

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

OFFICE OF THE FIRST PRESIDENCY

47 EAST SOUTH TEMPLE STREET, SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH 84150-1000

February 23, 2006

To: General Authorities and the following leaders in English-speaking areas:
Area Seventies; Stake, Mission, and District Presidents; Bishops and Branch
Presidents

Dear Brethren:

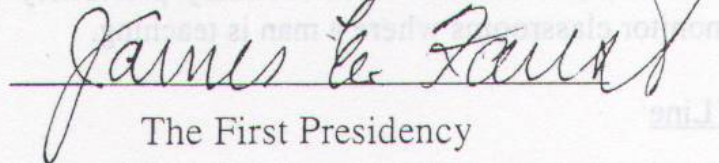
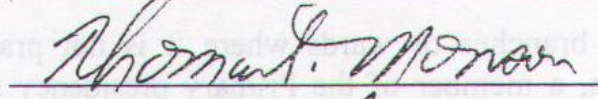
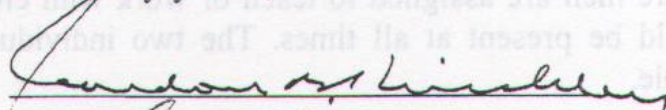
Safeguarding Children and Youth

Our Heavenly Father has entrusted parents, leaders, and teachers to care for and protect the children and youth of the Church. We are grateful for those who faithfully fulfill this responsibility. However, we desire that additional effort be given to ensure that all children and youth who attend Church services and activities are treated with kindness and protected against abuse or mistreatment of any kind.

We ask stake presidencies and bishoprics to counsel with local leaders and teachers on the divine nature of children and to ensure their spiritual and physical safety. Policies to help protect children, youth, and those called to teach them are summarized on the back of this letter.

We pray that the Lord will bless you in your faithful, continued efforts to teach, care for, and protect the children and youth of the Church.

Sincerely yours,



The First Presidency

REAFFIRMING CHURCH POLICIES TO SAFEGUARD CHILDREN AND YOUTH

1. A person who has been found guilty of child abuse should not be called to any position working with children or youth without a review of the membership record and authorization from the First Presidency (see *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1*, 157). Bishops are to submit a Report of Church Disciplinary Action for a member who has been disciplined for the abuse of a child, following which the membership record will be annotated by Church headquarters (see *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1*, 129).
2. Members who moved into a ward should not be called to teach children or youth until their membership records have been received or clearance from the person's previous bishop has been obtained (see *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1*, 37). Also, new converts should be interviewed by the bishop prior to being called to teach children or youth.
3. At least two adults are required to be present at all trips or outings attended by youth or children. Women do not participate in Young Men or Scouting overnight camps. All adult leaders participating in Scouting are to be registered through local Boy Scout councils (see *Church Scouting Handbook*, 4-5) and comply with guidelines in the *Guide to Safe Scouting*.
4. On overnight camps, a child or youth may not stay in the tent of an adult leader unless the adult is his or her parent or guardian (see *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 2*, 278).
5. When staying in a cabin or other overnight facility (other than a tent), at least two adult men should be present with the boys or young men. Similarly, at least two adult women should be present with young women (see *Young Women Camp Manual*, 90).
6. When a member of a bishopric or stake presidency meets with a child, youth, or woman, he should ask a parent or another adult to be in an adjoining room, foyer, or hall. He should avoid circumstances that may be misunderstood (see *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1*, 22).

ADDITIONAL POLICIES FOR PRIMARY CLASSES (INCLUDING NURSERIES), PRIMARY ACTIVITIES (INCLUDING SCOUTING), AND RELIEF SOCIETY NURSERIES

1. Where possible, classroom doors should have a window in them.
2. Where men are assigned to teach or work with children, at least two responsible individuals should be present at all times. The two individuals should include two men or a married couple.
3. In small branches or wards where it is not practical to have at least two teachers in a classroom, a member of the Primary presidency should be assigned to frequently visit and monitor classrooms where a man is teaching.

Help Line

In the United States and Canada, bishops and stake presidents who become aware of physical or sexual abuse involving Church members, or believe that a person may have been abused or is at risk of being abused, should call the Help Line at 1-801-240-1911 or 1-800-453-3860, extension 21911. Outside the United States and Canada, they should call the Area Presidency (see *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1*, 158).