



CHRIST THE SERVANT  
LUTHERAN CHURCH

*Children, Youth, and  
Vulnerable Adults  
Safety Policy*

*Committed to the Safety of all God's Children*



## Statement of Intent

The members and staff of Christ the Servant Lutheran Church (“Christ the Servant” throughout this document) are committed to maintaining a safe environment in which children, youth and vulnerable adults participating in educational or recreational programs both on and off the Christ the Servant campus are protected from physical, emotional and/or sexual abuse/assault and in which church staff, teachers and volunteers are protected from false allegations of abuse/assault.

## Church Personnel fall into one of two categories:

For the purposes of this guideline, the following are included in the definition of ***Church Personnel Who Regularly Work With and Around Children or Youth:***

1. All clergy whether stipendiary, non-stipendiary, who are engaged in ministry or service to the church.
2. All persons who supervise or assist with supervising children or youth in ministries, programs or activities more often than occasionally.
3. All persons who provide transportation to children or youth without other adults in the vehicle more than occasionally.

For the purposes of this guideline, the following are included in the definition of ***Church Personnel Who Occasionally Work With and Around Children or Youth:***

1. Sunday School Teachers.
2. All paid or volunteer Church Personnel whose work regularly takes them throughout the facility or grounds or who have keys giving them access to the buildings on the grounds.
3. All persons who supervise or assist with supervising children or youth in ministries, programs or activities infrequently, generally no more than three times a year or for one program or activity during a year that lasts less than a month.
4. All persons who provide transportation to children or youth without other adults in the vehicle infrequently, generally no more than three times a year. (i.e. driving to camp, synod gatherings, service projects, etc.)
5. All persons who work or assist in the nursery four or fewer times a year, whether on an emergency basis or otherwise.
6. Adults who participate in overnight activities with children or youth once or twice a year.



## CHRIST THE SERVANT LUTHERAN CHURCH

*Chosen by God to serve all through Christ, Jesus*

### Types of Abuse

**Child Neglect:** Omission of the child's basic needs, physical, environmental, emotional and nutritional, that are necessary for a child's well-being, or the failure to protect a child or youth from harm.

**Emotional Abuse:** Verbal or nonverbal violence toward a child that gives the child the message that the child is "not good" and never will be.

Verbal abuse is a very common malady that attacks every human being at some point in their lives; some more than others. It can be a very devastating form of abuse when the person experiences the attacks frequently.

Emotional abuse is mental or emotional injury to a child or youth that results in an observable and/or material impairment in the child or youth's growth, development or psychological functioning.

**Physical Abuse:** Physical violence toward a child. Physical abuse is non-accidental injury, which is intentionally inflicted upon a child or youth. Often it is the transference of adult anger.

**Sexual Abuse or Sexual Molestation:** Any sexual contact with a child by an adult or an older youth. These acts may range from touching of the penis, vagina, buttocks, or breast/chest area to sexual intercourse. This includes any activity which is meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of the adult, child or youth.

Sexual abuse perpetrated by another child or youth is any contact or activity of a sexual nature that occurs between a child or youth and another child or youth when there is no consent, when consent is not possible, or when one child or youth has power over the other child or youth. This includes any activity which is meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of any of the children or youth.

**Drug & Alcohol Abuse:** There is an increase in the use of alcohol among junior and senior high school students. Children or youth that show up at church under the influence of alcohol or drugs, who bring these substances with them on church retreats, camp or other activities or those who are reported by peers to be intoxicated may need help to stop dangerous behavior.

**Economic Exploitation:** Economic exploitation is the deliberate use of a child or youth for money or power. This includes forcing a child to work, using someone against their will or using another person's labor without offering them adequate compensation.

**Bullying:** Bullying happens when someone hurts or scares another person on purpose. Usually, bullying happens over and over. Bullying also can happen on-line or electronically. Cyber bullying is when children or teens bully each other using the Internet, mobile phones or other cyber technology. Unfortunately, not everyone takes bullying seriously, including adults.



## CHRIST THE SERVANT LUTHERAN CHURCH

*Chosen by God to serve all through Christ, Jesus*

### **Code of Conduct of Church Personnel**

- Church Personnel understand that the church will not tolerate abuse of children and youth and agree to comply in spirit and in action with this position.
- Church Personnel agree to not physically, sexually or emotionally abuse or neglect a child or youth.
- Church Personnel will respond to children and youth with respect, consideration and equal treatment, regardless of sex, race, religion, sexual orientation, culture or socioeconomic status. Church Personnel should serve as a positive role model for children and youth by maintaining an attitude of respect, patience, and maturity. They should avoid even the appearance of favoritism or impropriety.
- Church Personnel agree to comply with the congregation's local policies for general conduct with children and youth
- In the event that Church Personnel observe any inappropriate behaviors or possible policy violations with children or youth, church personnel agree to report their observations to the church leadership.
- All Church Personnel acknowledge their obligation and responsibility to protect children and youth and understand there may be legal requirements to report known or suspected abuse of children or youth to appropriate church leaders and state authorities in accordance with these policies.



## Screening and Selection

### **Any and all Church Personnel who Regularly Work With or Around Children or Youth shall be screened and selected utilizing:**

1. A standard application completed by the applicant that includes an authorization for the release of information to conduct background checks and the code of behavior.
2. Criminal records check in any state where the applicant has resided during the past seven (7) years, and other states, if any, as determined by the church. This check is to be updated every 5 years
3. Sexual offender registry check in any state where the applicant has resided during the past seven (7) years. This check is to be updated every 5 years.
4. Individual interview with the applicant conducted by appropriate Church Personnel based on the purpose of the position.
5. Reference checks of persons outside of the congregation or organization who know the applicant, preferably who know how the applicant works with children.
6. Driving or Motor Vehicle records check if the person may be transporting children or youth.

### **Any and all Church Personnel who Occasionally Work With or Around Children or Youth should be screened and selected utilizing:**

1. A standard application completed by the applicant that includes an acknowledgement for the release of information to conduct background checks and the code of behavior.
2. Individual interview with the applicant.
3. At least one Reference Check of a person or persons outside of the congregation who knows the applicant, preferably who know how the applicant interacts with children.
4. Driving or Motor Vehicle records check if the person will be transporting children or youth.



# CHRIST THE SERVANT LUTHERAN CHURCH

*Chosen by God to serve all through Christ, Jesus*

## **Procedures for the Screening and Hiring of Teachers, Staff, and Volunteers**

1. All compensated staff and teachers of Christ the Servant Lutheran Church shall complete the Employee Application and successfully pass background checks.
2. Uncompensated volunteer Providers for programs sponsored by Christ the Servant when Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults are entrusted to the care of adults shall complete the Volunteer Application and successfully pass background checks.
3. The confidential personnel files of all compensated staff and teachers shall include the completed employment/volunteer application and documentation they have successfully passed the background checks.
4. Confidentiality of the completed and signed forms utilized to implement this policy shall be maintained by limiting the access to these filed forms to the Senior Pastor and/or his designee.
5. All Volunteers who work with Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults, even in a limited capacity of only a few hours per year, are required to be active members of Christ the Servant for a minimum of six months  
  
or be parents of children enrolled in the Christ the Servant Sunday School Program or other church sponsored programs and must complete and sign the Volunteer Application and successfully pass the background checks. Prior to the 6-month anniversary these individuals may attend activities as a visitor.
6. Adults who have been convicted of either sexual, emotional or physical abuse or assault are not permitted to be volunteer Providers for Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults.
7. Background checks must be renewed every two years. A search of the Texas Sex Offender Registry will be conducted annually for all Providers.
8. Other organizations that use Christ the Servant facilities for programs for Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults must either agree to abide by this policy or operate under a compatible policy issued by that organization. The similar procedures of that organization must be approved by the Christ the Servant Senior Pastor or his designee.



## CHRIST THE SERVANT LUTHERAN CHURCH

*Chosen by God to serve all through Christ, Jesus*

# **Procedures for Reporting Incidents of Abuse/Assault of Children, Youth, or Vulnerable Adults**

1. Texas law requires that any person suspecting that a child has been abused or neglected must immediately make a report. If there is an emergency, call 911 and then call the DFPS Texas Abuse Hotline at 1-800-252-5400. Then report to the Christ the Servant staff person directly responsible for the area of ministry or education where the incident occurred and/or to a pastor. A staff person and/or pastor shall also make a report or verify the making of the report.
2. Questionable or inappropriate behavior, when observed, shall be reported to the Christ the Servant staff person directly responsible for the area of ministry or education, as such conduct can precede abuse/assault, even though the observed act itself is not.
3. All adult members of Christ the Servant staff and other adults participating in programs on the property of Christ the Servant are encouraged to be sensitive to the potential for abuse/assault of Children, Youth or other Vulnerable Adults. They shall be encouraged not to hesitate to caution others that activities they observe are, or may appear to be, inappropriate.
4. Organizations that use Christ the Servant facilities that have reporting procedures of their own shall follow those established reporting practices. In addition to following their notification procedures, the organization that uses Christ the Servant facilities shall also notify Christ the Servant Senior Pastor or designee as soon as possible (and within 24 hours) about any incident or suspected incident involving any person affiliated with that arm of the organization that uses Christ the Servant facilities.
5. Any report involving a pastor or other rostered leader of the Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod, ELCA shall also be made to Synod Office at (940) 241-2099.



## CHRIST THE SERVANT LUTHERAN CHURCH

*Chosen by God to serve all through Christ, Jesus*

# **Procedures for Responding to Allegations of Abuse/Assault of Children, Youth, or Vulnerable Adults**

1. All the facts and circumstances of an incident shall be documented. Concurrently with the notification to the Texas Department of Family & Protective Services (DFPS), (refer to reporting procedures) the Senior Pastor and designee shall be notified of the incident/reasonably suspected incident of abuse/assault.
2. The Senior Pastor or designee shall be responsible for first securing the safety of the potential victim in cases where DFPS is not responsible for the potential victim, for immediate notification of parents/ guardian of the potential victim and for notification of the person(s) accused of the abuse/assault. The safety of the potential victim must be safeguarded before the person(s) accused of abuse/assault.
3. Investigations shall be carried out by DFPS and/or law enforcement and not by church personnel.
4. Persons accused shall be immediately relieved of further responsibilities involving direct contact with Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults until the investigation is completed and the allegations are cleared or charges are formally brought against the accused. If charges are made, the Personnel Committee of Christ the Servant will consult with the accused regarding future responsibilities.
5. Incidents/reasonable suspected incidents shall be reported to church legal counsel, if any, and to the liability insurer for the church by the Senior Pastor or the Director of Administration.
6. All steps taken in the course of handling the incident or report shall be documented by all involved parties and maintained with other secure files.
7. All parties involved in the incident/reasonably suspected incident, including the accuser, the accused and the victim, shall be treated with dignity, support and Christian love in accordance with the mission and principles of Christ the Servant. Confidentiality of all persons involved shall be safeguarded to the extent possible.
8. The Senior Pastor or designee shall be the sole spokesperson for the church insofar as media inquiries are concerned. Confidentiality of all persons involved shall be safeguarded to the extent possible.





## CHRIST THE SERVANT LUTHERAN CHURCH

*Chosen by God to serve all through Christ, Jesus*

### **Training and Supervision Procedures**

1. It shall be the responsibility of the Christ the Servant staff member accountable for any Christ the Servant program that involves Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults to insure that appropriate practices are implemented within those programs and activities to reduce the risk of abuse/assault. The specific circumstances of each program shall be considered in the development of those program-specific practices.
2. An education program on abuse/assault issues involving Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults shall be offered at least every two years to all staff and volunteer Providers at Christ the Servant addressing these goals: Protection of Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults in Christ the Servant programs and activities Protection of Providers from exposure to “high-risk” situations and false accusations Awareness of the symptoms of abuse/assault Understanding of the reporting procedures and the procedures for responding to incidents/reasonably suspected incidents of abuse/assault Demonstration of appropriate/expected communication between people and behavior styles that foster healthy relationships.
3. This educational program is available to all adult members of Christ the Servant and is required training for each new compensated staff or teachers. Their immediate supervisor or, for volunteers, the staff member in charge of the volunteer’s area of interest is responsible for insuring completion of training. Each rostered person on the Christ the Servant staff shall be asked to sign an acknowledgement that she or he has received and read a copy of the “Sexual Misconduct Policies and Procedures for Rostered Leaders” issued by the Northern Texas-Southern Louisiana ELCA. This acknowledgement will be kept in their employment file.
4. To the extent practical, Providers shall observe the “two-adult /open door” rule at all times, which requires an adult working with children, youth or vulnerable adults, to be accompanied by an another adult, and to provide visual access to the room. This requires that doors without windows must always be left slightly ajar when conducting programs.
5. To the extent practical, Providers shall have no one-on-one contact with Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults, without notification of one of pastoral staff and prior parental approval.



## CHRIST THE SERVANT LUTHERAN CHURCH

*Chosen by God to serve all through Christ, Jesus*

### **Training and Supervision Procedures**

6. Where practical, the “two-adult” rule applies to vehicles used to transport youth to and from youth activities that are not conducted on the property of Christ the Servant Lutheran Church. In those situations where two adults are not present in each vehicle, in no case shall only one youth be present in the same vehicle (to prevent a “one-adult/one youth alone” situation). Also, solo adult drivers must establish a “caravan” with at least one other driver with the understanding that the two or more vehicles are always within eyesight of each other. (This is intended to prevent a solo adult from getting “lost” or placed in a “high-risk” situation during transit to or from a youth activity.)
7. All Providers for any overnight church activity involving Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults must be approved in advance by the pastoral or program staff accountable for that program. At least one Level 1 Provider shall participate. Males and females shall be segregated during sleeping times. If it is necessary for adults to share sleeping accommodations with Children or Youth, a minimum of two adults shall sleep in those areas. Overnight events require a ratio of one adult per ten Children or Youth, with a minimum of two adults.
8. Written parental permission, including a signed Medical Liability Release form and emergency contacts, shall be required prior to taking Children or Youth on any off campus trip or overnight stay on campus.
9. A parent or guardian is responsible for insuring that his/her child is not left alone in an unsupervised area. Drop-off and pick-up of children shall only be by the parent or guardian unless written, signed notification is provided for other arrangements.
10. The compensated church staff member directly responsible for campus programs shall make recommendations to the property manager and/or church administration committee for facility modifications that could further reduce the risk of abuse/assault occurring on the church campus.
11. Whenever nursery services are provided by the church, Providers shall follow the rules and guidelines that have been established for the nursery.
12. Possession or use of weapons or other dangerous items is prohibited by any Provider or participant, regardless of it being otherwise lawful.
13. Entities of other organizations that use Christ the Servant Lutheran Church facilities must either agree to abide by this policy or operate under similar training and supervision procedures issued by that organization. The similar procedures of that organization must be submitted to Christ the Servant Lutheran Church Senior Pastor.



## CHRIST THE SERVANT LUTHERAN CHURCH

*Chosen by God to serve all through Christ, Jesus*

### **Mandated Reporters**

Any person who has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is being abused or neglected is required to report this information to the DFPS Texas Abuse Hotline at 1-800-252-5400. Those required to report include professionals, relatives or any other person in the community, without exception.

### **Additional Policies**

During any activity that involves Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults, building access should be limited to those entrances that have a Provider monitoring such entrance. This would include events such as Vacation Bible School (VBS), day camps, youth retreats and “lock-ins”,

During normal operating hours, all visitors (including church members) are asked to report in at the main office.

No Provider may share, post, or otherwise distribute photos, comments or otherwise communicate any images or sound of; through social media, email or any other form of electronic communication any Child, Youth or Vulnerable Adult without express written consent of the individual or their parent/guardian and in consultation with a staff member.

CTSLC will follow all federal, state, and local guidance during times of pandemic, war, natural or man-made disasters.