

YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY
Christ the King Lutheran Church
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Statement of Policy

It is the policy of Christ the King Lutheran Church (CTK) to establish Youth Protection Guidelines for all church programs and ministries to guard against all forms of child abuse. In all programs and ministries, we seek to provide an environment that reflects the Christian characteristics of love and respect.

Applicability

This policy applies to all church paid staff and volunteers who work with our Christ the King Lutheran Church's youth program, or its related ministries.

Definitions

Child is defined as a person under the age of 18.

By definition, child abuse is harm to a person under the age of 18 that occurs immediately or through accumulated effects over a period of time. This policy is directed at three forms of child abuse caused by commission of acts against a child – emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse.

Emotional abuse is defined for this policy as any language directed toward a child by an adult that is intended to cause emotional anxiety, pain or other severe emotional disturbance.

Physical abuse is defined for this policy as the bodily injury of the child through physical contact or mistreatment.

Sexual abuse is defined for this policy as any sexual activity between a child and an adult or between children where there is an unusual distribution of power such as when one is significantly older or larger.

Guidelines

Registration. Paid staff, as well as volunteers working in the youth program shall undergo a background check. Current volunteers that are required to have a background check as a prerequisite for their current employment will verify their employment status

Two-deep leadership. Two adult leaders (one male and one female) are required for all scheduled activities, trips, retreats or outings and when driving youth home. Both leaders must have undergone a background check.

Posting on social media. CTK Staff and Volunteers will not post images of youth to their personal social media pages. CTK staff will only post pictures of youth to our social media pages once the church has a signed photo release on file.

Respect for privacy. Adult leaders (paid staff and volunteers) must respect the privacy of children such as going to the bathroom and changing clothes. They must also protect their own privacy in similar situations.

Appropriate attire. Proper clothing for activities is required.

Constructive discipline. Discipline should be constructive and reflect the church's underlying values. Corporal punishment is never permitted.

Communication with Parents. Parents will be notified anytime a youth displays signs of or talks about anything related to self-harm, suicide or imminent danger to others. All other items communicated to the youth staff and pastor will be held in confidence. Parents may request other subjects be communicated with them, approval of those request will be at the discretion of youth staff and pastors, and will further be communicated to the youth.

Adherence to these policies not only enhances the protection of our membership, but also ensures that the basic values of our church are preserved.

Training

CTK understands that preventive education and training are required to protect youth. The following methods will be implemented to educate and train adults involved with youth.

- Review and understanding of this policy.
- View Church Mutual's Safety Tips on a Sensitive Subject; Child Sexual Abuse and the accompanying video.

Reporting Requirements

Any adult or child must be ready to safeguard and protect the trust and safety of children. Anyone who has "reason to believe" or evidence that a child is a victim of abuse or neglect has a duty to report. This duty to report is not limited to events or activities at CTK or under our supervision. A failure to report is a criminal offense and potentially subject to civil liability.

Anytime you observe or suspect child abuse, you should report it immediately to the Pastor and the Coordinator of Youth Ministry.

CTK understands that appropriate government agencies must respond and investigate reports of abuse/neglect of a child to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS). CTK will at all times fully cooperate with such governmental agencies and in no way attempt to interfere in or obstruct such agencies from their investigations.

If anyone is unsure whether an incident should be reported, they should feel free to discuss the circumstances with the Pastor or Coordinator of Youth Ministry. Additionally, CTK asks that if an incident is reported to the DFPS, that the Pastor and the Coordinator of Youth Ministry be notified of the situation. If the allegation concerns the Pastor, the Coordinator of Youth Ministry or the Assistant Coordinator of Youth Ministry the Bishop of the Northern Texas - Northern Louisiana Synod and the MLT President shall be notified immediately.

Response

- The Ministry Leadership Team or designated committee will review all information obtained during the investigation, and when deemed necessary, will seek legal counsel to assist in the investigation and resolution.
- Christ the King Lutheran Church will not engage in or tolerate retaliation against any clergy person, lay employee, or volunteer for making a good faith claim of misconduct or harassment or providing information relating to such complaints during an investigation.

Communication of Policy

This Policy shall be given to and reviewed with the Congregation's clergy, employees and all volunteers that engage with children in church activities to ensure their understanding and support of this policy. This review shall take place on a regular basis. Their signature below indicates that the individual has reviewed, understands and supports this policy statement. In addition, the Congregation shall periodically publicize this policy to all its members and volunteers through church bulletins and other appropriate forms of communication.