

Child and Youth Protection Policy

Trinity Lutheran Church and School

Winfield, KS

Trinity Lutheran Church and School desires to be a safe place for all children and adults who attend church and school sponsored activities. Individuals they know and trust sometimes victimize children. The church and school are not immune to such abuse. Incidents of child abuse or neglect cut across racial, social, economic and religious boundaries. Although no organization or individual can ensure complete protection, the Child and Youth Protection Policy reflects Trinity Lutheran's commitment to help protect children from harm. Trinity will not tolerate child abuse or neglect. Your cooperation in this commitment not only reflects your concern about children's safety, but also your willingness to take steps toward halting child abuse and its detrimental effects. For the safety and protection of our children and youth, all volunteer and paid workers are required to comply with the guidelines provided in this policy.

DEFINITION OF CHILD ABUSE

"Child abuse is an injury or pattern of injuries to a child that is non-accidental."

http://www.kansas.gov/kbi/info/info_brochures.shtml

Kansas Statute 21-5602. Abuse of a child. (a) Abuse of a child is knowingly:

- (1) Torturing or cruelly beating any child under the age of 18 years;
 - (2) shaking any child under the age of 18 years which results in great bodily harm to the child; or
 - (3) inflicting cruel and inhuman corporal punishment upon any child under the age of 18 years.
- (b) Abuse of a child is a severity level 5, person felony.
- (c) A person who violates the provisions of this section may also be prosecuted for, convicted of, and punished for any form of battery or homicide.

A guide from the Kansas Children's Service League outlines indicators for abuse and is available in the church office. Downloads are available at the following web site:

<http://www.dcf.ks.gov/services/PPS/Documents/GuidetoReportingAbuseandNeglect.pdf>

WORKER SCREENING

This policy reflects our commitment to provide protective care of all children, youth, volunteers, and paid workers who participate in church and school sponsored activities. Volunteer and paid workers shall be screened in accordance with the following:

1. Any person who has been convicted of a crime against a child or a sexual or violent crime against an adult shall not be allowed to assist with any church or school sponsored activity or program for children or youth.
2. All volunteers working with children and youth must have been members or regular attendees of Trinity for a minimum of six months. Exceptions may be made, at the church and school's sole discretion, especially in the case of school parent/guardian volunteers, who will be supervised by the classroom teacher or the principal.
3. All paid workers shall be screened according to this policy, whether or not they are members of Trinity Lutheran Church.
4. All volunteers and paid workers must do the following before assisting with any church or school sponsored child or youth activities:

- a. Complete an Authorization and Request for Background Check (see attached form) or provide proof of a recent (within the last three years) background check.
 - b. Participate in an interview with a designated board chairperson or committee, if deemed necessary by the church or school, in its sole discretion.
 - c. Attend any orientation and training for such activities.
5. All applications and results of screening shall be kept confidential and shall be retained in a locked file cabinet. Only the pastor, principal, and chairperson of the Safety and Security Committee shall review these files. Files will be shredded after 10 years if the volunteer or paid worker is no longer in a position to be in contact with children or youth.
 6. Applications shall be renewed every three years.

TRAINING

Regular and ongoing training appropriate for the activities involved shall be provided for all volunteer and paid workers who will be working with children and youth.

1. Development and documentation of appropriate training programs is the responsibility of the chairperson of the Safety and Security Committee.
2. All training programs for volunteers and paid workers who will be working with children and youth shall include a review of this Child and Youth Protection Policy.
3. Satisfactory completion of the appropriate training program shall be required before a volunteer or paid worker is permitted to supervise or assist with a church or school sponsored activity involving children and youth.
4. Presentation of a signed certificate showing completion of the appropriate training program shall be made to the chairperson of the Safety and Security Committee.
5. All new members of Trinity Lutheran Church and all parents/guardians of Trinity Lutheran School students shall be given a copy of the Child and Youth Protection Policy.
6. The Child and Youth Protection Policy shall be publicized in the August edition of the Vineyard. Copies of the policy shall be available in the church office and on the church web site.
7. Trinity encourages anyone who was a victim of childhood abuse or neglect to consult with the pastor in order to ensure an appropriate level of recovery for work with children and youth.

SUPERVISION

1. Supervisory responsibility for child and youth activities is vested as follows:
 - a. First, with the appropriate church board (e.g. Board of Education, Board of Youth, etc.);
 - b. Second, with the paid worker or volunteer responsible for the age group involved;
 - c. Third, with the pastor and/or principal.
2. Every attempt shall be made to have an adequate number of trained adults present to supervise all activities involving children and youth. This ideally shall include at least two adults, preferably one male and one female. Supervising adults shall remain at each activity until all children have been dismissed. Early dismissal of participants shall not be allowed, except at the express direction of a parent or guardian.
3. A parent/guardian permission form, available in the church office, shall be required for all off-premises activities involving children through grade 6 and all out-of-town activities involving youth grade 7 and above.
 - a. Parent transport of students through grade 6- see Trinity Lutheran School Parent Handbook/Transportation.
 - b. Youth transportation grade 7 and above- see Trinity Lutheran Church Manual of Duties, Procedures, and Policies III.E.2.d.

4. It is recommended that overnight events attended by children or youth of both genders shall be chaperoned by adults of both genders.
5. Any inappropriate conduct or relationship between an adult and a child or youth shall be dealt with as specified in the "Reporting" section of this policy.

REPORTING

When it is necessary to report suspected child abuse or neglect, the protection of children must be the most important concern. Any person with responsibility for the care of children shall report all cases of child abuse they observe and shall report visible signs of alleged abuse to law enforcement and the Kansas Department of Children and Families. Failure to report could lead to liability on the part of the church and school, the observer, or both.

"The Kansas Code for the Care of Children (K.S.A. 38-1522) requires that suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect **must** be reported by dentists, optometrists, doctors, nurses, psychologists, psychotherapists, teachers, school administrators or other school employees, chief administrative officers of medical care facilities, therapists, counselors, child care service providers, social workers, firefighters, emergency medical services personnel, juvenile intake and assessment workers, and law enforcement officers to the Department of Children and Families and/or local law enforcement."

(<http://www.kansas.gov/kbi/info/docs/pdf/Child%20Abuse%20brochure.pdf>)

1. As soon as possible and within 24 hours, the volunteer or paid worker shall report his or her actions in reporting an incident of abuse to the pastor, principal or appropriate board chairperson who in turn will notify the congregational president.
2. All actions by the volunteer, paid worker, pastor, principal, or board chairperson shall be documented in detail, in writing, including the alleged incident.
3. The Executive Board of Trinity Lutheran Church shall obtain legal counsel.
4. The church's insurance carrier shall be notified of any report of alleged abuse involving a child or youth at a church or school sponsored activity.
5. All situations shall be handled with due respect for people's privacy and confidentiality.
6. Full cooperation shall be given to law enforcement or other governmental agency personnel.

REVISION

This policy shall be reviewed annually in the month of July by the Constitution/Bylaw Committee and Safety and Security Committee. Revisions shall be approved by both committees and the Administrative Council of Trinity Lutheran Church. All revisions shall be reported to the Voters' Assembly and to all persons affected by such revisions.

Approved by: Constitution/Bylaw Committee 8/20/13
Safety and Security Committee 10/01/13
Administrative Council 10/09/13

Addendum: Anyone involved in a church or school activity that involves children or youth shall be required to take a background check. Only those who will be working one-on-one with children and/or without another adult present will be required to complete the video training. Temporary approval can be granted by the pastor or principal with the caveat that the background check and/or training be completed within 10 days. Those who have been licensed by the state of Kansas to be teachers or substitute teachers will be exempt from this requirement.

Approved by: Administrative Council 6/8/22; Constitution/Bylaw Committee 7/8/22
Revisions approved by Executive Board 8/9/2023; Constitution/Bylaw Committee 8/11/2023