



Liminal Church Policy Document for Children’s Ministries

1. OVERVIEW OF LIMINAL CHURCH SAFETY SYSTEM

For purposes of this policy, the terms “child,” “children,” “youth,” or “minors” include all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years. Liminal Children’s Ministries serves infants through 4th grade.

Liminal Church requires all staff members and volunteers who work with minors to complete the following safety steps before employment or volunteer placements begin. Liminal Leadership Team members must also complete the sexual abuse awareness training whether or not they volunteer in Youth or Children’s Ministry areas.

Step 1: Internal Screening Process

Staff members and volunteers are required to complete the Liminal Church Screening Process, which requires a staff member or volunteer to:

- complete the application (employees and volunteers)
- complete a face-to-face interview (employees and volunteers)
- provide references to be checked (employees and volunteers)

In addition, a volunteer must have regularly attended Liminal Church for six months before they are eligible to serve in volunteer positions providing access to minors.

Step 2: Criminal Background Check

Liminal Church and the State of California require all staff members and volunteers to undergo a Live Scan background check. Depending on the position, background checks may require differing levels or intensity.

Individuals who have committed sexually-oriented or sex-related crimes may not serve in any area providing services to minors. In addition, certain other past criminal acts may preclude an applicant from serving minors.

Upon request, volunteers will be reimbursed for the Live Scan cost.

Step 3: Sexual Abuse Awareness Training

Liminal Church requires that all staff members and volunteers complete Sexual Abuse Awareness Training. This training equips Liminal Church staff and volunteers with the information necessary to recognize abusers’ characteristics and behaviors. Retraining is required every two years.

Step 4: Policies and Procedures

Staff members and volunteers are required to review the policies and procedures in this manual and sign the last page indicating that they have read, understood, and agree to comply with its policy requirements.

2. CHILD SAFETY POLICY

(a) ENFORCEMENT OF POLICIES

Liminal Church staff members and volunteers who supervise other staff members or volunteers are charged with diligently enforcing all Liminal Church policies. The Liminal Church Leadership Team and the Liminal Church Board will make final decisions related to policy violations.

(b) REPORTING VIOLATIONS OF POLICY, INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR, AND SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE

An important element in creating a safe and secure environment for children and youth is to foster a culture of reporting relevant information to a supervisor, the church administrator, a Leadership Team Member, or a member of the Liminal Board.

It is the responsibility of every staff member and volunteer at Liminal Church to act in the best interest of all children and youth in every program. Staff members and volunteers must be aware of their individual responsibility to report any questionable circumstance, observation, act, omission, or situation that constitutes a violation of these policies. All questions or concerns regarding inappropriate, suspicious, or suspected grooming behavior should be directed to an immediate supervisor, the church administrator, or a Leadership Team Member so that the church may take appropriate action to safeguard children and youth.

If staff or volunteers observe any inappropriate behavior (including, but not limited to, policy violations, inattentive supervision, poor role-modeling), suspected abuse (physical, emotional, or sexual), grooming behavior, or signs of neglect, they are required to immediately report their observations to their immediate supervisor, the church administrator, or a Leadership Team Member.

Any report of inappropriate behaviors or suspicions of abuse or neglect will be taken seriously and will be reported, in accordance with Liminal Church policy and State of California law, to the Liminal Church Board, Liminal Church Leadership Team, and as appropriate, to Ventura County Child Welfare Services and to Ventura County Police.

Failure to report a policy violation or any questionable circumstance, observation, act, omission, or situation that is a violation of Liminal Church policies may be grounds for termination (employee) or removal (volunteer).

Liminal Church strictly prohibits and does not tolerate any form of unlawful retaliation for engaging in any protected activity, including good faith reporting of incidents of inappropriate behaviors or suspicions of abuse or neglect.

**We report all suspected or alleged abuse or neglect of
children to
Ventura County Child Welfare Services
24-hour hotline 805-654-3200.**

Mandated reporters must: 1) call the hotline to report suspected child abuse or neglect, and 2) submit a written report ([Form BCIA 8572](#)) to HSA-CFS-SCAR@ventura.org.

Mandated Reporters include Liminal pastors, Liminal staff, supervisors of volunteers, and the members of the Liminal Leadership Team. Volunteers who work with children or youth must immediately notify any of the above individuals if incidents of inappropriate behavior or suspicions of abuse or neglect arise.

(c) CHILDREN’S MINISTRY SAFETY POLICIES

(i) Supervision

The Children’s Ministry Staff Person is responsible for maintaining a safe and secure program area during programming serving children. This includes monitoring volunteers and children. Only screened church staff, screened ministry volunteers, and children are allowed in areas where ministry to children is occurring. Parents may be in the area when dropping off or picking up children.

(ii) Two Adult Rule

Two trained, screened adults should supervise children at all times. Avoid being alone with an individual child in any room or during any ministry program. If one supervising adult must leave the room, another screened volunteer or employee must be notified so that the *Two Adult Rule* can be followed. If two individuals serving in a room are related to one another, a third unrelated volunteer or staff member must be present.

If an unusual circumstance occurs and you find yourself alone with a single child, take the child to an area occupied by others, or to a location easily observed by others.

- If you need to talk to a child alone, do it in the hallway or a highly visible area.
- Avoid distractions that would impact your ability to effectively supervise students and maintain situational awareness (i.e., use of cell phones, wearing headphones).

- After every ministry programming event, ensure that every room, area, and restroom is checked prior to leaving.

Youth Volunteers: Youth volunteers must always be paired with two supervising adults, never be left alone with a child, and must undergo appropriate background checks. Specific guidelines will be provided regarding age-appropriate tasks (such as helping with crafts and games), supervision requirements, and appropriate behavior while interacting with children. Youth volunteers are subject to Steps 1 and 4 of Section 1 of this Manual with respect to child safety protocols. Youth volunteers must provide written permission from a parent or guardian prior to serving in Children’s Ministries.

3. GENERAL POLICIES

(a) CHECK-IN

All children must be signed into the classroom by a parent or guardian.

(b) RELEASE OF CHILDREN

All children must be signed out. It is presumed that a person who drops off a child or student has the authority to pick up the child. Under no circumstances will a child be released to anyone other than a parent or guardian without express written authorization.

(c) RESTROOMS:

Preschool, PK, Kindergarten: A screened adult must accompany the child to the restroom. If a child is able to tend to their needs by themselves in a stall, then the adult will remain outside the exterior restroom but will hold the restroom door ajar. If a child needs assistance, in or out of a stall, the screened adult may enter the restroom, leaving the exterior restroom door open and the stall door unlocked.

Grades 1-3: A screened adult will accompany the child to the restroom, check to make sure the restroom is empty, and stand outside the exterior restroom door until the child comes out. If the child requires assistance, leave the exterior bathroom door open while assisting the child.

Grade 4: One child at a time may be excused to use the restroom. A screened adult shall make sure the restroom is empty and then may leave the child unattended.

Diapering: The preferred practice is to ask the parent to change the child’s diaper. If that is not practical, a screened adult may change a diaper in the presence of a second screened adult.

(d) PHYSICAL CONTACT

Physical contact between adults and children should always be public, age-appropriate, and non-sexual in nature.

- Physical contact should be given only in observable places or in the presence of other Children’s Ministry staff members and volunteers. It is much less likely that touch will be inappropriate or misinterpreted when physical contact is open to observation.
- Physical contact of children includes hugs when initiated by the child.
- Do not force physical contact. A child’s preference not to be touched must be respected.
- Children’s Ministry staff members and volunteers are responsible for protecting children under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by others.

(e) DISCIPLINE

Liminal Church policy prohibits staff and volunteers from using physical discipline to manage children's behavior. No form of physical discipline is acceptable. Best practice is to redirect the child to an appropriate activity. All verbal interactions with children should be positive and constructive.

(f) TOBACCO/VAPING

Please abstain from the use or possession of tobacco and or vaping products in church facilities, while in the presence of students or their parents, or during Liminal Church ministry activities or programs, whether on campus or away. Liminal Church is a tobacco-free facility.

(g) INTOXICANTS

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from the use or possession of, or being under the influence of alcohol, cannabis, or other illegal drug while in any church facility, while traveling with students, or while working with or supervising minors during any Liminal Church program or activity.

Policies and Procedures
Statement of Acknowledgement and Agreement

This page is to be signed, detached, and delivered to the Church Administrator.

I have received and read a copy of the Liminal Church Policy Document for Children's Ministries. I understand the importance of the material in the manual. I agree to abide by these guidelines while serving or working at Liminal Church.

I understand the manual may be modified, and that any guideline may be amended, revised, added or eliminated by Liminal Church with or without notice. Any amendment shall be distributed to all volunteers and staff and shall be considered an integrated part of the Policies and Procedures. I understand it is my responsibility to review new guidelines which may be created and distributed.

I have reviewed the duties listed in my ministry position description, and I agree to fulfill these duties. If applying as a volunteer, I acknowledge and agree that I will receive no monetary compensation for hours worked.

Liminal Church hopes that it and every employee and/or volunteer will find involvement in Children's Ministries satisfying and rewarding in all respects. At the same time, it recognizes that relationships are not always mutually satisfactory. TO PROTECT BOTH PARTIES' RIGHTS, IT SHOULD BE REMEMBERED THAT VOLUNTEERING OR EMPLOYMENT IS TERMINABLE AT WILL, AT THE OPTION OF EITHER THE VOLUNTEER, THE EMPLOYEE, OR THE EMPLOYER. Moreover, no one at Liminal Church, other than the Board of Directors, has the authority or legal ability to modify the at-will nature of the volunteer/employment relationships. The Board can do so only if it is done specifically in a written agreement that is signed both by the Board and the volunteer or employee. This represents an integrated agreement with respect to the at-will nature of the employment relationship.

I acknowledge receipt of Liminal Church policies and procedures manual.

Staff Member or Volunteer's name (please print)

Staff Member or Volunteer's signature

Date: _____