we have all had parents who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of spirits and live! Our parents disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.”

Rules: Rules should be established to clearly communicate the expectations required of children/students.

Sprouts Discipline Strategy:

- In Sprouts we are working together to create a safe environment where kids can learn to love and follow Jesus. We want Sprouts to be safe and fun for every child who visits. Preschoolers are just discovering the world around them and testing boundaries for the first time. The goal for Sprouts is to keep things simple and to involve the parents as much as possible.
- We have **one rule in Sprouts** — “I will try my best”. If a child is misbehaving, ask them if they are trying their best. Encourage them to try their best by sharing, being nice, and listening to their leaders.
- If a child puts themselves or another in danger (e.g. hitting, biting, throwing toys), separate the child from the rest of the group. If a visible injury has occurred, or the child is in distress (e.g. crying), an incident report must be completed, and the supervising pastor or staff person will be informed. The pastor or staff person will connect with the parents/guardians of both the victim and perpetrator to explain the incident (depending on the severity you could wait until pickup time).
- If a behaviour/incident reporting reoccurs for 2–3 consecutive weeks the child attends class, a parent meeting will be arranged with the child's parent/guardian and the supervising pastor. At this meeting the documentation surrounding the incidents will be shared, as well as discussion concerning how best to serve the child while maintaining the safety and well-being of all children.

Blast Discipline Strategy:

- In BLAST we are working together to create a safe environment where kids can learn to love and follow Jesus. We want BLAST to be safe and fun for every child who visits. The goal of discipline is to help kids learn self-control, responsible behaviour, and appropriate ways to socially interact.
- We have the rule of Respect in BLAST
 1. Respect Yourself [try your best]
 2. Respect Others [listen when others speak, be kind to others, keep your hands to yourself, respect the space of others]
 3. Respect Your Space [stay in your seat, stay off the stage, respect classroom supplies & property]
- These rules should be posted and reviewed with kids throughout the year.
- If a child is misbehaving and a couple gentle reminders do not remedy the concern, a volunteer will take the child aside and talk with the child to help them understand what they are doing wrong and what the correct behaviour and/or expectation is for them. Explain that if they continue to misbehave, they will need to have some time set aside from the class.
- If the child continues to misbehave, the volunteer will sit with the child for 5 minutes. If that is not possible the Special Needs Volunteer can be brought in to help and/or the emergency pager can be activated for more support. It is important that the volunteer dealing with the situation be the one who was involved in the incident. The additional help is to support the rest of the class while this volunteer is helping the child. During this time the volunteer will document what has happened on an incident report and have another conversation with the child about the class rules and expectations. If the child appears responsive, they may rejoin the class, and all additional volunteers can return to their roles.

If the child continues to misbehave and continues to be unresponsive to leaders, the pager person will be paged and they will go without the child to retrieve the parent from the gathering. The parent will be asked to take the child upstairs with them. Both the parent and child will be told that the child is absolutely welcomed back the next week to try again, unless the behaviour was severe (for example, extreme violence).

Youth Disciple Strategy:

In Youth we are continually working to create safe environments for students to get to know Jesus better. We aim to create a space that encourages love and respect for self and each other. We will encourage students to take ownership of their own behaviour. If a student's behaviour is continually negatively impacting those around them, parents may be contacted by the supervising pastor or staff person to discuss next steps.

Leaders should not react in anger to students' negative behaviour (yelling, prolonged exclusion, mocking, physical violence) but seek always to show the love of Jesus in any behaviour management, or discipline. We see these as teachable moments in a student's discipleship journey and not an end point.

Documentation

- Any child or student whose behaviour has caused the pager person to enter the classroom and/or is removed from the class will have a documented incident report.
- The volunteer will make sure the supervising pastor, or staff member receives the incident report at the end of the class. This written record will be important if there needs to be a meeting with parents to discuss what has happened.
- Volunteers will record objectively, without the use of emotion (facts only).

Parent Meetings

If a child or student is continuously behaving in a way that the pager person is paged and/or is removed from the class and no solution can be found, a parent meeting will be arranged with the child/youth's parent/guardian, the supervising pastor (and volunteer(s) if applicable). At this meeting the documentation surrounding the incidents will be shared, as well as discussion concerning how best to serve the child while maintaining the safety and well-being of all children.

PROPER DISPLAYS OF AFFECTION

Appropriate Touch: Recognizing that children/students need appropriate displays of affection that reflect pure, genuine and positive displays of God's love, all touch will be age and developmentally appropriate. All touch must be done in view of others and done in the context of appropriate settings as outlined in this document. We encourage ministry leaders to:

Sprouts:

- Hold a Sprouts child who is crying.
- Speak to a child at eye level and listen with your eyes as well as your ears.
- Hold a Sprouts child's hands when speaking, listening, or walking to an activity.

BLAST:

- A side hug or arm on the shoulder is appropriate when greeting or comforting a student.

- Gently hold the child's shoulder or hand to keep his or her attention while you redirect their behaviour.
- Put your arm around the shoulder of a child when comforting or quieting is needed.
- Pat a child on the head, hand, shoulder or back to affirm them.

Youth:

- Gently tap a student's shoulder to get their attention.
- A side hug or arm on the shoulder is appropriate when greeting or comforting a student.
- Give a student a high-five, fist-bump, or a pat on the shoulder to affirm them.

Inappropriate Touch:

Ministry leaders will be made aware that the following actions are deemed inappropriate and will not be permitted:

- Do not kiss a child/student or coax a child/student to kiss you (this includes infants).
- Do not engage in extended hugging and tickling.
- Do not hold a child's/student's face when talking to or disciplining them.
- Do not touch a child/student in any area that would be covered by a bathing suit
- Do not BLAST children or youth and do not allow them to sit on your lap.

Avoid prolonged physical contact with any child/student.

VISITORS AND SPECIAL GUESTS

Occasional visitors who join a class will have their attendance written down in the classroom notebook or attendance sheet. Visitors will be limited to family members of the children in the class, musicians, special speakers, or someone approved by the Pastor in charge of Kids' Ministry. If they have not completed the security process, they will not be placed in a position of trust with any child, student, or vulnerable person who is not their own child. Parent visitors will be restricted to the area their children are in.

Occasional observers will not:

- be left alone in a room with any children, students, or vulnerable persons
- assist with washroom breaks
- record attendance
- be the lead teacher of a lesson (this does not include special guests who have been invited to be a part of the class)
- release children/students from the classroom

If an unknown and/or unapproved adult is in the Kids' Ministry area during class times, the emergency pager will be activated and/or a pastor will be contacted immediately.

SECTION 3: HEALTH AND SAFELY GUIDELINES FOR KIDS' MINISTRY AND/OR YOUTH

HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDELINES

1. **In case of illness:** A child/student who is ill and could therefore expose other child/student staff and volunteers to illness will not be received into the program. Typical signs of illness are unusual fatigue or irritability, coughing, sneezing, runny nose and eyes, fever, vomiting, diarrhea, inflamed mouth, and throat. Any child/student with a known communicable disease should not be received into children or youth programming.

2. **Medications:** Ministry Leaders at Living Springs are NOT to give or apply any medication to children or youth. If a child needs medication, the parent/guardian must give it. No medication will be left in the room or with a leader, child or youth. If a student is in need of over-the-counter medications during a youth program (e.g. Advil), a Youth Coordinator/Pastor may give (but not administer) it to them after obtaining verbal permission from the parent/guardian. Verbal permission must be documented alongside an incident report. In extreme cases, (i.e. EpiPens, inhalers, etc.) arrangements should be made with written instructions and the permission of the child and/or youth's parent/guardian. Requests should be written, dated, signed, and filed permanently. In the special case of a retreat or event, the ministry leader will help the student find proper storage for medication but will not administer unless specifically requested by their parent/guardian in written form.

3. **Allergies:** Children/students having severe allergies will have the information brought to the attention of the ministry leaders and noted on any registration form for events and, for infants to grade 6, noted on their name tag. See information on medications for policies involving EpiPens and inhalers.

4. Procedures for Dealing with Cuts or Injuries Involving Blood:

- a) First aid kits will be available in each room in cupboards marked with a red cross. In addition, a master first aid kit will also be available in the building.
- b) Separate the other children/students from the injured child/student. The injured child/student must not be moved unless they can stand up and walk on their own. Isolate the area where any blood may have dropped on carpet, toys, etc. Apply first aid measures and send someone to locate the parents/guardians.
- c) If other children/students have had contact with any of the blood from the cut or injury, their parents/guardians should be informed.

- d) Put on vinyl gloves (available in first-aid kits) and bandage the injury, avoiding contact with the mouth, ears and eyes.
- e) Carefully wipe all blood and bloody bandages and remove to a secure, inaccessible waste removal receptacle.
- f) Any blood on the floor or toys must be washed using solution of one part bleach to ten parts water.
- g) Properly remove and dispose of vinyl gloves. Wash hands carefully with soap.
- h) Complete an Incident Report.

5. **Cleanliness:** Sanitize the childcare areas regularly. This includes cleaning and sanitizing all toys, tables, bedding, gaming consoles.

7. **Zero Tolerance:** There will be no tolerance given for abuse, harassment, or neglect as defined in the Definitions section of this document.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOTAPING POLICY

No child or student will be photographed, videotaped, or audio taped by ministry staff without prior written consent from a parent or guardian. Consent must be given through use of an approved Living Springs release form. All photography, videotaping, or audio taping must be approved by Living Springs staff. Consent forms where appropriate and retained in accordance with Living Springs' records retention policy.

With consent, Living Springs staff or an authorized photographer/videographer may take photos/videos during an event or program, to be used for ministry purposes only. Family members should not be "tagged" by ministry staff in media that is posted. Volunteers, outside of Volunteer Coordinators and authorized photographers/videographers, are not approved to take photos or videos of children or students unless it is for the Amazing Kids Wall. These photos will be sent to the Ministry Leader for printing and then deleted.

COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Social media and electronic communication are common methods of connection within our community and ministry programs. Living Springs is committed to ensuring that all communication between leaders and students is conducted in a manner that promotes safety, transparency, accountability, and appropriate boundaries.

Online communication and text messaging with children in Grade 5 and younger is prohibited. Communication regarding children volunteers must be directed through parents

or guardians or sent to the children volunteer and their parent cc'd. Leaders shall not engage in direct electronic communication with children in these programs.

For youth ministry programs, electronic communication may occur only through approved Living Springs communication channels and must remain transparent and accountable. Whenever possible, parents or guardians shall be included in, copied on, or have access to all communication between leaders and students.

All ministry-related social media communication shall occur through official Living Springs accounts, platforms, or approved group communication tools. Personal social media accounts are not to be used for ministry communication with students.

Internet Use: Unsupervised internet access by a student is prohibited while participating in programs at Living Springs. Any internet usage required for lessons or programs must be reviewed and approved by Ministry Leaders, clearly communicated to parent(s)/guardians, and accompanied by written parental consent prior to participation. Where applicable, Living Springs will make reasonable efforts to utilize internet filtering and other safeguards to protect students and leaders while accessing online content.

Social Media: Communication between leaders and students through social media must occur only through approved platforms and in a manner that is transparent and accountable. Interactions should be public whenever possible (e.g., comments on posts, public group discussions) or include at least one additional approved leader. Parent(s)/guardians must have the ability to view or access communications involving their student. Private, one-on-one messaging between a leader and a student is prohibited. Leaders are not permitted to use platforms, features, or settings that enable disappearing messages, hidden communications, or unmonitored private interactions (e.g., Snapchat or similar features on WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, Facebook Messenger, or other platforms).

Video Calls (FaceTime, Zoom, Google Meet, etc.): Video calls involving students must include a minimum of two security-cleared leaders, receive prior approval from the appropriate Ministry Supervisor, and have parental consent. Whenever practical, video calls should occur through approved ministry accounts or platforms. Approved video calls may be recorded where appropriate and retained in accordance with Living Springs' records retention policy.

Phone Calls, Text Messages, and Email: Leaders shall not communicate individually with students by phone, text, or email without the knowledge and permission of both the student's parent(s)/guardians and the appropriate Ministry Leader. Communication should occur primarily through approved ministry channels, group chats, or the Living Springs App whenever possible.

Individual communication, when necessary, must include a parent/guardian or another approved leader whenever feasible. Any communication conducted through phone, email, text message, or other electronic means may be documented and retained in accordance with Living Springs' records retention policy.

We ask that all of our ministry leaders abide by the following guidelines:

- Youth leaders must be mindful to maintain appropriate opposite gender interactions and redirect opposite gender students to their same gender leaders whenever possible, especially when discussing highly personal, physical, or emotionally intense topics (e.g. female students with female leaders, male students with male leaders). In the case of gay, lesbian, or transgender students, discuss wise approach with overseeing Pastor.
- In the event that children or students attempt to converse or exchange information of an inappropriate nature, the worker or volunteer will screen shot the conversation and contact their manager or ministry coordinator immediately.
- Ministry leaders will not post comments, content, or photographs that are not conducive to the integrity of the ministry, or that may be considered a contradiction of beliefs and core values of Living Springs.
- Ministry leaders (including staff) will not post photographs or videos of children or students online except with permission on an approved page of Living Springs.
- Ministry leaders will not use Living Springs logos or other graphics that may cause confusion as to whether or not a site is an "official" site of Living Springs

Note: In the case of volunteers email communication is appropriate for dialogue regarding the ministry position without copying a second leader. Wisdom is still encouraged in utilizing email and social media regarding all communication with minors.

AGE-APPROPRIATE SEX EDUCATION

We feel it is important that young people be taught the scriptural view of relationships and sexual issues. It is important for parents to teach their own children about these subjects in a healthy and safe environment. We also feel that the church is to partner with parents by reinforcing the scriptural standard for sexual relationships that is outlined in the scriptures. With this in mind all volunteers are to abide by the following guidelines:

- Children grade 5 and younger will not be taught sexual issues in the church.
- Youth students may be taught the scriptural standard of sexual issues as long as

the overseeing Pastor has approved the lesson being taught. It is our policy that Youth leaders must never teach on this issue without first speaking with the overseeing Pastor. If sexual issues come up in an informal or teaching setting, the leader may discuss the issue but must teach it according to the beliefs and teachings of Living Springs. When this topic is taught in grades 6–8, a reasonable attempt will be made to notify parents in advance.

SECTION 4: SPECIAL EVENTS

SPECIAL EVENTS AND OVERNIGHT POLICIES

Leaders are encouraged to plan social activities and involve their children or students in field trips and service projects. The following precautions need to be taken with these activities.

1. Field Trips and Special Events

- Church affiliated activities conducted away from the church property must be pre-approved by the supervising Pastor or coordinator
- Parents must be notified at least one week prior to the outing.
- Proper written consent and medical release forms are required for each child/student (participating in field trips and special events). A copy of these forms, along with attendance sheets (names of all students, leaders, and visiting adults) is to accompany the supervisor(s) on the outing. Following the event, these will be filed at the production site and kept indefinitely.

2. Overnight Events

Church sponsored overnight activities may be permitted as long as the following guidelines are met:

- All overnight activities must be pre-approved by the supervising Pastor
- A completed event specific form is required for each person participating in overnight events
- Proper supervision is required (see section on Ministry Staffing)

3. Billeting

- Billeting students is permitted only as needed for official events of Youth or Living Springs
- All billeting arrangements must be developed and approved in conjunction with the overseeing Ministry pastor, and in line with other overnight policies as outlined in this document.

All supervising adults must be security cleared volunteers.

DRIVING STUDENTS

When transporting students, the following guidelines will be observed:

- A proper written consent form must be signed by parents prior to the outing. This form will be specific to one driver and can be signed once per ministry year.
- All drivers must have a valid Class 5 driver's license and current automobile insurance. Leaders must sign a Safe Driving Statement (see Appendix B).
- The number of persons per car must never exceed the number of seat belts. Each person must wear a seat belt. Children must be transported in legally required booster seating.
- Leaders will not drive individual students whenever possible. If it is necessary to drive one student, the leader will ask the student to sit in the back seat. A male student should never be alone with a female leader or vice versa.
- If parents of students arrange rides for their children, Living Springs is not liable.

Note: The policies outlined in the previous chapter still apply during a special event

MEETING WITH STUDENTS OUTSIDE OF REGULAR PROGRAMMING

1. Connecting Outside of Regular Programs

We encourage leaders to connect with Youth students on a regular basis, which sometimes means in-person check-ins and meetings outside of regular ministry programming. When a staff member or volunteer recognizes the need to meet with a student, including Video Calls (Skype, FaceTime etc), written or verbal consent from the parent/guardian must be obtained prior to the meeting. The appropriate ministry staff will be informed of all meetings in advance (for volunteers this is the ministry coordinator; for staff this is the direct supervisor). Leaders of children grade 5 or younger will not meet with individual children.

2. Small Group Events & One on Ones

Small group activities are encouraged. Parents will be informed of all details and appropriate event forms will be used if applicable. It is always recommended that students meet leaders at the designated meeting location. When this is not possible leaders may drive students with parent/guardian consent and following the driving policies in the "Driving Students" section of this document.

It is always recommended that meetings with students in grades 6–12 include at least three people (two leaders with an individual student or two students with one leader) but we recognize that on occasion a one-on-one meeting with a leader and student is appropriate. Leaders of students in grades 6–12 will abide by the following policies when meeting with students:

- Leaders will inform their ministry coordinator of the meeting time, location, and people involved in advance.
- Leaders involved must be security cleared.
- Meetings must take place in a public space and be clearly visible to other adults.
- Parents must be notified, and give consent, prior to each outing.
- If a leader must drive a student to/from a meeting, the appropriate driving policies must be followed. (see the “Driving Students” section of this document).
- A male small group leader will never meet alone with one or more female students for any reason. A female small group leader will never meet alone with one or more male students for any reason

SECTION 5: IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

FIRE SAFETY PROCEDURES

Each classroom is to exit via the closest exit. Look for exit signs mounted to the ceiling. If you do not know where the exit doors are located, see the posted evacuation plan in each classroom, or ask your supervising pastor or staff member.

When there is an emergency requiring the evacuation of the building, one volunteer is to ensure children/students are lined up in single file. Remain calm when exiting the building and take children/students to designated evacuation location, away from the main traffic route.

The person with the emergency pager will evacuate with a check in tablet. When children/students are safely gathered outside the building, the person with the emergency pager will do an attendance check to ensure each child/student is accounted for.

One volunteer from the BLAST class is to go to the Littles (nursery) to help carry children up the stairs to evacuate.

Do not allow parents to pick-up their children until all children have been accounted for and approval has been given by the person with the pager. After this, regular check out procedures apply.

LOCKDOWN PROCEDURES

Volunteers will be trained on the emergency plan and on techniques to remain calm in a crisis.

If the threat is inside the building, you cannot secure yourselves inside, and it is safe outside, call 9-1-1 and exit the building in the same way as the above fire plan. If it is not known where the threat is located, follow these steps:

- Call 9-1-1.
- One volunteer will immediately lock all doors/windows. Secure leaders and kids inside classrooms, locked if possible.
- One volunteer will check hallways and restrooms for kids to get to safety.
- Volunteers will try to keep kids calm, silent, and unseen. Create obstacles between the threat and potential victims by locking doors, covering windows, and staying out of sight. Create a fort with tables, chairs, and play panels for kids to hide in.

- Remain in place until you get the all-clear from your supervising pastor or staff member. Don't open doors or windows for anyone unless you can easily confirm the person is not a threat through identification precautions. Let rescuers find and come to you.

MISSING CHILD

If a child has gone missing from a classroom, page the emergency pager immediately. The person with the pager will search the church classrooms, restrooms, and all other rooms at the site. The parent will be paged if they have a pager, texted if they have a cell phone number listed, or found in the sanctuary. If the child is not found inside, the person with the pager will do a perimeter search outside the building. If the child is still not found 9-1-1 will be called.

SECTION 6: REPORTING AND RESPONSE

HEARING AN ALLEGATION OR SUSPICION OF ABUSE

The following policies outline the recommended procedure and sequence for reporting suspected abuse cases.

1. For the protection of our children, students and vulnerable people, all allegations and/or suspicions of abuse against children, students and vulnerable people will be taken seriously.
2. Stay calm and listen to the child/student/vulnerable person.
3. Do NOT ask leading questions or attempt to investigate the incident. Get the basic story, give emotional support, and remind the child/student/vulnerable person that he or she is not at fault.
4. Do not promise the child/student/vulnerable person that you will not tell anyone. The only claim of confidentiality which overrides the legal duty to report is solicitor-client privilege. Thus physicians, clergymen and others who consider their professional relationships confidential for certain purposes are not exempt from the duty to report child abuse or neglect.
5. Extend whatever Pastoral resources are needed. Remember that the care and safety of the victim is the first priority. Responding in a negative or non-supportive manner to the alleged victim can increase the pain of the victim and the victim's family, and future reconciliation will be more difficult along with increasing the possibility of damaging litigation increases.
6. In no way should the accused or any other parties be contacted at the point of completing the documentation aside from the appropriate authorities and supervising pastor.
7. Any allegation, disclosure, suspicion, or concern regarding the abuse of a child/student/vulnerable person must be taken seriously and reported immediately. All staff, leaders, and volunteers are required to comply with applicable reporting laws and shall promptly report concerns to the appropriate child protection or law enforcement authorities where required.

In addition to any required external reporting, the individual receiving the information must immediately notify their supervising pastor, who will inform the Lead Pastor and ensure that appropriate internal procedures are followed.

Any allegation involving a staff member, leader, teacher, or volunteer will result in the immediate suspension of that individual from their ministry duties involving children/students/vulnerable people pending the outcome of the appropriate investigation. This administrative suspension is not a determination of guilt but is intended to protect all parties involved and maintain the integrity of the investigation.

During the investigation, the Lead Pastor, in consultation with appropriate leadership and authorities where applicable, may establish conditions or restrictions regarding the individual's participation in church activities and ministry programs.

8. Upon hearing of potential abuse or allegations of abuse to a child/student/vulnerable person the supervising pastor should document all pertinent information and retained in accordance with Living Springs' records retention policy. All documentation must be kept permanently unless otherwise directed by legal counsel.

REPORTING AN ALLEGATION OF ABUSE

If you have any concerns regarding the safety of a child, student or vulnerable person at Living Springs Christian Fellowship, you must report this to your supervising pastor immediately. He/she will then work in conjunction with the Lead Pastor and you in addressing the issue and, if needed, contacting the appropriate child protection agency. Any person who has reasonable grounds to believe that a child, student or vulnerable person is in need of protection is legally required to immediately report the matter to the Child Abuse Hotline and/or a Child Intervention caseworker (<https://www.alberta.ca/how-to-help-and-report-child-abuse-neglect-and-sexual-exploitation.aspx#toc-3>). Your supervising pastor will contact this agency about the concern if required and you may be contacted by the agency.

An effective response strategy to an allegation of abuse recognizes the following underlying principles:

- All allegations are to be taken seriously.
- Adequate care must be shown for the well being of victims.
- The victim should not be held responsible in any way.
- Situations must be handled forthrightly with due respect for people's privacy and confidentiality.
- Full co-operation must be given to civil authorities under the guidance of our church lawyer.
- The incident will be reported to the church's insurance agent.
- The church will notify and work in conjunction with denominational leadership.

In the case of an allegation, the following guidelines should be followed:

- 1. Responding to a Disclosure of Abuse:** If a child, student or vulnerable person discloses to you that an episode of abuse has occurred, take the allegations seriously. Follow the guidelines listed in the previous section of this document.
- 2. Reporting the Incident or Allegation:** Any allegation of abuse will be reported to the supervising Pastor immediately. The church and its individuals must avoid any undue interference when a report of child abuse has been filed. The church should ask the appropriate authorities how it could assist in helping and supporting the investigation and the hurting child/student/vulnerable person and their family. At this point, the church's lawyer and insurance provider may be contacted if necessary. Keep all information confidential and do not notify the individual against whom an allegation has been made. If the suspected abuse happened in the context of church ministries or was committed by a church member or attendee, the parents of the victim must be notified by the Lead Pastor or by church leadership. If the allegation is against anyone in church leadership, the chairman of the Board will also be notified, and he/she will inform the Board.

3. Documentation of the Incident: As soon as possible, take special care to document all interactions, observations, and comments clearly and precisely accurately and thoroughly. Include as many details as possible, as this information may become part of a legal proceeding. It is necessary to provide all available information on both the victim and the accuser (name, age, gender, address, etc.), and to explain the information on which your suspicion is based. Report any additional concerns you become aware of, even if a previous report has already been made with respect to the same child and/or abuser.

4. Notification of Appropriate Authorities: Reports of suspected abuse should be done with the knowledge and assistance of the supervising Pastor. Social workers designated to receive reports are trained to investigate and assess the need for intervention. The child protection workers will determine if abuse has occurred. The supervising Pastor will ask Children's Service's and/or the police how to proceed with notification of the child's parents unless the allegations concern the involvement of the victim's parent(s). Following any allegation of abuse, Living Springs will notify its insurance provider and seek legal counsel as appropriate.

5. Protection of the Victim: If the allegation of abuse comes forward while the child/student/vulnerable person in the care of Living Springs Christian Fellowship, the child/student/vulnerable person must be kept in a safe place and a plan developed in conjunction with Children's Services or police as to how to proceed with the investigation.

6. Treatment of the Accused: It is crucial to ensure that even in a situation where an accusation of abuse has been made, the accused needs to be treated with dignity and in a manner of love. However, for the safety of all involved, the accused will be immediately suspended pending the outcome of the investigation.

7. Confidentiality: Living Springs is committed to protecting the privacy and dignity of all individuals involved in a report, allegation, suspicion, or investigation of abuse, misconduct, harassment, or neglect. Information relating to such matters shall be treated as confidential and shared only with those who have a legitimate need to know in order to fulfill legal, pastoral, supervisory, or investigative responsibilities.

Access to confidential information shall be limited to:

- The Lead Pastor and/or designated ministry supervisor;
- Individuals designated to receive and respond to allegations;
- Members of church leadership or the Board when necessary for decision-making or legal responsibilities;
- Legal counsel, insurance representatives, police, child protective agencies, or other authorities as required by law.

No volunteer, staff member, parent, or church attendee shall have access to confidential information unless authorized as part of their official responsibilities.

All staff and volunteers shall refrain from discussing allegations, suspicions, investigations, or personal information with unauthorized individuals. Information shall not be shared through social media, group messaging, email distribution lists, public meetings, or informal conversations.

Public statements regarding allegations or investigations shall only be made by an individual designated by church leadership and, where appropriate, in consultation with legal counsel and the church's insurance provider.

All incident reports, screening records, investigation notes, correspondence, and related documentation shall be maintained in a secure and confidential manner. Physical records shall be stored in a locked location, and electronic records shall be stored using appropriate security measures with access restricted to authorized personnel. Documentation shall be retained in accordance with church policy, legal requirements, and insurance requirements.

Living Springs recognizes the importance of protecting both the alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator during the reporting and investigation process. Confidentiality shall be maintained to the greatest extent possible while fulfilling legal reporting obligations and ensuring the safety and wellbeing of those involved.

Living Springs Christian Fellowship will decide how to deal with rumour and innuendo that often circulate in such situations and will as a matter of principle not try to handle information dissemination without legal assistance. The Lead Pastor or his designate will be the spokesperson for the church. He/she will speak to the media and the congregation regarding the matter in a discreet, informed truthful and diplomatic way.

8. Position Statement: With any allegation of abuse, the following statement is to be used for a media/ public response until all of the facts are uncovered and the case reviewed, as having a careful prepared statement is far superior to making no comment. Statements will be provided by a Lead Pastor/ Chairman of the board or appointee approved by the aforementioned parties.

"It is always tragic when children are abused or exploited. Living Springs Christian Fellowship is aware of the ever-growing nature of child abuse. We have taken careful precautions to protect the children entrusted to our care. We are distressed by any accusation of child abuse. We will do everything in our power to address any needs in this situation. For the welfare of those involved, all information has been directed to the (insert name of appropriate agencies and authorities)."

9. Report Follow-Up: A confidential written report with conclusions and action taken should always be made by the supervising Pastor following a child abuse report. These reports should be kept in a confidential file.

SECTION 7: POLICY MONITORING

COMPLIANCE WITH THE “SAFETY FOR ALL” GUIDELINES

Education, communication, and commitment to this policy are key to our efforts to prevent the occurrence of abuse of children and students in our care. We recognize the serious nature of the implementation of this policy and believe it to be critical in providing a safe and effective environment for our children and students.

All staff and volunteers are expected to comply with the Safety for All policy. Violations may result in corrective action, additional training, temporary suspension, or removal from ministry responsibilities, depending on the nature and severity of the concern. Serious violations that place a child, student, vulnerable person, volunteer, or the church at risk may result in immediate removal from ministry duties pending review. All violations and corrective actions shall be documented. Individuals may request a review of decisions through the designated ministry supervisor or church leadership.

This policy is approved by the Pastor responsible for Kids’ Ministry and/or the Pastor responsible for Volunteers. That Pastor is also responsible for any revisions of this policy and reviewing it yearly. This will be documented and the Lead Pastor and Board will be notified.

As such, each ministry leader is required to have a mandatory annual refresher training of the relevant policies and procedures for his/her respective ministry area. This could be, but not limited to, attending a training session in person, watching a training video, or being asked to read through the manual with a test for understanding. This training will cover a review of:

- Recognizing abuse indicators
- Mandatory reporting laws and obligations
- Grooming behaviors
- Electronic communication and social media risks and standards
- Transportation rules
- Responding to disclosures
- Documentation procedures
- False allegation procedures

Training attendance and completion of training will be documented in Living Springs’ database and added to each person’s file.

In addition to annual training, Living Springs will conduct a bi-annual (once every two years) internal compliance audit which will be a review of policy, activities, and records by at least

one board member to ensure accountability, transparency, and alignment with current best practices, legal requirements, and denominational guidelines. This will include:

- A screening file review
- Classroom observation review
- Incident reporting review
- Training compliance review
- Documentation checklist

It will conclude with a written report listing any corrective action procedures.

Any recommendations, updates, or corrective actions identified through the review process will be documented and implemented within an appropriate timeframe.

BUILDING AND FACILITY REVIEW

As part of the bi-annual audit process, the church facility and grounds will be assessed to identify potential safety risks, security vulnerabilities, and points of failure. Findings will be documented and reviewed with church leadership and the Church Board, with recommendations for corrective action where necessary. This review includes, but is not limited to:

- Verification that indoor and outdoor lighting are adequate and functioning properly.
- Inspection of doors, locks, windows, and other security features to ensure they are operational and secure.
- Review of staff and volunteer access controls, including keys, fobs, alarm codes, and building entry permissions.
- Assessment of child and student ministry spaces to ensure appropriate visibility, supervision, and emergency access.
- Evaluation of building maintenance concerns that may impact the safety and well-being of children, students, vulnerable people volunteers, staff, and visitors.
- Review of emergency procedures, signage, evacuation routes, and first aid resources to ensure readiness and compliance.

Any deficiencies identified during the review will be documented, assigned for follow-up, and reported to the Church Board as part of the audit process.

The results of each audit will be reviewed by church leadership and shared with the Church Board. Leadership will be responsible for developing and implementing any necessary action plans to address identified gaps, strengthen compliance, and ensure the ongoing effectiveness of the Safety for All program. If changes should be made following the audit, all volunteers, ministry leaders, and relevant parties will undergo a training on the new policies and mandated changes.

Audit documentation is to be kept in a locked, secured area, only accessible by Ministry Leadership and Administration. Living Springs maintains written records demonstrating compliance with abuse prevention requirements including screening records, training completion, signed agreements, incident reports, and audit documentation.

APPENDIX A. YOUTH TRANSPORTAIN POLICY


For events where minors are being transported a chartered bus is the preferred method of transport. In situations where this is not cost effective or size appropriate, a rental vehicle or personal vehicle may be used. It is the responsibility of the driver to ensure that any rental vehicle is appropriately covers by insurance in line with expectations set out in the safe driving policy.

When the number of attendees is too small to warrant the use of a bus the following procedures must be followed:

1. The Driver must sign and comply with the Driving Declaration Form.
2. The Driver must adhere to the Safety for All Policy.
3. Living Springs Christian Fellowship must have a current, valid Police Check on file for the Driver.
4. If the event is a car rally or scavenger hunt it must not be a timed event or a race.
5. The student must provide a current, signed Parental Permission for Volunteer Driver and Release Form (see Appendix B) that provides the details of the event for each off-site event or trip. Parental consent forms will be completed for each event and/or for the school year and documented through Subsplash.
6. If parents of students arrange rides for their children, Living Springs is not liable. Parent/guardian-arranged transportation, including carpools or pre-arranged drop-off and pick-up arrangements between families, is considered outside of Living Springs' direct transportation arrangements. Living Springs Christian Fellowship is not responsible or liable for transportation arrangements made independently by parents/guardians. Parents/guardians are responsible for determining appropriate drivers and transportation arrangements for their children unless transportation has been specifically organized and approved by Living Springs.

DRIVER DECLARATION FORM

(Example only. Do not use this form)


Log in

Driver's Declaration Form

All drivers must complete this form to be added to the churches list of approved drivers.

Your name *

Email address *

Drivers License Number: *

Vehicle Registration Number: *

Make, Model, and Colour of Vehicle *

I confirm I hold a current, non suspended class 5 drivers license: *

- Yes
- No

I confirm I am 25 years or older with at least 3 years driving experience *

- Yes
- No

I confirm I am medically fit to drive (this question should be answered to the best of your knowledge and belief) *

- Yes
- No

I confirm that I will not drive while under the influence of alcohol or any other substances which may impair my ability to drive, including prescribed medication *

- Yes
- No

I confirm that I will inform my Ministry Leader of any changes to my vehicles details and/ or any circumstances that could or would affect my ability/ suitability to drive *

- Yes
- No

I confirm my vehicle is fully insured and has at least \$1 million in Third Party Liability coverage. (we encourage, but do not require \$2 million in Third Party Liability for the safety of our drivers) *

- Yes
- No

I confirm I will have one other security cleared adult in the car or 2 non-familial youth in the vehicle while driving students from youth. *

- Yes
- No

I confirm I will drive with extreme care, and safety. Abiding by the rules of the road. This includes avoiding distracted driving due to cell phone use, texting, eating, loud music, etc. *

- Yes
- No

I confirm my vehicle is in safe working order, including all safety equipment such as: seat belts, air bags, etc. *

- Yes
- No

I confirm the number of persons per car must never exceed the number of seatbelts. Each person must wear a seatbelt. *

- Yes
- No

I understand I am personally responsible for all traffic and parking violations and will notify authorities immediately of an accident *

- Yes
- No

I have not had more than 2 traffic violations in the past 3 years. (ie. speeding, traffic light violation, unsafe vehicle, etc.) *

- Yes
- No

I have not had any major at fault accidents or major traffic violations in the past 5 years (ie. dangerous driving, speeding, impaired driving, etc.) *

- Yes
- No

By typing my name I agree that the above information is correct, and consent to follow the regulations outlined in this document: *

Submit

A copy of your responses will be sent to your email address.

PARENTAL PERMISSION FOR OFF SITE FIELD TRIP/ PROCEDURE

To help ensure the safety and well-being of all participants, parents/guardians registering a youth for a church event through Subsplash Events platform will be required to complete all applicable registration and consent questions. These questions may include emergency contact information, medical information, activity permissions, transportation consent, and other event-specific details.

Responses submitted through the registration process will be securely retained as part of the event record in accordance with our Safety for All practices. Completion of all required questions is mandatory for participation.

By submitting an event registration, parents/guardians acknowledge that they have reviewed the information provided, consent to their child's participation in the event, and agree to any permissions, acknowledgements, and declarations associated with the completed registration form.

Each registration form will ask parents/ guardians to complete the following questions to consent to the off site field trips:

- I understand that my child will be participating in a church-sponsored field trip.
- I understand that participation in this activity may involve certain risks associated with travel and group activities.
- I give permission for my child to participate in this field trip.
- I understand that my child cannot attend the field trip without this signed consent form.
- I have had the opportunity to ask questions about this activity and have received the information needed to make an informed decision.
- I am either the Parent/Guardian of the Individual, or over the age of 18, and have full legal responsibility for the decision of myself or the Individual

Living Springs will make every effort to ensure parents and guardians are fully aware of possible risks associated with off-site field trips and will communicate any changes with parents as they surface. Failure to complete the parental consent will mean that participants are unable to attend the trips. We acknowledge that certain off-site field trips will come with their own waiver requirements dependant on activity. Living Springs will provide the off-site waivers to parents and without proper consent for third party waiver, participants will be unable to attend that specific off-site trip.

APPENDIX B: YOUTH RETREAT PROCEDURES

While on youth retreats and extended overnight trips, leaders will strive to not be alone with students. However, we recognize it is not always possible for two leaders to be present in every situation.

The rule of three: When two leaders cannot be present, leaders will not be alone with a single student but will ensure two or more students are present. There will always be at least three people.

If one on one conversations need to occur between students and leaders, they will be in public spaces. Between the hours of 11pm and 6am, no leader will be alone in a cabin without another security cleared leader present.

Student medications will be kept in the possession of the student and leaders will not administer medications. In special circumstances, student medications may be looked after (but not administered) by a ministry leader only after discussion with parents. When needed, over the counter medications will only be given to students by the designated first aid person after permission from parent/guardian. Verbal permission must be documented by the ministry leader.

For extended international trips, a Safety for All addendum may be made, with written permission/consent by the parent/guardian.

For LGBTQ+ students, decisions around accommodation on retreats will be made by ministry leaders, Pastors, parent, and church leadership.

APPENDIX C: COVENANT AGREEMENT

As a volunteer serving with Living Springs Church, I recognize that ministry with children and students is both a privilege and a responsibility. I commit to serving in a manner that reflects the character of Christ and promotes a safe, caring, and respectful environment for every child, student, family, volunteer, and staff member.

I agree to:

- Conduct myself in a manner consistent with Christian values and the mission of Living Springs Church.
- Read, understand, and comply with the Safety for All Policy and all ministry procedures.
- Follow all screening, supervision, communication, transportation, and safety requirements established by the church.
- Maintain appropriate physical, emotional, relational, and electronic boundaries with children and students.
- Immediately report any suspected abuse, neglect, harassment, misconduct, policy violation, or safety concern in accordance with church policy and applicable law.
- Respect the privacy and confidentiality of children, families, volunteers, and staff, except when disclosure is required for safety, reporting, or legal reasons.
- Participate in required training and policy reviews.
- Cooperate with ministry leaders in maintaining a safe ministry environment.

I understand that failure to comply with this covenant or the Safety for All Policy may result in corrective action, suspension, or removal from ministry responsibilities.

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have received and reviewed the Safety for All Policy, understand my responsibilities as a volunteer, and agree to abide by the expectations outlined above.

Volunteer Name (printed) _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____