

LCMS KANSAS DISTRICT YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY FOR DISTRICT-SPONSORED EVENTS

From Holy Scripture, we learn that our Heavenly Father values the life of children. This policy of the Kansas District reflects care and concern for youth who participate in District-sponsored youth events. This policy is intended for the protection of both the youth participants and the adult sponsors directing the activity and caring for the youth at the event. The following regulations are presented in love and concern:

Permission

Participants must have the written, informed consent of their parent/guardian to participate. Included on the permission form shall be information regarding any physical, health, and/or medical limitations, as well as a statement that the parent/guardian is responsible for any insurance for the child. The written informed consent shall also include a Youth Media Release Consent Form granting the District the right to use a participant's likeness or picture to record, promote or celebrate the church's ministry. A copy of the form is attached.

Sponsors

Sponsors shall be adults at least 21 years of age who have been endorsed by the pastor and/or leadership of their home congregation. Individuals between the ages of 18 and 21 may be able to participate in some events as assistants. They may assist the sponsors but shall not have the responsibility of being a sponsor. The District requires congregations to obtain screening and background checks for adult sponsors and assistants. (see **Suggested Steps to Secure Background Checks.**)

Ratio of Sponsors to Participants

There shall be a minimum of one (1) sponsor for every nine (9) participants for high school student events. The ratio for middle school student events shall be a minimum of one (1) sponsor for every (6) participants. If both boys and girls participate in an event, there shall be at least one (1) male and one (1) female sponsor.

Drug, Cannabis, Alcohol & Controlled Substances Use by Adult Sponsors

Adult sponsors shall not consume and be impaired by or be under the influence of alcohol, cannabis, drugs, or other controlled substances while participating in a District-sponsored youth event.

Sexual or Inappropriate Behavior of Adult Sponsors/Assistants

Should an adult sponsor or assistant initiate sexual activity or engage in inappropriate behavior with a participant, he/she shall be removed from the event, barred from any future involvement in District-sponsored youth events and reported (see Reporting). Should an adult sponsor or assistant engage in consensual sexual activity with another adult sponsor or assistant (not their spouse), the adult sponsor or assistant shall be removed from the event and shall be barred from any future involvement in District-sponsored youth events. Should the sexual activity be non-consensual, the adult sponsor or assistant shall be reported (see Reporting) to the designated director of the District-sponsored youth event. In the case of an emergency, participants and adult sponsors or assistants shall first call 911.

Reporting

Any participant who believes he/she has been sexually violated or subjected to inappropriate behavior by an adult sponsor or assistant shall immediately report this conduct to the on-site designated director of the District-sponsored youth event. The designee will thoroughly investigate the incident in accordance with the prescribed procedures* and will present the results of such investigation to a called District staff person. The called District staff person shall assist the on-site designated director of the District-sponsored youth event in investigating and resolving the allegations in accordance with Kansas state law. In all reported cases, the Kansas District shall inform the pastor(s) of the congregations in question and offer information and support to the participant's family. A written record of the investigation shall be made and retained at the District Office. Access to the records will typically be limited to or regulated by the District President and/or his designee. Confidentiality for all parties will be observed to the extent practical. This policy encourages any witness to report such incident immediately.

(*See Investigation Procedures for the Designated Director of District Youth-Sponsored Events)

Behavior of Youth Participants

Should a youth participant engage in sexual activity, or consume or be under the influence of alcohol, cannabis, illegal drugs, or illegally obtained prescription drugs or other controlled substances, he/she shall be reported to the designated director of the District-sponsored youth event and the sponsor(s) of the congregation(s). The incident will be documented in writing along with notification of the parents and pastor(s) of the congregation(s). Consequences will include the removal of the youth participant from the event at parent/guardian's expense.

In all such sexual activity cases, future involvement by the youth participants in District-sponsored youth events will be subject to review.

Approved 05/05/2023 by the Kansas District Board of Directors.

Suggested Steps to Secure Kansas Bureau of Investigation (KBI) Criminal History Background and Department for Children and Families (DCF) Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry Search

Kansas Department for Children and Families: www.dcf.ks.gov

1. Log on to the Department for Children and Families (“DCF”) website to obtain a release of information form for the Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry.
2. Applicant supplies information necessary for a KBI Criminal History Records Search and submits the names and pertinent contact information of three references.
3. Applicant executes a release of information form granting permission for release of information concerning applicant on the Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry maintained by the Department for Children and Families Prevention and Protective Services.
4. Designated congregational coordinator completes the on-line application and submits money to KBI for processing and submits the release of information form with fee to DCF.
5. Designated congregational coordinator contacts references.
6. Congregation receives and retains KBI and DCF reports and references in a confidential file.
7. Applicant is notified of his/her service upon notification of the absence of a criminal history record and no substantiated reports of abuse and/or neglect.

Investigation Procedures for the Designated Director of District Youth-Sponsored Events

Kansas Department for Children and Families: www.dcf.ks.gov

1. Within 24 hours following a reported incident, the designated director of the District-sponsored youth event and/or the called District staff person must do the following:
 - a. Document the reported incident in writing;
 - b. Interview the person reporting the incident;
 - c. Interview any witnesses to the alleged victim;
 - d. Notify the senior pastor/s of the situation;
 - e. Notify the parents or guardians of the alleged victim.
2. Using the above information, the designated director will prayerfully discern whether reasonable suspicion exists.
3. If reasonable suspicion exists, the designated director will:
 - a. Notify the proper authorities;
 - b. Suspend the accused person from any position which allows contact with children or youth and document any statement given by the accused; and
 - c. Inform the accused of any action being taken.
4. All conversations will be documented by the designated director. The documentation should include the following:
 - a. The name of the volunteer/worker who observed the conduct or received a report regarding the incident. Include date, time, place, and any action taken by this person. Statements should be signed whenever possible.
 - b. The alleged victim’s name, age, address, and date of birth.
 - c. Any statement made by the alleged victim (as given to the designated director by the victim or by the person to whom the statement was made) including the name of the accused, time, place, and nature of the alleged incident.
 - d. Name of the accused person, the date, time, place of any conversation, and any statement made.
 - e. Any action taken (i.e. suspension of the accused).
 - f. Date and time of call to alleged victim’s parents or guardians and the content of that conversation.
 - g. Date and time of call to Department for Children and Families, name of worker spoken to, content of that conversation, and case number assigned.
 - h. Date and time of call to law enforcement agency, if made; and name of officer spoken to and content of that conversation.
 - i. Date and time of any other contacts made regarding this incident.
5. Should an allegation be made concerning the designated director, all reporting and investigating will be performed by the called District staff person.
6. Should an allegation be made concerning the called District staff person, all reporting and investigating will be performed by the District President.
7. Upon confirmation of abuse or molestation, the insurance carrier will be notified.
8. One person will be designated by the District President as the official media spokesperson for the church.

LCMS KANSAS DISTRICT

Youth Event Guidelines: A Supplement to the Youth Protection Policy

From Holy Scripture we learn that our Heavenly Father values the life of children. These guidelines of the Kansas District reflect care and concern for youth who participate in District-sponsored youth events. These guidelines are supplemental to the **Kansas District Youth Protection Policy** and are intended to assist congregations to be intentional when planning to participate in District-sponsored youth events. The following guidelines are presented for your consideration and possible inclusion.

Adult Sponsors

When choosing adult sponsors, congregations should select people who love the Lord and who live lives that are receptive to the working of the Holy Spirit. Adult sponsors should be active members who demonstrate a relationship with the Lord in their worship attendance and participation in Holy Communion. They should be people who have undergone an official background check and have a proven history of an ability to lead students to grow in their spiritual lives. **Congregations shall select people who have completed an official Kansas Bureau of Investigation (KBI) Criminal History Records search and the Department for Children and Families Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry check.*

Participants

Youth who meet the age criteria of the District-sponsored youth event are eligible for participation. Participants may include non-member youth. In respect for these individuals, the pastor of the participating congregation, or his designated adult leader, shall inform those non-member participants of LCMS communion practices.

Transportation

When planning how a group is to travel to the District-sponsored youth event, adult sponsors shall use drivers who are 21 or older, licensed, and properly insured. *Note: Car rental agencies may present different driver requirements.*

Housing

Congregations should consider how to evenly disperse their adults into gender specific sleeping rooms. You may want to have an adult in each room for a junior high event. You may also want to consider this for high school and middle school events. In cases where adults are not in a room with high school students, students under the direction of an adult may function as a room leader. Congregations should also consider having married couples sleep in separate rooms so as to be housed with gender specific students. An adult sponsor should not share a bed with a participant unless there is a parent/child relationship.

Conduct/Consequences

Congregations should establish a written covenant of expected behaviors as well as behaviors that will not be tolerated. Congregations should have consequences of unacceptable behaviors outlined, and students and parents should sign the document.

*(*Suggested Steps to Secure Kansas Bureau of Investigation (KBI) Criminal History Record and Department for Children and Families Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry searches.)*