

**CHILDREN/YOUTH PROTECTION  
POLICY (CYPP)  
Christ Lutheran Church**



*People were bringing little children to Jesus to have Him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When he saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them. (Mark 10:13-16)*

Children came to Jesus in trusting love and simple faith. This policy exists for the purpose of protecting the simple faith and loving innocence of all children and youth who participate in activities sponsored by Christ Lutheran Church (hereafter referred to as CLC). It is the commitment of this church to expend any amount of effort necessary to ensure the spiritual, emotional and physical safety and well-being of children and youth entrusted to our care.

## **Statement of Purpose**

The Children/Youth Protection Policy (CYPP) exists for these purposes:

- to provide a safe environment for children and youth
- to communicate strongly that CLC is serious about providing protection from child abuse
- to assist CLC in evaluating a person's suitability to supervise, oversee, and/or exert control over the activities of children and youth
- to protect staff and volunteers from liability associated with false allegations
- to ensure proper training of all paid and volunteer workers who work with minors
- to establish a procedure for reporting any suspicions of child abuse or neglect to authorities in compliance with Indiana laws

Primary responsibility for implementation of these policies rests with the Director of Children and Family Ministry (hereafter referred to as DCFM) or an appropriate designee specified by the pastor with oversight by the pastor, the Governance Board, and the Faith Formation Network. Refer to the Staff Handbook.

- Any individual observing a violation of CYPP immediately reports it to the pastor.

## **Procedures—Nursery**

- Nursery check-in and checkout - Children through three years of age are signed in by the parent who also will designate the check-out person. Parents are informed of this requirement when they first bring their children.
- Changing diapers - No child is ever left unattended on a changing table.
- Restroom supervision - When taking children to the restroom, workers supervise children of the same gender whenever possible. When this is not possible, the worker stays at the restroom door until the child is finished in the stall. Children are provided as much privacy as possible when using the restroom. Workers may assist only when absolutely necessary. When taking children to the restroom, the main restroom door is left open or two adults are present at all times. Childcare workers follow these guidelines as closely as possible in an emergency situation while providing the appropriate assistance.

- Permission to be alone with a child in the nursery: written parental permission is obtained prior to the child being left in one individual's care. This shall only occur when the parent/caregiver is in the building.

## **Screening Policies and Procedures**

Careful screening of all persons who work with children and youth is imperative to providing a safe environment.

***Persons who have been formally charged with child neglect or abuse are not permitted to serve in direct contact with children or youth.***

**Screening Procedure for Regular Workers:** to be used with all regular (working > 12 hours per year, more than 1 hr. /month) workers ages 18 and over, full-time or part-time, compensated or volunteer, including clergy

- Permission for Criminal History Check is completed.
- Participant Covenant Statement, agreeing to follow established policies.
- An Appointment to Service for paid staff is completed and signed.
- Identity is confirmed with photo ID and documented.
- The CYPP is provided and explained. The worker signs that they understand this policy.
- A copy of the driver's license and vehicle insurance card on file in the office for any drivers on church sponsored outings.

**Screening Procedure for Minimally Involved Persons:** to be used with workers, ages 18 and over, involved in a one-time event or working < 12 hours/year (Examples - parents who help in the Nursery or Sunday School, parent drivers or individuals who offer their homes to host children's or youth events). Minimally Involved Persons will serve in conditions that are adequately supervised and will be under direction of regular children/youth workers or staff.

- Identity is confirmed with photo ID and documented.
- The CYPP is provided and explained. Volunteers sign that they understand this policy.
- A copy of the driver's license and vehicle insurance card on file in the office for any drivers on church sponsored outings.

### **Screening Procedure for persons age 11-17**

- Youth who wish to serve as childcare workers in the Nursery must be at least 11

years old.

- Children between the ages of 11-17 will work under the supervision of an adult.
- Youth must have completed a childcare or life saving techniques course, or other comparable training such as Safe Sitter or cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) at their expense.
  - Verification of the completion of the course must be on file.
- The CYPP is explained and applicants sign that they understand this policy.
- A health and emergency form is on file for all volunteers age 11 – 17.

### **Record Keeping**

- The background criminal history check Form is turned in to the DCFM or a designee.
- All Requests for a Criminal History check are the responsibility of the DCFM or designee, who makes the request and files results in a locked file, keeping all information confidential.

### **Processing Steps for Background Checks**

- The background check will be the Indiana State Police Limited Criminal History Check. All previous criminal history records in the state of Indiana will remain valid until renewal is necessary. At that time, they will complete the federal form. In some cases, a more extensive employee screening will be requested - can cover criminal history, education verification, employment reference verification, name, social security and address verification, and review of employers and driving record - information requested depends upon the scope of the position.
- Forms turned in need to be processed in a timely manner.
- The following are criteria by which employment or involvement in Children or Youth ministry may be denied or restricted:
  - falsification of application - criminal history check must match applicant information
  - recent convictions that would impact the individual's ability to effectively perform job responsibilities
  - if charged with child abuse or neglect - no direct involvement in Children or Youth ministry
  - suspended license - restricted from driving for church outings
  - DUI - depending on history/frequency - restriction from driving for church outings

- If the background check reports are acceptable, the reports are filed in a locked file. The individual is thus approved to begin work in the ministry area.
- If the background check report is not acceptable by the above-established criteria, the DCFM or designee determines in a confidentially kept conversation with the pastor and Faith Formation Chairperson if the concerns are grounds for restriction or denial.
  - DCFM or designee notifies the individual of restriction or denial and the reason why. This meeting is documented and kept on file with the Criminal History Report.
  - If the individual feels the report information is incorrect, the individual has to provide proof that the report is incorrect if further consideration is desired.
  - If any questions arise in this process, the pastor is contacted. The pastor may follow up with legal advice as needed.
- Persons who have been formally charged with child neglect or abuse are not permitted to serve in direct contact with children or youth.
- If someone who serves in direct contact with youth is formally charged with child abuse or neglect, they must notify the DCFM or designee.

### **Supervised Interaction with Children and Youth**

Christ Lutheran Church has established parameters for the close supervision of persons working with children or youth.

- Two Adult Rule—At least two adults per classroom are present at every Children or Youth event. Appropriate adults may be staff, volunteer helpers or parents of children.
- Supervision during activities - Window blinds and doors are kept open whenever possible. Classrooms and office rooms all have windows in the doors.
- Permission to be alone with a child if direction or spiritual guidance is requested: When an adult needs to be alone with a minor for a direction or spiritual guidance session, written parental permission is obtained prior to the session. Direction or spiritual guidance is done in an office setting with another adult in close proximity. The office room door either has a window or is left open during a direction or spiritual guidance session.
- Group outings - Two adults escort children and youth on group outings. (No youth are allowed to drive on church sponsored outings.) In a caravan situation (all vehicles leaving and arriving at the same time), one adult per vehicle is adequate.
- Driving for church youth outings – Church responsibility begins when youth are gathered for an event. (*Example: Youth gather at church and are then driven together to an event; the*

*church's responsibility begins at church. When youth drive to an event at a park, movie, etc., the church's responsibility begins when the youth both arrive and gather.)*

- Photocopies of current driver's license and vehicle insurance are kept on file in the office for any person who serves as a driver for a church outing.
- Overnight Youth events - Two adults are present with youth at all times.
- Separate sleeping accommodations are arranged for male and female youth.
- No adult will share a room alone with a youth unless they are in the same family.
- If the Two-Adult rule cannot be followed, events will be cancelled.

### **Use of Technology when Communicating with Minors**

With the increase of technology use among minors as well as adults, the following guidelines serve to clarify safe measures in communications between any adult staff and volunteers having contact with minors.

- Communication with minors must always be public, transparent and never in a form that could be construed or viewed as secretive, private, or suggestive.
- Parents or legal guardians must be informed of the different electronic methods being utilized for communication purposes with minors by staff and volunteers of CLC.
- All communications should be minimal and only used to exchange needed information.
- All messages should be Church related.
- Staff and volunteers should maintain separate social networking accounts for CLC organizations and personal communications.
- Write messages and emails as though others will read what is written. Messages are easily shared or forwarded with minors and others.
- Messaging can be misinterpreted. Always check before sending a message to see if someone reading it might read something into it that is not intended.
- Do not use messaging to harass, threaten, degrade, or demean individuals.
- Avoid any communication which might be construed as having sexual or inappropriate overtones. **DO NOT REPLY** to any such messaging received from minors; instead take a screen-shot and notify your supervisor or pastor immediately.

### **Children/Youth Protection Team**

The Faith Formation Network acts as the Children/Youth Protection Team to oversee CLC's CYPP

#### **Duties**

- Receive a semi-annual report of persons screened.

- Ensure a training event is held annually (and as needed with new workers) for all children/youth workers (staff and volunteer). Ensure records kept of attendance at the training event and makeup sessions are held if an individual is absent. The training event(s) and recordkeeping may be delegated to the DCFM.
- Conduct an annual evaluation of the CYPP. Revise the CYPP as needed.
- Review any special circumstances or questions that arise regarding policies.
- Ensure that proper confidentiality, reporting, and ministry occur, through specific policies and assigned tasks on the team. Confidentiality and healing ministry are vital, should an incident occur.
- See that annually a newsletter article regarding the CYPP is written so that all congregation members are informed of the CYPP and its purpose.
- See that the CYPP is kept current on the church website so that all who visit the website are informed of the intent and purpose of the CYPP.

## **Communication of Policy and Procedures**

All members of CLC are informed of the emphasis that is placed on the safety of children and youth involved in ministries offered here. The Children/Youth Protection Team ensures policies and procedures are communicated appropriately and that training occurs for all who serve in direct contact with children and youth in ministry.

### **Procedures**

- The Statement of Purpose for the CYPP is reviewed with each New Member class. New members are presented with a summary outlining the CYPP and are informed of the process for serving in the Children's or Youth ministry areas. A copy of the CYPP is made available to new members.
- Copies of the CYPP are available in the church office, the DCFM office and the Early Childhood Ministry (ECM) office for parents.
- Leaders in the areas of Children's Ministry, Youth Ministry, Nursery, MOPS, and ECM are responsible for communicating policies and procedures to workers in their areas.
- Individuals who serve in direct contact with children and youth receive training on the congregation's CYPP prior to active involvement.
  - Each training session contains information and material designed to keep persons working with children/youth current and equipped.
  - Records are kept of attendance at the annual training event and makeup sessions are required if an individual is absent.
  - A Participant Covenant Statement is reviewed and signed by each person involved in Children's or Youth ministry at the annual training event and kept on file.

## Reporting Child Abuse or Neglect to Authorities

Any person who has reason to believe that a child is a victim of child abuse or neglect has a duty to report the allegations of any abuse.

Any individual (whether serving in a personal or professional capacity) "who has reason to believe that a child (less than 18 years old) is a victim of child abuse or neglect" has a duty to report (Ind. Code 31-33-5-1). "Reason to believe" means "evidence that, if presented to individuals of similar background and training, would cause the individuals to believe that a child was abused or neglected." The individual's as well as the church's priority is to ensure the safety of the alleged victim.

When "reason to believe" exists the types of child abuse or neglect (regarding a child that is less than 18 years of age) that must be reported are:

- 1) Inability, refusal, or neglect of parent, guardian, or custodian to supply child with necessary food, clothing, shelter, medical care, education, or supervision.
- 2) Impairment or serious endangerment of physical or mental condition.
- 3) Endangerment of physical or mental health.
- 4) Victim of sex offenses - rape, deviate sexual conduct, child molesting, child exploitation, intercourse, indecent exposure, prostitution, incest, or human trafficking
- 5) Participation of child in obscene performance.
- 6) Sex offenses committed by a child.
- 7) Child substantially endangering own or another's health.
- 8) Disabled child deprived of necessary nutrition or medical or surgical intervention
- 9) Fetal alcohol syndrome, neonatal abstinence syndrome, or drugs in the child's body.
- 10) Injury, development, or condition arising or aggravated by mothers' use of alcohol, controlled substance or prescription drugs during pregnancy.

The "duty to report" is not limited to events on our premises or under our supervision. It applies to events occurring elsewhere subject only to the condition that as a result of the event the child must be in need of some sort of care, treatment or rehabilitation that he or she is not receiving and will not receive without intervention by the courts.

Once the "duty to report" has arisen, a report must be made immediately according to Ind. Code 31-33-5-4. The knowing failure to make a required report of child abuse or neglect is a Class B misdemeanor. The sentence and fine may be doubled if the person failing to make the report is the individual in charge of the organization.

The state does not impose the duty to report on an organization, such as CLC, rather on individuals and individuals within organizations. Strict confidentiality of any information that is brought forth regarding an allegation or a report must be maintained at all times.

- **When to report** - Immediately



- **Who to report to** - Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) or the local law enforcement agency in the county in which the child resides.
  - Indiana DCS Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline: 1-800-800-5556 (24 hours)
  - Boone County DCS: 765-482-3023 (8:00am – 4:30 pm)
  - Zionsville Police: 317-873-5967
  - Boone County Sheriff Dept.: 765-482-1412
  
- **How to report** - According to Ind. Code 31-33-5-4, the report can be oral or written and shall be reported to the DCS or to a local law enforcement agency as listed above.
  - The report and the identity of the person making a report is considered confidential information by the agency receiving the report.
  - Generally, reports that are made to DCS with the following information are well received:
    - Exact name, address and telephone number of the parent, guardian or custodian.
    - Exact description of what you saw or what the child said to you.
    - If you have kept a log of behaviors that have concerned you, have the log available when you call.
    - Be professional, courteous and factual.
    - The more specific your information and the details you provide, the easier it is for the person taking the report to assess the situation quickly.
  - After making the report, the individual shall notify the pastor (Ind. Code 31-33-5-2). If the pastor is the person being reported to DCS, the individual who made the report shall notify the President of the CLC Governance Board. If the President is not available (example: out of town), the Vice President of the CLC Governance Board shall be notified.
  
- Ind. Code 31-33-6-1 provides that a person who makes or causes a report of child abuse or neglect to be made is "immune from any civil or criminal liability that might otherwise be imposed because of such actions."
- Immunity does not apply to reports made "maliciously or in bad faith" (Ind. Code 31-33-6-2) or to knowingly making false reports.
- DCS or the local law enforcement agency will determine if an investigation is needed.
- Ordained clergy should not assume they are exempt from the child abuse law's reporting requirement by reason of pastor/penitent privilege.

### **After Reporting**

The pastor is informed and ensures that an immediate report to DCS or law enforcement agency has been made by the appropriate individual. Should an incident occur, the pastor ensures that

healing ministry to persons affected is initiated only as advised by DCS. In consultation with DCS, the pastor also ensures that the following additional steps have been taken:

- The victim's safety is ensured.
- The alleged perpetrator is not confronted with anger or hostility but is treated with dignity and support. However, he/she is immediately removed from involvement with children or youth while local authorities investigate.
- Notification of an allegation is made to the church's legal advisor, the church's insurance agent, CLC Governance Board members, and to the Indiana/Kentucky Synod office according to synod guidelines.
- A written record of steps taken by the church in response to an allegation is maintained in a locked file by the DCFM or a staff member designated by the pastor. (See Form - Response to Suspected Incidence of Child Abuse or Neglect). If the pastor or the DCFM is the person being reported to DCS, the CLC Governance Board will designate a staff member to maintain this written record.

Additional actions that may or may not be taken as appropriate to the situation:

- News Media - Only the designated spokesperson is authorized to speak to the media on behalf of the congregation. The designated spokesperson should be prepared to state the church's policy for the prevention of child abuse, the church's concern for the safety of the victim and all children and the procedures the church follows to reduce the risk of abuse to children.
- Information shared with the congregation - Confidentiality is the highest priority. No information is released that would give unnecessary details, place blame, interfere with the victim's privacy or violate any confidentiality concerns. Release of any information to the congregation or to portions of the congregation is at the discretion of the pastor and the church's legal representation.
- Evaluation of allegations or follow-up treatment - It is not the responsibility of the person or institution making a report to be involved in the evaluation of allegations or the follow-up treatment process. Official agencies perform these functions. DCS and local law enforcement agencies are the only agencies qualified to be involved in the investigation of allegations. Experience and research in this area suggests that any additional involvement beyond the scope of local law enforcement and DCS increases risk to the victim and any others involved.

## Description of changes:

1. Move 'reason to believe' section from last page to under 'Reporting Child Abuse or Neglect to Authorities' section.
2. Revise & expand type of abuses to report to align with IC 31-34-1
3. Report may be made orally or written per IC 31-33-5-4
4. Change 'Children/Youth Protection Program' to 'Children/Youth Protection Policy' for consistency with title of document.
5. Change 'Director of Faith Formation' to 'Director of Children and Family Ministry' to align with current position description title.
6. Move annual newsletter and website communication responsibilities from Communication section to the Children/Youth Protection Team section to assign accountability.
7. Added recommendations on what to report when contacting DCS. Source: Prevent Child Abuse Indiana (<https://pcain.org/education-outreach/reporting-abuse/>).
8. Delete name tag and picture ID for identification of workers to reflect current practice.
9. Revise adult being alone with a 'child in a counseling situation' to indicate 'direction or guidance'. Counseling indicates a professional activity.
10. Change training event frequency from 'each fall' to 'annually'.
11. Added statement that DCS/law enforcement will determine if investigation is needed.
12. Remove 24-hour requirement for applicant to prove background check is inaccurate. Proof is still needed for reconsideration.
13. Revise overnight youth event condition for youth alone with adult in sleeping arrangement: change 'bed' to 'room alone'.
14. Remove paragraph on extending ministry to persons affected due to redundancy with first paragraph in the 'After Reporting' section.
15. Remove 'hearsay' and 'second hand reports' as qualifiers for a reason to believe; not found in IC 31-33-5-1.
16. Add section on use of technology when communicating with minors. Source: Diocese of Lafayette-in Indiana Child Protection Policy (<https://dol-in.org/child-protection-policy>) and Social Networking / Technology Directives (<https://d2y1pz2y630308.cloudfront.net/2446/documents/2016/11/Diocese-Social-Network-Technology-Directives-P-%20Eng..pdf>).
17. Add who to notify if the pastor is being reported to DCS in 'How to Report' section.
18. Deleted use of 'summary brochure' and refer to this document instead. This provides one source of information, eliminating potential conflict(s) between the brochure and this document.
19. Change 'Christ Church' to "CLC" for accuracy & brevity.
20. Change 'Church Administrator' in 'After Reporting' section to 'DCFM or staff member designated by the pastor' for clarity of responsibility.
21. Renamed document title from 'Children/Youth Protection Policies and Procedures' to 'Children/Youth Protection Policy (CYPP)'.

22. Page 4 – Per Jim Standish’s suggestion - Added “Children between the ages of 11-17 will work under the supervision of an adult.”
23. Page 5 – Per Jim Standish – Added, “Two Adult Rule—At least two adults per classroom are present at every Children or Youth event. Appropriate adults may be staff, volunteer helpers or parents of children.
24. Page 5 – Per Jim Standish – Deleted “Parent’s and other approved observers are welcome to visit programs at any time.”