

St. Barnabas Lutheran Church Safety Policies and Guidelines for Volunteer Adult and Teen Leaders, Chaperones, and Drivers

The following guidelines and policies reflect St. Barnabas's commitment to providing a safe environment for those participating in, receiving, and providing its ministries.

1. All volunteers working with youth are to be active in the life of the congregation for a minimum of six months, or may provide a letter of recommendation from their previous congregation or suitable substitute and meet with the Pastor or his/her designee. Non-member volunteers are asked to follow the same procedures as members.
2. All adult volunteers leaders and chaperones will complete St. Barnabas's Background Check and Child Safety Training program every three years. St. Barnabas staff will monitor the need for additional training opportunities annually in regard to the detection and prevention of child abuse and the requirements of the law for reporting alleged/suspected sexual abuse.
3. Parents who volunteer as leaders or chaperones will be asked to follow the requirements for Volunteer leaders.
4. Adults whose background checks raise questions or concerns will meet with at least two members of the executive team to determine their eligibility to work with St. Barnabas youth. Background checks that result in disqualification include but are not limited to records of physical, sexual, or child abuse.
5. All leaders who work with youth shall observe the "Two-person rule". The "Two-person rule" requires that every effort should be made to avoid situations where an adult or teen volunteer or paid staff member is alone with youth.
6. Teen or young adult volunteers must be part of a two-person team **at ALL times**.
7. The "Two-person rule" is **REQUIRED** for those working with kindergarten and younger children. If a young child needs bathroom assistance, the door must be left open while guarding their privacy as much as possible and another adult must be told before and after the assistance.
8. If only one adult is present, the "Open Door Policy" requires the door to be open **at ALL times**, and there **MUST** be more than one youth present.
9. If a meeting of an adult with an individual youth occurs, it shall be in an open area such as the Family Life Center, the Narthex (entry) or in an open hallway (move if necessary). If the meeting must be in a classroom, office, or other confined space, the door must be left open. Either way, there **MUST** be other people nearby (in adjacent halls/rooms) who can monitor the situation. If the meeting must occur outside the St. Barnabas Lutheran Church building, it must be in an open, public area.
10. Preschool and Kindergarten children will be dismissed from classrooms only to custodial parents or those persons indicated on the child's registration form.
11. Special care is to be taken in contacting youth by electronic communication (email, text messaging, or any social media) and should be limited to church activities or congratulations at special events. Parental permission needs to be granted on the church consent form and a parent copied on the communication unless the parent opts out in writing.
12. Parents have the responsibility for transporting children and youth to youth activities. When St. Barnabas organizes transportation, all drivers must be 25 or older and consent to a Motor Vehicle Record Search. The Driver Form must be filled out and proof of a valid driver's license and vehicle insurance provided and reviewed by the event planner or St. Barnabas staff. Copies of these documents can be made in the church office and will be securely stored at the church.

13. Drivers should avoid being alone with a single youth in a car (other than their own child) without another adult present. If it is necessary to ride or drive alone with a youth, special care should be taken: it is preferred the youth sit in the back seat or at least one seat-belt away. Phone the parent or a witness to verify departure and arrival times and do not stop the car to talk. A parent can sign a release to allow a specific adult to transport their child.
14. Discretion is to be used when among youth, especially regarding physical contact. Seemingly innocent behavior can be misinterpreted. Stroking, massaging, kissing or other expression of affection is not permissible by any volunteer or staff.
15. Corporal punishment is prohibited. This prohibition shall not be interpreted to prevent such physical contact, restraining, or touching of students as may be required to prevent harm or injury to the student, other individuals, and/or church or private property.
16. Any abusive behavior or inappropriate verbal or nonverbal gesture by youth or adults towards another person will not be tolerated. Witnesses should report such behavior to the Pastor or executive team member. Incident reports are to be kept confidential by both the reporting person(s) and pastor/executive team and kept securely stored in the church *indefinitely*.
17. Dating between an adult volunteer or staff and youth under the age of 18 will not be tolerated.
18. The use of any drug (including alcohol) and smoking (including e-cigs) is prohibited in the presence of youth. Approved medications for youth must be listed on parental permission slips.
19. St. Barnabas will provide chaperones at ratios of at least 1 adult of the same gender for every 7 youth at all events. When possible, separate sleeping areas will be provided for male and female youth and their chaperones. Sleeping arrangements will be discussed with youth and parents prior to each event.
20. The lights-out curfew for youth will be determined on an event by event basis. Participants will respect the curfew.
21. Movies to be shown will be publicized prior to the event so that parents can know which ones will be shown and their ratings.
22. No weapons: knives, guns, fireworks, fire crackers, ammunition, or any other explosive devices will not be brought or used during any youth activity.
23. The wearing of life jackets is required for all youth and adults participating in any boating or rafting events.

Volunteer Leaders or Staff who do not follow St. Barnabas Safety Policies and Procedures will, on the first offense, be given a verbal warning. If a second offense occurs a written warning will be given. A third offense will result in suspension or termination from leadership.

Any of these steps may be bypassed depending on the seriousness of the offense.

In the case of alleged child abuse, volunteer leaders or staff will be suspended during the investigation. All information regarding any specific incident will be kept confidential within the necessary boundaries of the fact-finding process. No reprisal against the person reporting the allegation of harassment will be tolerated.