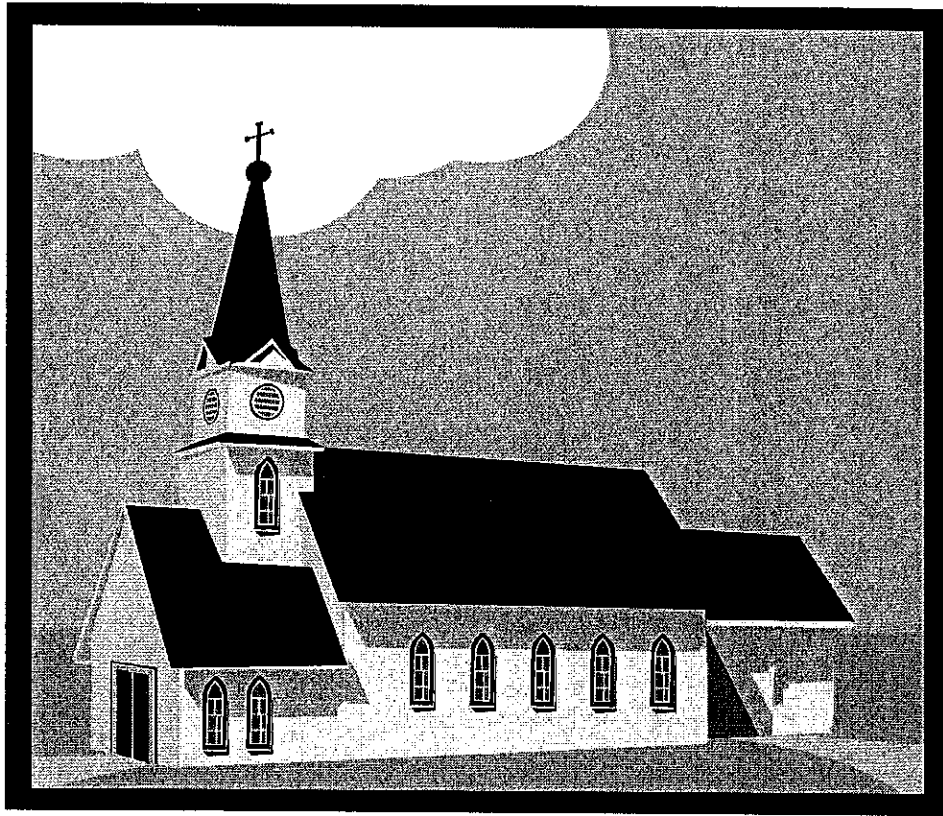


Heart Lake Baptist Church

Amended May 2008



Protection Policy

"Love...always protects". 1Cor. 13:4-7

HEART LAKE BAPTIST CHURCH PROTECTION POLICY (HLBCPP)

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11.01 Policy Statements for the Church

- (a) In consideration of the ongoing need for the Church to provide policies, guidelines and directions to its Members on furtherance of the Objects of the Church or on practical applications of Biblical principles, teachings, doctrinal considerations and Christian conduct, the Church may adopt Policy Statements on such matters as are deemed necessary from time to time by the Church Council and such Policy Statements upon adoption as set out below shall be deemed to be a part of this General Operating By-law and the Constitution.
- (b) A Policy Statement may be proposed or amended by either the Pastor or the Church Council and shall not become operative until first approved by a ninety percent (90%) Resolution of the Church Council. Any Policy Statement adopted by the Church Council shall continue to have force and effect until the next Meeting of Members at which the said Policy Statement shall be ratified by a seventy-five (75%) Resolution of the Members at the said Membership Meeting.

Date:	Motion:	Passed:
May 20, 2008	Council Motion	Passed
June 17, 2008	Business Meeting Motion	Passed

HEART LAKE BAPTIST CHURCH PROTECTION POLICY (HLBCPP)

A. INTRODUCTION

Purpose

This document is intended to:

- Protect the children, youth and vulnerable adults in the care of HL Baptist Church
- Protect staff (paid or volunteers) who work with children, youth and vulnerable adults
- Provide a basis for educating the congregation
- Meet legal and insurance requirements of HL Baptist Church concerning children, youth and vulnerable adults.

The primary focus of the HLBCPP is to assist in developing and maintaining a safe and nurturing environment in which our children, youth and adults may be drawn closer to Jesus our Lord. Furthermore, an objective of the HLBCPP includes protecting the integrity of those ministering by providing them with an environment conducive to effective ministry. It is our desire to glorify God in all we do (including this protection policy) and promote spiritual development and growth.

Biblical Perspective

As a body of believers at Heart Lake Baptist Church we are responsible for ensuring that the children, youth and adults under our care participate in ministries characterized by safe, nurturing, and loving environments. It is our moral duty to create an atmosphere where children, youth and adults are provided with opportunities to experience spiritual growth and social development free from impropriety. The Bible establishes a mark of moral excellence for us to follow. We can expect no less in creating ministry environments.

The Scriptures listed below reflect the standard set before us by God:

- “Jesus said, Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these”. (Matt. 18:14)
- “Avoid every kind of evil”. (1 Thess. 5:22)
- “Love your neighbor as yourself”. (Matt. 22:39)
- “Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves”. (Rom. 12:8-10)
- “But among you there must not even be a hint of sexual immorality, or any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God’s holy people”. (Eph. 5:3)

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- “Love...always protects”. (1Cor. 13: 4 -7)
- “Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience”. (Col. 3:12)

Standard

We want children, youth and adults to both feel and be safe and secure in our ministries. Therefore it is the position of the Council of Heart Lake Baptist Church that we hold to a zero tolerance position on the issue of abuse, neglect and harassment.

To accomplish the above, the Church must implement and proceed to monitor its effectiveness.

B. HLBCPP IMPLEMENTATION

Council will designate an “Overseer” for the Protection Policy to ensure the implementation and maintenance of the HLBCPP. Individuals not complying with the HLBCPP shall be removed from ministry immediately.

Specific ministries or persons that require this policy are:

- Church Council (including the pastors), Deacons,
- Service Monitors and Floaters,
- Children & Youth Groups Leaders and Assistants,
- Drama Leader,
- Representatives of the church
eg. Mission team, Parish Nurse, Home or Hospital Visitors,
- and other positions as conditions and activities change.

Ministry leaders shall implement procedures outlined in the HLBCPP and ensure staff in their particular areas of ministry adhere to the procedures. Ministry leaders shall report progress to the Overseer and ensure all their ministry’s documents are filed on a regular basis (at least yearly). Documents will be stored by the Overseer in a locked filing cabinet at a central location in the church. Records are required to be kept on file indefinitely.

The Overseer shall report progress to Council and provide access to the documents for a yearly audit or as requested.

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C. DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE AND HARASSMENT

For the purposes of this document staff refers to both paid and volunteer staff.

In order to assist staff to have a clear understanding of the definition of what constitutes abuse and harassment in its various forms, the following section has been added. This section attempts to define abuse (emotional, physical, child neglect and sexual), and harassment.

What is Abuse?

Types: Emotional, Physical, Sexual, Lack of Care (Neglect)

Emotional Abuse:

Emotional Abuse is a chronic attack on a person's self-esteem; it is psychologically destructive behaviour by a person in a position of power, authority or trust. It can take the form of name-calling, threatening, ridiculing, berating, intimidating, isolating, hazing or ignoring the needs of such person.

Physical Abuse:

Physical abuse is when a person in a position of power or trust purposefully injures or threatens to injure a person. This may take the form of slapping, hitting, shaking, kicking, pulling hair or ears, throwing, shoving, grabbing, hazing or excessive forms of punishment.

Neglect:

Neglect is chronic inattention to the basic necessities of life such as clothing, shelter, nutritious diets, education, good hygiene, supervision, medical and dental care, adequate rest, safe environment, moral guidance and discipline, exercise and fresh air. Neglect includes the inattention to emotional needs and developmental needs.

Sexual Abuse:

In general, it includes any form of sexual contact or exploitation that is used for the sexual arousal or gratification of the offender, the minor, or third party. Sexual abuse can include touching or non-touching behaviors.

What is Harassment?

Definition:

While it is difficult to specifically define harassment, as any definition will contain a certain subjective or interpretive element, harassment is inappropriate and can have legal implications.

Harassment is simply the unwelcome treatment of one person to another that results in intimidation, embarrassment, shame, fear or stress. Harassment may result in (but is not limited to) interference of a person's quality of service or work.

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Harassment can take many forms whether physical, verbal, sexual or emotional, and most often involves a combination of these elements. One of the defining characteristics of harassment is that it usually takes place where one person is in a position of power over another, or has the trust of another and then abuses that relationship.

Harassment is not expressing a strong difference of opinion on issues or beliefs, or challenging one another as to ones understandings and lifestyle within a biblical context. Christ calls us to speak the truth in love; meaning in a gentle, persuasive, and dignified manner, while respecting the individuals right to freely choose their own path.

D. RESPONSE PLAN TO ALLEGATIONS

Alleged Abuse (under 18 years of age)

- i) If a child reports abuse to staff or if a staff member suspects abuse, the law requires that staff member to make an immediate report to the Children's Aid Society (C.A.S.). 905 363 6131
- ii) In such an instant, the staff member will not conduct an investigation or make attempts to substantiate or disprove claims. C.A.S. will conduct the investigation.
- iii) Following the report to C.A.S., the reporting staff member will inform the Senior Pastor and complete the Incident Report (Form – 10 which will be given to the Senior Pastor).
- iv) The Senior Pastor shall inform Heart Lake Baptist Church Council.
- v) The identity of the reporting staff member will remain anonymous to the congregation and known only to C.A.S. and Council (including the Senior Pastor).
- vi) Council will contact our insurance agent in order to satisfy the statutory conditions of the insurance policy.
- vii) If a staff member is accused of abuse that individual will be removed by Council from his/her position immediately pending the outcome of the investigation. This will not be viewed as indicative of guilt, but rather as a precaution. It is essential to keep in mind that in such a case both parties involved in the investigation be treated with Christ-like love and compassion.

Alleged Abuse (18 years of age or older)

- i) The individual who receives information or suspects abuse will encourage the alleged victim to access counseling and protection through the local police and pastoral or counseling services.
- ii) Pastor/Council will listen to and support the alleged victim but will not take action outside of the church on his/her behalf; that is, the alleged victim must be the individual to lay charges with the police. Physical, emotional, and spiritual support will be provided during this time, if requested.
- iii) It is requirement to report suspected abuse of a senior.
- iv) If a staff member is accused of abuse, that individual will be removed by Council from his/her position immediately pending the outcome of the investigation. This will not be viewed as indicative of guilt, but rather as a precaution. It is essential to keep in mind that in such a case both parties involved in the investigation be treated with Christ-like love and compassion.

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Alleged Harassment:

The Complaint Process

The individual complainant has the right to decide how to deal with harassment. However, incidents for which criminal charges could be laid, needs to be dealt with accordingly. In cases of sexual assault, obscene phone calls, intimidation and criminal harassment (where there is a fear for safety), the complainant needs to report the incident to the police and take action under the Criminal Code.

The individual who feels they are being harassed needs to report it or the lack of action may be interpreted as acceptance. Incidents of harassment would need to be documented. Keep a written record of the incident(s) including what the harasser did and said, who saw what, your response and to whom you reported anything.

Internal Resolution

Not all incidents of harassment require formal complaints to deal with the situation and may be resolved in an informal manner.

Informal resolution option:

- o When an individual feels they are being harassed, communicate disapproval and objections immediately to the harasser, either personally or in writing, and request the harasser to stop.
- o If the harassment does not stop, or it is not comfortable to address the harasser directly, take this concern to an Elder and/or Senior Pastor for discussion and advice. All conversations with the Board of Elders or Senior Pastor with respect to allegations of harassment are to be kept confidential.
- o The Elders or Senior Pastor will work with both parties to come up with an appropriate course of action which may include obtaining an apology from the harasser, informing the congregation (if agreed), and suggesting counseling and/or education for the harasser.
- o If it is determined in the Board's opinion that no harassment has taken place or that some form of harassment has taken place and has been dealt with and no further action deemed necessary, the confidentiality of all parties will be maintained.
- o In the event that the harassment is conduct that is grossly unbecoming to a member of Heart Lake Baptist Church, the Elders may choose to invoke discipline procedures as outline in Section II in the By-Law.
- o If the complaint involves sexual harassment or abuse by a pastor the matter shall be dealt with according to the By-Law of this church and its policies.

HEART LAKE BAPTIST CHURCH PROTECTION POLICY (HLBCPP)

E. STAFF SELECTION/SCREENING PROCESS

Screening Process For Staff 18 years of age & older

In order to be considered for service an individual **must complete all five** of the following:

1. **Must regularly attend Heart Lake Baptist Church for six months**
2. **Initiate Interview** – discuss ministry opportunities with the Ministry Leader
3. **Submit Application (Form -1)** – Application is submitted to Ministry Leader and reference calls will be completed by leader prior to working in ministry
4. **Submit Vulnerable Sector Police Records Search**
It is required to resubmit the Vulnerable Sector Police Records Search every 3 years. Confidentiality is important and the report will be separately filed indefinitely.
5. **Attend a Workshop** - This workshop deals with the protection policy and procedures, and volunteers are required to attend yearly.

Screening Process For Youth Volunteers (Gr. 6 to Age 17)

- Youth volunteers are required to attend an interview with Ministry Leader,
- Complete an application form including references (see Form7).
- Older youth volunteers (Age 16-17) are encouraged to attend the yearly Protection Workshop.

Young people interested in volunteering will be assigned to work alongside screened staff 18 years of age and older. It is recommended that there be at least 5 year gap between youth volunteer and child/youth they serve. When the youth turns 18, they must complete the above process for Staff 18 years of age & older, which include new form, reference check, Vulnerable Sector Police Records Search and attend the Workshop yearly.

Note:

- A. References may not include family members and preferably comes from a variety of sources including people from church, work, neighborhood or friends. References must not be completed by family members.
- B. Individuals that have been accused, or convicted, or are under the suspicion of crimes against children and/or youth, or who have been convicted of violent crimes or other relevant crimes will not have any involvement in ministries or programs where children or youth participate. Anyone convicted of child abuse will be prohibited from having access to children or youth. Church leadership may designate an individual to be responsible to be informed whenever the convicted person attends church activities and to accompany the convicted person while on church property. Clear written guidelines will be provided to the individual listing restricted areas and access points on the church property.

HEART LAKE BAPTIST CHURCH PROTECTION POLICY (HLBCPP)

F. SUPERVISION

Two Adult Rule

All activities will include at least two screened adults supervising the children, youth and vulnerable adults as a prevention strategy and to minimize the possibility of false accusation. This includes Congregational Care Home Visits. Exceptions are classes or activities held in rooms with a window in the door which are monitored by the floater or service monitor. This occurs with the Sunday School class on a Sunday Morning which is regularly monitored by a Floater and Service Monitor.

Staffing Ratio

1. Classroom settings must comply with established ratios for adults and children at all times. This includes off-site activities and trips. Established ratios are:
 - One staff for every 3 infants (birth – 17 months)
 - One staff for every 4 – 5 toddlers or preschoolers
 - One staff for every 7 – 10 elementary-age children

2. Programs for youth must comply with established staffing ratios as follows:
 - Junior High events – One staff for every 7 students
 - Senior High events – One staff for every 10 students
 - Overnight/Off-Site events – One staff for every 7 students

Floater

In settings where only one adult is present ministering to children/youth (i.e. Sunday school) the Ministry Leader shall arrange to have a floater check-in on the classrooms or other locations during the activity. The floater must be an individual having completed the staff selection/screening process.

Service Monitor

A member of council or a council designate will be on duty during the worship service for general supervision. Particular areas of supervision include the narthex, C.E. wing, and the office/bathroom hallway. This will be an individual who has completed the staff selection/screening process.

Relatives Ministering Together

Siblings, husbands/wives, or parent/child that share a desire to work together in ministry will have another screened staff, who is not a family member, present at all times.

Staff Absences

All staff will personally arrange a substitute from the pre-approved “Supply List” in the event that they are absent. All individuals on the “Supply List” are required to have completed the staff selection/screening process. In the case where two staff are not available, the group will join in with another group or the program will be cancelled.

HEART LAKE BAPTIST CHURCH PROTECTION POLICY (HLBCPP)

Occasional Observers

Occasional observers who join a class will have their attendance recorded and kept on file with the classroom attendance for that day. Observers will be clearly identified with a name tag and if they have not been screened and approved, they will be teamed up with a regular screened staff. Under no circumstances is an observer to be alone with a child/youth or group of children/youth and out of the sight of the screened staff. They will not be placed in a position of trust with children/youth.

Medical Exception

If there is a medical reason(s) a potential volunteer may not be suitable as a leader, he/she may be considered for a "helper position". This volunteer would be paired with a screened leader and never placed in charge. Consideration will be based on case by case by the Ministry Leader and Overseer.

G. REGISTRATION POLICIES

Nametags

Individuals working with children will wear a name tag to identify them as staff.

Participant Record (Form 4)

Participant Record forms which include contact and medical information will be accessible in each program meeting area in case of emergency and are to be kept indefinitely. It is the responsibility of the ministry leader or staff to ensure that the forms are completed and submitted for all participants. In the case of a visiting child, the parent bringing the child will be considered the guardian for the evening and the participant form must be sent home at the conclusion of the first program. All effort must be made to keep forms updated and current.

Attendance

1. Attendance of children is to be recorded each time a classroom or program is in session.
2. Record the staff and helpers on duty in each classroom/program and record any guest or occasional observer present. This attendance record will be filed with the Overseer indefinitely.

Receiving and Releasing Children

For Babies to Kindergarten Children:

1. Receiving and releasing children under the age of 6 is strongly monitored. A mandatory sign-in and sign-out form is to be used in all children's programming. (Form 5)
2. Children are not to be dropped off in a classroom without staff present.
3. Babies and preschool children will only be released into the care of the child's parent or designate utilizing a signature, security number or identification card.
4. Parents and visitors are not to enter the nursery or preschool classroom unless requested to do so.

For Elementary Students:

1. Younger elementary students are to remain in the classroom/program until the parent or designate comes to pick them up and the student demonstrates recognition.
2. Consideration must be given to security, church facilities, location, leader rotation and size of group when determining if Sign In & Out sheets are required for this age.

HEART LAKE BAPTIST CHURCH PROTECTION POLICY (HLBCPP)

H. PROPER DISPLAY OF AFFECTION

Appropriate Touch:

Recognizing that children and youth need appropriate displays of affection that reflect pure, genuine and positive displays of God's love, appropriate touch with children will be age and developmentally appropriate. All touch must be done in view of others.

We encourage staff to:

- Hold a preschool child who is crying,
- Speak to a child at eye level and listen with your eyes as well as your ears,
- Hold a child's hands when speaking, listening or walking him or her to an activity,
- Gently hold the child's shoulder or hand to keep his or her attention while you redirect the child's 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 him or her.

Appropriate touch for Staff working with youth and vulnerable adults may with permission include:

- one-arm hugs
- shoulder-to-shoulder hugs
- touch on the back or shoulder

Inappropriate Touch:

Recognizing that the innocence of children, youth and vulnerable adults must be protected, staff will never be left alone and the following actions are deemed inappropriate and will not be permitted:

- Do not kiss or coax a child, youth or adult to kiss you,
- Do not engage in extended hugging and tickling,
- Do not engage in chest-to-chest hugging
- Do not physically hold when talking to or disciplining,
- Do not touch any area that would be covered by a bathing suit (strictly prohibited except in cases of diapering and assisting preschoolers as outlined in washroom policies),
- Do not carry older children and do not allow them to sit on your lap,
- Avoid prolonged physical contact with any child or youth.

Staff must be cognizant of conduct that could be misinterpreted:

- Horseplay
- Tickling
- Aggressive game of sports
- Extended backrubs

HEART LAKE BAPTIST CHURCH PROTECTION POLICY (HLBCPP)

I. DISCIPLINE & CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

All discipline and classroom management will be conducted in a loving and caring environment. All attempts will be made to prevent discipline problems from arising and to avoid the need for remedial discipline. All attempts are to be taken to adhere to the following:

Preventative Discipline:

- Create a loving, caring atmosphere,
- To gain respect, you must grant respect,
- Model self-discipline and structure in your own life,
- Prepare exciting and interesting classes with short transitions between activities,
- Arrange your environment for children and for learning,
- Establish and communicate realistic expectations for the children,
- Be sure the activities that you provide are meaningful and age-appropriate,
- Be fair and consistent with all children,
- Be sure your focus is on positive actions and reward positive behaviour,
- Be aware of children with special needs and bring their needs to the attention of the ministry lead.

Remedial Discipline:

- Every effort will be made to deal with problems individually,
- Every effort will be made to explain to the child why the behaviour is unacceptable and instruct them in how to do it correctly,
- Every effort will be made to redirect the child to positive action,
- Every effort will be made to explain the consequences of unacceptable behaviour by defining the correct way to behave as well as the result of the wrong behaviour,
- Every effort will be made to offer choices that are acceptable to both you and the child.

Classroom rules will be established to clearly communicate the expectations required of children. Some suggested rules are:

- One voice talking at a time
- Quiet hands get answered
- Use inside voices
- Obey directions the first time
- Use good manners
- Keep your hands and feet to yourself
- Respect each other
- Be friendly
- Visit the washroom before class begins
- Remember – life isn't fair, but God is good

HEART LAKE BAPTIST CHURCH PROTECTION POLICY (HLBCPP)

Bullying among Peers

Bullying is the act of intentionally causing harm to others, through verbal harassment, physical assault, or other more subtle methods of coercion such as manipulation. Bullying is usually done to coerce others by fear or threat. It can be referred to as peer abuse.

Our children and youth have a right to a caring, respectful and safe church environment where they will encounter the love of God in action. An anti-bullying policy will therefore be in effect at all times and will be clearly communicated and enforced among the children and youth. All ministry personnel will take action to prevent bullying, teach against it, and assist and support children and youth who are being bullied. Bullying in any form will not be tolerated.

J. BATHROOM POLICIES

Children wearing **diapers** are to be changed by adult staff only. Change tables are located in a visible area of the room.

The **toddler/preschool rooms** have a bathroom attached to the room so a staff adult can assist the child if needed and also be in full view of the other staff. The door to the bathroom will always be left open.

Taking **younger children** to the hall bathroom, the youth or adult staff will escort the child to the bathroom, remain outside the bathroom door and wait for the child, and return to class together. If the child needs assistance another staff worker must be called and be present when assisting. The bathroom stall door will never be closed.

School age children do not require an adult or youth escort. Where needed a same sex buddy will accompany the child to the bathroom or the staff adult who has view of the one room bathroom from the classroom door can see the child go in and can make sure they return to the classroom.

During Home Visits the staff will not change diapers or help children with bathroom routines. This is the responsibility of the parent.

K. HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES

First Aid Kit

First aid kits at the church are available in each Wheelchair washroom and the kitchen. Property Committee or designated person shall ensure the contents of the first aid kits are properly stocked monthly. Additional first aid kits ("Kits for Off-Site Events") are stored in the kitchen and will be available for church events taking place off church property. Committee/Ministry leaders involved in such events shall secure a first aid kit for these events and review contents to ensure the kit is properly stocked.

Use Accident Report Forms 6 to report any accidents to the office. Parents will be informed immediately in the case of injury.

HEART LAKE BAPTIST CHURCH PROTECTION POLICY (HLBCPP)

Emergency Fire Procedures and Drills

The Property Committee will establish fire exit procedures, post procedures (see attached map) regarding emergency fire exit procedures. Leaders/staff will be trained during the yearly workshop, educate their group and will practice procedures in the form of a drill every year.

Illness

Children with contagious illnesses will not be admitted by staff in programs or classes (symptoms may include: excessive coughing, visible body fluids such as a continuous runny nose, pinkness and mucous in eyes, fever, vomiting, etc.).

Medication

Staff is not to administer medication. Parents must administer medication if it is required. In special cases (extreme allergies, inhalers, etc.) parents must provide a letter including signed consent and detailed instructions in the event of an emergency.

L. OFF-SITE AND OVERNIGHT EXCURSIONS

All excursions, (whether a trip to the park, retreat, camping or to private homes) will have all staff and adults present who have completed the screening process. Written parental consent (see Form -- 8/8a) for each participant must be obtained for every group off-site and group overnight excursions. Forms must be kept in the ministry leader's possession during trips or events and a photocopy filed in the church office. Ministry leaders will submit the original forms to the Overseer to be filed indefinitely.

Individual contact/one on one outside the church building must occur only in public places and with the prior consent of the minor and parent or guardian.(eg. mentoring times at the coffee shop or visitation at a hospital)

Transportation

Transportation to and from events is primarily the responsibility of the families. During events, drivers will not drop off or pick up minors without the prior written consent of the parent or legal guardian.

In the event that volunteers are required to transport children/youth to events by cars or vans (eg. retreat), the driver must have completed the staff selection/screening process, possess a valid driver's license and vehicle insurance. Everyone must wear seat belts (one person per seat belt) and be in appropriate car seats according to the law.