



ILC MINOR SAFE GATHERING POLICY

Immanuel Lutheran Church is a community of faith committed to using our resources to promote a safe environment for the physical, emotional, and spiritual growth of our minors.

Purpose

a. The primary purpose of this policy is to maintain a safe environment for those participating in Immanuel Lutheran Church's children and adolescence programs. Compliance with this policy will also help protect our church and its members, who lead our minors, from unfounded charges and legal liability.

Open Program

a. All aspects of Immanuel's minor programs are open to observations by parents and congregational leaders at any time.

Screening

a. Any staff or volunteer adult who regularly works with adolescence 6th grade and above at Immanuel must be at least 21 years old. Any staff, volunteer or "youth helper" regularly working with 5th graders and below may be 5 years older than the oldest child. Every adult must submit personal information and must authorize a background check (see Appendix A) before working with a minor. The background check must be renewed prior to the events and background check is good for one year. All information obtained from this disclosure and background check will be treated as confidential. The senior pastor, or other church staff as needed and appointed by the senior pastor, will be responsible for reviewing the information submitted and approve each staff or volunteer adult to work with youth, designating them as an "Adult Leader ". No adult may regularly work with the minor at Immanuel without the prior approval of the senior pastor or Church staff.

History of Sexual Misconduct

a. Any adult who has been convicted of sexual misconduct or abuse may not participate in any capacity in Immanuel's children and adolescence programs.

Two-deep Leadership

a. At least two adult leaders must be present at each minor programming activity from its beginning until all participants have been released to a parent or another approved person. If a minor program is occurring simultaneously in separate areas, two adult leaders must be present in each area where youth are present.

Open Door Policy

a. When a planned one-on-one meeting between an adult leader and a minor takes place in the church building, the meeting must be in a room with an unobstructed window or an open door. A second adult leader must be in the same area of the church, although not necessarily in the same room. Unplanned individual contact during program activities off church property must be done in view of a second adult leader. Planned individual contact off church property may only occur in public places with the prior consent of the minor and parent or guardian. An adult leader should not meet alone with a minor in a private place for any reason.

Connecting through technology

1. In addition to participating on the ILC social media pages, minors may wish to establish connections with church leaders and adult volunteers engaged in adolescence and children ministries. Adults who are willing to participate in these relationships should use the following guidelines when establishing these connections:
 - a. Adults should not submit ‘friend’ requests to minors or vulnerable adults, unless an actual relationship (ministry, family friendship, etc.) already exists between them. Minors may feel they are not able to decline such requests due to the dispensary of power between them and adults.
 - b. Due to the greater potential for misinterpretation, inappropriate discussions, and inadvertent exposure of youth to inappropriate content; personal pages should be maintained appropriately. Church leaders and adult volunteers should avoid relationships with minors and vulnerable adults via social media sites.
 - c. When checking in with any location tagging social media, only check in yourself. Never check in minors. Be sensitive to tagging or revealing other participants’ locations.
2. Video chat/ FaceTime may be used when unplanned individual contact during program activities off church property must be done in view of a second adult leader or public place, unless previous permission from the guardian. Never be alone with a child or adolescent; even if their parents are on the way, unless prior permission.

Respect of Privacy

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

Separate Accommodations

a. A minimum of two adult leaders must be present on an overnight adolescent activity. If participants are both male and female, the adult leaders must be male and female. Males and Females will sleep in separate areas. Adult Leaders will not occupy the same bed as a minor unless with their own child.

Transportation

a. When the church provides transportation to a program activity, the following requirements apply:

1. The driver must be an adult leader at least 25 years of age.
2. The driver must have a valid Texas driver's license.
3. The driver must have proof of insurance that meets the State of Texas requirements.
4. The driver must have not had a driver's license revoked or suspended within the last five years for any reason.
5. The number of passengers in a vehicle may not exceed the number of working passenger seat restraints.
6. The driver and all passengers must always wear seat restraints.
7. The driver must have a copy of and follow the Transportation Safety Guidelines
8. A parent or guardian must sign a consent form.
9. An Adult Leader should never be alone in a car with a minor unless prior permission.

Constructive Discipline

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

No Hazing or Disrespectful Behavior

a. Hazing and initiations are prohibited and may not be included as part of any Immanuel minor programming activity. Bullying, discriminatory jokes or comments, and other behavior that is disrespectful of others is not allowed.

No Sexual Behavior

a. No sexual contact is permitted at minor programming activities. Other behavior that does not involve physical contact, such as suggestive or sexual comments, displaying sexual materials, or exposing sexual body parts, is also prohibited.

Gifts

a. Adult Leaders shall not give personal gifts or money to an individual minor without first notifying parents or another adult leader. Gifts to entire classes or groups are acceptable.

Reporting of Violations of These Rules

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

Training

- d. Training shall be required of all adult leaders every year with a background check. A copy of this policy shall be provided annually to every adult leader. The Church office will keep records of volunteers' up to date records. This training will be designated and provided by Immanuel Lutheran Church's adolescents and children's ministries.

Congregational Awareness and Review

a. A copy of this policy will be always available on the Immanuel Lutheran Church website and/or in the church office.

Terms

Minor- anyone under 18 years of age.

Adolescent - Young person of 6th - 12th grade.

Youth Helper- may be 5 years older than the oldest child (working with 5th grade and below).

Effective Date

a. This policy shall become effective on (date). PASSED AND APPROVED by the Council of Immanuel Lutheran Church on this 19 day of September 2023.

APPENDIX A
IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH MINOR PROGRAM
ADULT LEADER APPLICATION

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

Personal Information:

Name:

Address:

Cell Phone:

Work Phone:

E-mail:

Occupation:

Employer:

Hobbies/Interests:

Birth Date:

How long have you been an active member of Immanuel? _____

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

Do you have any training that would assist you in your ministry with our Youth or Children ministries?

CPR training

First Aid training

Other _____

When could you be available to help with the program?

Weeknights nights

Sunday mornings

Sunday afternoons or evenings

Overnight trips

Other: _____

Volunteer Experiance

Please list any previous volunteer experiance. _____

Criminal Charges/ Convictions

1. Have you been charged with, or convicted of child abuse, neglect, or a crime involving actual or attempted molestation of a minor? (*cirlce one*)

Yes

No

2. Have you been charged with or convicted of any other crime? (*circle one*)

Yes

No

If you answer 'no' to question 1 but 'yes' to question 2, you will need to provide and complete a form describing those convictions of charges (attached as Appendix D).

Transportation Information

Do you have a vehicle you would be willing to use to transport minors to a program activity?

Yes

No

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

Do you have a valid Texas drivers' license? Yes No

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

Yes No

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

Yes No

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

Applicant's Statement

I hereby acknowledge that the information provided by me on this ILC Minor Program Adult Leader Application is true and correct to the best of my knowledge, and I further agree to authorize a personal background check. I have been provided with a copy of the Immanuel Lutheran Church's Minor Program's Adult Leadership Policy, and I agree to abide by that Policy.

Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____ Date: _____

Please attach a copy of your driver's license and social security card to this application.

I represent to Immanuel Lutheran Church, its employees and volunteer workers (collectively ILC) that I have the legal authority to make decisions regarding the welfare, safety and legal rights of _____ (youth). I understand that this document waives certain legal rights that my youth and I might have, and limits the ability of ILC, in the event of an accident or injury occurring during an ILC event. It is my intention to grant permission for my youth to participate in all ILC events occurring between _____ and _____. I and the youth understand that every ILC event presents a risk of injury, serious injury, or even death to the youth.

I understand and agree that it is my parental duty to request information about each event from ILC, to assess the risk of each individual event, to discuss those risks with my youth, and to prevent my youth from participating if I deem the event too risky. I further understand and agree that ILC is not responsible for determining whether or not I have given my permission for my youth to participate in any given event. ILC may rely on the signed document, coupled with my youth's actual participation, as an expression of my permission for youth to participate in any event.

I understand that parent and youth assume the risk of injury, serious injury or death that may result from participation in ILC events. As parent and youth, we waive any and all right to sue ILC for any injury or death to youth while engaged in any ILC youth event, and we agree to an indemnify and to defend ILC against any claim or liability asserted against ILC for any such injury, or death to youth. We also hold ILC harmless from any and all liability to any other person or entity arising as a result of the conduct of the youth during any ILC event, and we agree to defend and indemnify ILC against any claim or liability arising as a result of such conduct.

If I, as parent, cannot be contacted in the case of an emergency or other medical necessity, ILC is authorized on my behalf, and on behalf of youth, to arrange for such medical and hospital treatment as ILC deems advisable for the health and well-being of the youth.

I authorize ILC to transport the youth to, from, and during any ILC event. I also understand that, from time to time, other youths may drive their own vehicles to, from, and during youth events. I understand that it is ILC's youth ministry policy to disallow youths from riding in vehicles driven by other youths without parent consent. However, I agree that ILC is not responsible for determining whether I have given permission for my youth to ride in vehicle driven by other youths. I acknowledge that it is my parental duty to prevent my youth from riding in vehicle driven by other youths.

As parent and youth, we agree that this document, and the waiver of rights and limitations of ILC's liability, continue in full force, and effect should youth, attain the age of majority, or otherwise become emancipated during the effective dates listed herein.

Parent/Guardian Printed Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Youth Signature: _____ Date: _____

Insurance Company Name: _____

Group Number: _____ Policy Number: _____

Youth's Physician's Name and Telephone Number: _____

Medications or Current Medical Conditions/Issues: _____

Allergies (food and medical): _____

Other important medical information: _____

APPENDIX B

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY GUIDELINES

A) Requirements for Drivers

- a. Each driver must be an approved adult leader and at least 25 years old to drive Church van; 21 to drive own vehicle.
- b. Each driver must have a valid Texas driver's license
- c. Each driver must have proof of insurance that meets the State of Texas requirements.
- d. The driver must not have had a driver's license revoked or suspended within the last five years for any reason.

B) Seat Restraints

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

C) Emergency Preparedness

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

D) Traveling in Groups

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

- a. Don't leave until every driver has: directions; a map; a phone number at the destination; the cell phone numbers of other drivers; and the license plate numbers of the other drivers.
- b. Drive with headlights on at all times.
- c. Do not put passengers at risk in order to drive in a group.

E) In Case of an Accident

- a) Check for any injured persons.
- b) If anyone is injured, make them as comfortable as possible. **DO NOT ATTEMPT TO MOVE THE INJURED PERSON.** Keep them warm. Administer first aid only if you have the proper training.
- c) Do not leave the injured person unattended!
- d) Call 911 for an ambulance. Don't forget to give the location clearly and distinctly. Do not hang up until they tell you to.
- e) Call Police or fire departments as necessary.

f) Get the name, phone number, drivers' license number, license plant number, VIN number and insurance information for other parties involved with the accident.

g) Get the names and telephone numbers of any witnesses.

h) call pastor or an Immanuel staff member and inform them of the accident and the wellbeing of all persons involved. Since you may be understandably upset, let the pastor or an Immanuel staff member explain the status of the situation to any injured person's family.

i) cooperate with police and fire department investigators.

j) Inform your insurance agent of the accident and provide him or her with the information you have gathered.

APPENDIX C

MINOR PROGRAM CONSENT FORM

Minor General Information

Full Name: _____

Nickname: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____

Cell Phone: _____

Texts: YES or NO

Personal email: _____

Family email: _____

DOB: ____/____/____

Gender: Male or Female

School: _____ Grade: _____

Church Membership at _____

Parent/ Guardian 2

Name: _____

Work Phone: _____

Cell Phone: _____

Email: _____

Relation: _____

If address is different than child, please complete the following:

Address: _____

Home phone: _____

Emergency Contact (other than guardian)

Parent/Guardian 1

Name: _____

Name: _____

Relation: _____

Work Phone: _____

Cell Phone: _____

Cell Phone: _____

Home Phone: _____

Email: _____

Relation: _____

If address is different than child, please complete the following:

Address: _____

Home phone: _____

APPENDIX D

CRIMINAL HISTORY QUESTIONNAIRE

If you have been convicted of or charged with a criminal offense, the senior pastor of Immanuel must review your criminal history to determine if you should be an approved adult leader at Immanuel. If you have been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor, other than a minor traffic violation, or pleaded guilty or no contest (nolo contendere) to any such offense, please complete this section. If you have more than one conviction, please provide the requested information as to each conviction. Attach additional pages if necessary.

Name: _____

SSN: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

County where convicted: _____

Court where convicted: _____

Date of conviction: _____

Exact crime of which you were convicted: _____

Sentence imposed by court or other action taken by court:

Specific actions or events leading to conviction: _____

Are you currently on probation or parole? (*Circle one*) YES NO

If so, what are the terms and conditions of your probation or parole?

I hereby acknowledge that the information provided in this Criminal History Questionnaire is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX E

Consent Form for Posting Photos / Videos of Minors for use in Print, Website, and/or Social Media sites.

ILC Events and Sunday School calendar year of, _____.

Photographic and Video Recording devices will be employed during this year and could be used for publicity or historical purposes in a print or web-based media outlet (i.e., church website or Facebook).

To protect the privacy of the children and youth attending ILC, parents/legal guardians are asked to select the appropriate permission level below.

(Please check the one which applies)

_____ I give my permission for my child's/children's image, without name, to be printed and/or posted on a website or social network page associated with this church/organization.

_____ I do **NOT** give permission for my child's image to be printed and/or posted on a website or social network page associated with this church/organization.

Name of Child/Children

Name of Parent/Guardian – please PRINT

Signature of Parent / Guardian

Date

APPENDIX F

TEXTING MINORS CONSENT FORM

Do your Church staff and ministry volunteers obtain permission to communicate electronically with your minor(s) from ILC calendar year of _____? (*Circle One*)

Agree

I Do Not Agree

Parent/Guardian Signature_____

Parent/Guardian Print_____

Date: _____

Minor’s Cell Phone #: _____

Minor’s Email: _____