



Christ the King
Lutheran Church

10550 Georgetown Pike
Great Falls, VA 22066

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Policy Statement and Purpose

As a caring Christian community, we at Christ the King Lutheran Church are committed to providing a safe and nurturing environment for all children and for all those working with children involved in the congregational life of Christ the King Lutheran Church. The intention of this policy is to protect children from child abuse and to ensure that those working with children are not subjected to false or unwarranted charges of child abuse.

Additionally, organizations affiliated with Christ the King Lutheran Church (e.g. Christ the King Lutheran Church's Mother's Day Out Program) shall provide a safe and nurturing environment for children and those working with children.

Definitions

For purposes of this policy, the following definitions shall apply:

- **Affiliated organization** means a group, association, or entity that is either chartered by or sponsored by Christ the King Lutheran Church and that regularly utilizes Christ the King Lutheran Church's facilities.
- **Child** means any individual who is considered to be a minor under the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia, including an individual who is legally incapacitated.
- **Child abuse** includes the following:
 - (1) The actual infliction, the threat to inflict or create, or the permitting of another to inflict or threaten to inflict or create a physical or mental injury upon a child, by other than accidental means, or the creation of a substantial risk of death, disfigurement, or impairment of bodily or mental function.
 - (2) The refusal to provide care necessary to the health of a child, or the abandonment of a child, in one's care.
 - (3) The commission or permitting of any act of sexual exploitation or any sexual act upon a child.
- **Employee** means an individual who is hired or called to work for Christ the King Lutheran Church for salary or wages.
- **Supervision** includes direct observation, control, and visual monitoring of activities.
- **Volunteer** means a congregation member who provides services to Christ the King Lutheran Church without monetary remuneration.



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Standards of Conduct

- No employee or volunteer shall engage in any act of child abuse.
- No employee or volunteer shall touch, interact with, or otherwise communicate with a child in any way that is intended to be sexually stimulating, emotionally demeaning, or exploitative.
- Common expressions of affection and affirmation (including hugs and pats on the back) or physical care (including diaper changes and first aid) are appropriate in this and any other community of caring Christians. Care must be taken, however, that physical expressions of affection are not excessive or imposed on another individual.
- Employees and volunteers who work with children are tasked with guarding the physical and emotional safety of those in their care and with being alert for signs of each child's well being.
- No employee or volunteer shall use corporal punishment on a child during any program or activity conducted by Christ the King Lutheran Church.
- For special programs, such as vacation bible school, that involve the support of non-members, an exception to policy can be made by the council representative responsible for that program to relax the requirement for volunteers to be congregation members; however, those persons must receive child protection training, sign the child protection covenant, and should be under the supervision of a congregation member.
- To the maximum extent practicable, there shall be visual access into each room in which activities with children are being conducted.
- To the maximum extent practicable, employees and volunteers who work with children shall work in unrelated pairs, with two or more adults present with children at all activities.
- If an unaccompanied employee or volunteer meets with a single child to conduct a private discussion, that meeting shall be held at Christ the King Lutheran Church when the church is open for scheduled group activities or shall be held in a public place. In no case shall an unaccompanied employee or volunteer meet with a single child at Christ the King Lutheran Church unless there is at least one other employee or member volunteer in the building who is aware that the private meeting is being held and the location of that meeting, although the identity of the child may remain confidential.
- With respect to any church-sponsored activity for which Christ the King Lutheran Church arranges transportation, one employee or volunteer may transport children as long as there are two or more children in the vehicle. Children will be picked up and dropped off as a group at Christ the King Lutheran Church or at other designated, central locations. Exceptions to this clause may be made in the case of medical or family emergencies or with permission of a parent or guardian and with acknowledgement of responsibility by an employee or volunteer. (Privately arranged transportation is not addressed by this clause.)



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Allegations of Child Abuse

- Any individual who has a reasonable suspicion of child abuse shall promptly report the suspicion to the pastor, associate pastor, or a Council member
- The pastor, associate pastor, or an executive committee member, shall ensure that any credible allegation of child abuse is reported to the proper authorities in accordance with applicable Commonwealth and local laws, and the Department of Social Services regulations. In Northern Virginia, that report is to be made to the Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline (1-800-552-7096) or to Child Protective Services (703-324-7400) not later than 72 hours after the suspicion is reported. By law, reports of child abuse are strictly confidential.
- The pastor, associate pastor, or an executive committee member, shall notify the Synod Office if an allegation is raised against an ordained minister, an employee or member of Christ the King Lutheran Church. This person shall request guidance on the procedure to be followed in processing any allegation and, if necessary, for obtaining a moderator for the Council.
- In each case of alleged child abuse, the pastor, associate pastor, or an executive committee member shall contact and involve Christ the King Lutheran Church's liability carrier and verify that Child Protective Services has been notified and that the proper written documentation of the allegations and proceedings is maintained.
- The pastor, associate pastor, or an executive committee member, shall be responsible for maintaining contact with the police and with the family of each alleged victim and for determining further actions in consultation with the Council. Additionally, this person shall speak on behalf of the Council in the event of an allegation that requires speaking to the congregation and/or the community.
- Christ the King Lutheran Church will cooperate fully with government authorities in the investigation of any suspicion of child abuse.

Implementation

- A copy of this policy and the Child Protection Covenant shall be provided to each employee and to each volunteer participating in any program or activity involving children.
- Each employee shall submit to Christ the King Lutheran Church a signed copy of the Child Protection Covenant and shall submit to a background check as a condition of employment.
- Each applicant for employment shall submit to Christ the King Lutheran Church a signed copy of the Child Protection Covenant as part of his or her application for employment and shall be willing to submit to a background check as a condition of employment.
- An individual who seeks to be a volunteer in any program or activity involving children shall review the Child Protection Policy and submit to Christ the King Lutheran Church a signed copy of the Child Protection Covenant and shall be willing to submit to a background check. An applicant who is a minor shall have the Child Protection Covenant co-signed by a parent or guardian.
- Organizations affiliated with Christ the King Lutheran Church shall either show proof of a comparable child protection policy in place or agree to abide by Christ the King's Child Protection Policy.



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Administration

- The council vice president, in coordination with the learning, worship and music, and youth committees shall administer this policy.
- All documentation associated with this policy (including applications, background checks, and documentation associated with allegations of child abuse or misconduct) shall be strictly confidential and shall be kept secure by church administrator.
- The staff relations committee shall be responsible for the conduct of appropriate clearances on employees and applicants for employment. The clearance process shall allow applicants the opportunity to correct or respond to information obtained from a background check. For purposes of the initial implementation of this policy, the staff relations committee shall determine the manner in which initial clearances shall be conducted.
- Council committees with activities involving children and volunteers shall be responsible for training volunteers; ensuring volunteers sign the Child Protection Covenant, compliance with this policy.

Member Awareness

- The congregation shall be informed of this policy upon its adoption by the Council and shall be reminded of this policy annually with an announcement during worship on National Children's Sabbath, the third Sunday in October.
- This policy and the Child Protection Covenant shall be posted on the Internet website of Christ the King Lutheran Church.
- This policy and the Child Protection Covenant shall be published annually in the *King's Herald* newsletter or the annual report of the congregation.
- A copy of this policy and the Child Protection Covenant shall be provided to each participant in each new member class.
- Each employee and each volunteer who works with children shall be requested to review this policy not less than annually.
- A review of this policy shall be included in
 - (1) An annual Sunday school teacher training session;
 - (2) Training sessions for childcare, music, youth, or worship employees and volunteers;
and
 - (3) A training session for new Council members.
- A copy of this policy shall be kept in the church office at Christ the King Lutheran Church.



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CHILD PROTECTION COVENANT

I ACCEPT the responsibility to nurture the Christian faith and well-being of the children of Christ the King Lutheran Church and to care for them as Christ cares for me. “I...will tend the flock of God that is in my charge, exercising the oversight...willing, as God would have me do it...”.

I Peter 5: 2

I AGREE to submit to the authority of the Council of Christ the King Lutheran Church in all matters related to child protection.

I HAVE READ and **UNDERSTAND** and **AGREE TO ABIDE BY** the Child Protection Policy of Christ the King Lutheran Church.

Signature

Date

Print Name