

POLICIES

I. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Recognizing the importance of ensuring a safe environment to protect children from abuse, Trinity Lutheran Church authorizes, requires and supports our Keeping Kids Safe program to provide an effective system to reduce the risk of abuse, deter perpetrators through a screening process and respond appropriately if an incident occurs.

II. INSTRUCTIONS

A. All employees, including program and rostered staff, and all volunteers engaging in the care, supervision, teaching, escorting, and transporting of children under the age of 18 shall be educated and screened in accordance with the Keeping Kids Safe program of Trinity Lutheran Church. All support staff shall be required to attend in-house training every three years and review and sign the **Covenant of the Guidelines for Working with Children and Youth** (Appendix 20) annually as part of their supervisor's review. This requirement includes all chartered/sponsored scouting organizations. There shall be no exceptions to this policy.

B. Keeping Kids Safe program professional staff requirements shall include:

1. Participation no less than once every three years in a recognized professional educational seminar or online training module describing legal definitions of abuse, indications of abuse, reporting, response to allegations, appropriate expressions of affection, and description and purpose of the screening process. Participants must include all Trinity Preschool Playgroup Staff, and all other Trinity rostered and program staff who work directly with those under age 18.

2. Completion of Criminal Background check upon hiring and once every 60 months thereafter including:

- PA State Police Criminal History Record Information (SP4-164)
- Child Abuse History Clearance Form (CY-113)
- Federal Criminal History Background Check (with submission of fingerprints)

3. Read and sign the **Covenant of the Guidelines for Working with Children and Youth** (Appendix 20) annually as part of supervisor's review.

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- C. Keeping Kids Safe Volunteers over age 18 with regular supervision of children and youth including but not limited to Sunday Church School Teachers, Vacation Bible School leaders, Nursery Care Providers, Youth Group Advisors, Youth Group chaperones and Preschool teachers will be subject to an approval process which includes in this order:
1. Interview with Director of Faith Formation
  2. Completion of the **Keeping Kids Safe Volunteers Information Form** (Appendix 21) including affirmation in writing that he or she is not disqualified from employment or service related to working with children {pursuant to 6344(C)} or “has not been convicted of an offense similar in nature to those crimes listed in subsection (C) under the laws or former laws” of any other jurisdiction.
  3. Completion of criminal background checks (fees to be paid by Trinity Lutheran Church). It is understood that copies of previous reports may not be used in place of reports requested directly by Trinity Lutheran Church.
    - PA State Police Criminal History Record Information (SP4-164)
    - Child Abuse History Clearance Form (CY-113)
    - Federal Criminal History Background Check (with submission of fingerprints) if the volunteer has not been a continuous resident of PA for the previous 10 years.
  4. Participation in an educational session either online or in person that covers reasons for this screening process, legal definitions of abuse, indicators of abuse, reporting as well as response to allegations, and appropriate expressions of affections.
  5. Upon successful completion of the requirements, the candidate shall be given the **Covenant of the Guidelines for Workers with Children and Youth** (Appendix A-20) to review and sign. The Directors will then coordinate the placement of the volunteer in a position working with children or youth.
  6. All approved volunteers will be added to the Roster of Keeping Kids Safe Volunteers and all pertinent paperwork shall be collected by the Director of Faith Formation and secured in the Keeping Kids Safe File located in the director’s office.

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7. All Keeping Kids Safe Volunteers shall participate in periodic education sessions, and re-take the training at least once every three years.
8. All Keeping Kids Safe Volunteers will review and re-sign the **Covenant of the Guidelines for Workers with Children and Youth** (Appendix A-20) annually.

D. As needed or short-term volunteers

1. Short-Term volunteers (i.e. last minute parent classroom helpers, or last-minute youth volunteers) may assist a KKS SV for no more than three hours or one event without going through the process to become a Keeping Kids Safe Volunteer.

E. Volunteers under age 18

1. Assistance by individuals under age 18 shall be allowed only after the individual has participated in an educational session that reviews the **Covenant of the Guidelines for Workers with Children and Youth** (Appendix A-20). Volunteers under age 18 are not required by law to obtain criminal background checks.

F. Volunteers new to Trinity Lutheran Church or Requiring Further Screening

1. Assistance by individuals with less than six months active participation in the life of Trinity Lutheran Church may be subject to additional screening and shall be utilized only as directed by the Director of Faith Formation and/or the applicable professional staff member.
2. Individuals for whom the staff interview raises concerns will be subject to additional screening. This additional screening will include:
  - a. Completion of the **Keeping Kids Safe Volunteer Information Form**
  - b. Review and evaluation of the following by no less than three members of the professional staff:
    - (1) Completed **Keeping Kids Safe Volunteer Information Form** (Appendix A-20)
    - (2) Reports from communication with personal references

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(3) Criminal Background Check Report

- c. A unanimous affirmative decision of the aforementioned will be required to approve service. All decisions are subject to review by the Lead Pastor.
3. Upon receipt of a favorable decision, the candidate shall be required to participate in the training and will be given the **Covenant of the Guidelines for Working with Children and Youth** (Appendix A-20) to sign. The Director will then coordinate the placement of the volunteer in a position working with children.
4. All requirements listed in section C, 3-6 will also apply to these volunteers.

III. INCIDENT REPORTING AND RESPONSE

- A. According to Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, a **mandatory reporter** is defined as “An individual paid or unpaid, who, on the basis of the individual’s role as an integral part of a regularly scheduled program, activity, or service, accepts responsibility for a child”. In addition it includes “Clergyman, priest, rabbi, minister, Christian science practitioner, religious healer or spiritual leader of any regularly established church or other religious organization”. Therefore, all those working directly with children in their role at Trinity are considered **mandatory reporters**.
- B. If a volunteer, staff member, or employee suspects abuse of a child or suspects an adult offender within the congregation, Pennsylvania state law requires the individual to contact the Pa Department of Welfare **CHILDLINE at 800-932-0313**. The law states that: “Persons who, in the course of their employment, occupation or practice of their profession, come into contact with children shall report in accordance with 23 Pa. C. S. A. 6311 (relating or reporting procedure) when they have reasonable cause to suspect on the basis of their medical, professional or other training experience, that a child coming before them in their professional or official capacity is an abused child.”
- C. Additionally, Trinity Lutheran Church requires the individual to notify their director supervisor, Lead Pastor, Director of Faith Formation or Congregation Council President immediately. The direct supervisor, Lead Pastor, Director Faith Formation or Congregational Council President may not dissuade the individual or make an independent determination of whether to report.

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- D. The mandated reporter, however, may request that the direct supervisor be present when the report to **CHILDLINE** is made.
- E. Within 48 hours of making the report to **CHILDLINE**, a written report of suspected child abuse shall be made to the county children and youth agency where the abuse occurred. The Lead Pastor, Director Faith Formation or in his/her absence, the Congregational President shall engage the reporter, as needed, in preparing the CY-47 form (Appendix 20a) and shall supply the reporter with a copy of the completed form as filed. If the suspected abuse occurred in Cumberland county, the Office of Child Protective Services at 16 W. High St., Suite 200, Carlisle, PA 17013 is the agency to contact (717-240-6120)
- F. The Lead Pastor shall also notify the ELCA Synod Office and supply a copy of form CY-47 to the Synod Office. The Synod Office may provide advice and consultation to the Lead Pastor and mandated reporter. The Lead Pastor shall also provide pertinent substantive information as regards the progress of a reported filing as appropriate.
- G. All parties with knowledge of the report must maintain utmost confidentiality about the incident and exercise proper judgment, sensitivity, and compassion with both victim(s) and perpetrator(s).
- H. Any/all media contacts to Trinity Lutheran Church regarding an incident shall be referred to the synod office.

This reporting policy and protocol shall be strictly followed. Per PA statute, the penalty for failure to report suspected child abuse is a third-degree misdemeanor for the first violation and a second-degree misdemeanor for a second or subsequent violation.

*PLEASE NOTE:*

*This policy shall come into compliance with any such changes in statute and shall be reviewed, updated, and edited by the Administration and Personnel Committee for Congregational Council ratification within 60 days of any statutory enactment.*

*The Administration and Personnel Committee shall maintain a pro-active stance as regards the statutory update*

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH  
CAMP HILL, PENNSYLVANIA

Number 5.70

Subject Keeping Kids Safe

Effective Date 10/11/22

Committee Administration and Personnel

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*resulting from the current bills, beginning every 90 days after the adoption of this policy by Congregational Council and shall take action to amend this policy as appropriate.*