And looking up to heaven, He sighed and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is "Be opened."
Mark 7:34

Volunteer Safety & Compliance Handbook

Child Protection Requirements under California AB 506 & SB 848

Our Commitment

Protecting the children and youth entrusted to our care is a core part of our mission at Hephatha Lutheran Church and School. This handbook sets out the training, background check, and supervision requirements that every employee and volunteer must meet before serving in a role that involves contact with minors—reflecting both California law and our own commitment to a safe environment across every ministry and classroom.

The Two Laws That Apply to Us

Hephatha operates both a church with youth ministries and a private school, so two California laws work together to define our obligations:

- **Assembly Bill 506 (AB 506)** governs "youth service organizations," which include our church youth programs. It requires mandated reporter training and Live Scan fingerprint background checks for administrators, employees, and regular volunteers who work with minors, along with written prevention policies and a two-adult supervision standard. (Business & Professions Code § 18975; in effect since January 1, 2022.)
- **Senate Bill 848 (SB 848)**, the Safe Learning Environments Act, applies to our school. It expands who counts as a "mandated reporter" to include private-school employees, volunteers, contractors, and governing board members, and it adds annual training, professional-boundary policies, and hiring-vetting steps. Its private-school provisions take effect July 1, 2026. (Signed October 2025; amends the Education Code and Penal Code § 11165.7.)

Key Terms

- **Regular Volunteer —** Under AB 506, a person 18 or older who has direct contact with or supervision of children. State law sets the trigger at more than 16 hours per month or 32 hours per year. Hephatha applies a stricter internal standard of more than 8 hours per month, so more of our volunteers are covered than the state minimum requires.
- **Mandated Reporter —** Anyone legally required to report known or reasonably suspected child abuse or neglect to authorities. Under SB 848, this now includes our school's employees, volunteers, contractors, and board members.

- **Live Scan —** A California Department of Justice fingerprint-based criminal background check. Results are tied to Hephatha specifically and are not transferable to or from another organization.

1. Mandated Reporter Training (MRT)

The following roles must complete state-approved child abuse identification and reporting training before beginning service. All roles renew annually and submit proof within six weeks of starting service (SB 848). Those roles with an *asterisk* may complete the shorter and unpaid MRT.

Role	Requirement
Parent drivers (all)*	SB 848
Room parents*	SB 848
Pizza parents*	SB 848
PE parent volunteers*	SB 848
PTF members*	SB 848
Youth Board / Board of Christian Education	AB 506
School Board members	SB 848
Sunday School volunteers	AB 506
VBS volunteers age 18+*	AB 506
Youth group volunteers	AB 506

2. Live Scan Fingerprinting & Background Checks

The following must clear a California DOJ Live Scan fingerprint background check before working with minors. Fingerprinting is a one-time step for Hephatha, but it must be completed here even if the person was screened elsewhere.

Role	Requirement
Coaches	SB 848
Volunteers (church or school), age 18+, with direct contact or supervision with children more than 16 hours per month or 32 hours per year	SB 848 / AB 506
Parents attending overnight camps	SB 848 / AB 506

5. Confidentiality of Board Members

Board members may become privy to confidential information during their term of service. They are expected to maintain the confidentiality of information obtained through Board meetings or discussions with employees and must not disclose it to anyone other than fellow members of the Board, unless authorized or required by law. **This never limits or delays mandated reporting, as suspected abuse or neglect must still be reported immediately through the process above; confidentiality applies to Board discussions, not reportable concerns.**

Confidentiality Agreement

5. Documentation & Records

Hephatha keeps training certificates on file for every covered person and tracks them for renewal, records and monitors Live Scan clearances for subsequent-arrest notifications through our DOJ account, and -for school staff - reviews prior-employer misconduct history and the state misconduct database (once available) before hiring, as required by SB 848.

For Mandated Reporter Training go to https://mandatedreporterca.com/. Press the "Start Now" button in the upper right hand corner. After creating a free account, please select the "Child Abuse Prevention Training for School Personnel (SB 848). To get the free training, make sure that the training shows SB 848 and is 30 minutes, as other training on this site is not free.

A certificate of completion is required for Mandated Reporter Training. Please send electronic certificates to jschmidt@hephatha.net. Printed certificates may be turned in to the church or school office.

6. PV Hours for Training for School Volunteers

Volunteers that complete Mandated Reporter Training may count 30 minutes toward PV hours. An electronic or printed certificate is required.

Volunteers that require Live Scan (fingerprinting) may turn in the receipt for 10 PV hours, or request reimbursement. Live Scan typically costs between $90-$100. Reimbursement and hours will only be granted for volunteers in the positions that require fingerprinting.

7. Supervision of Ministry Activities

To the greatest extent possible, there should be two unrelated mandated reporters present when activities involve contact with, or supervising children. Volunteers should avoid being alone with a child or youth.

8. Restroom Guidelines

When taking children to the bathroom, the volunteer should remain outside the bathroom door. Volunteers should never be alone with a child in a bathroom. If the child is having trouble the parent should be contacted to come help the child.