



Trinity Lutheran Church

117 West King Street

East Berlin, PA 17316

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Approved by Church Council on June 13, 2019

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Trinity Lutheran Church Mission Statement “We are a family of Christian disciples committed to making Christ known while loving and serving God and neighbors.”

I. OVERVIEW

A. PREAMBLE

1. When the disciples tried to keep the children away from Jesus, he was quick to respond, “Let the children come to me.” (Matthew 19:14) Jesus taught that children were to be included and provided for within the community of faith. Today, the church may be the only place where some children find the unconditional love and care they so desperately need to grow and thrive. As Christians, we must take our responsibilities to our children very seriously.

2. In April 2015, Trinity Lutheran Church of East Berlin adopted a resolution aimed at reducing the risk of child abuse in the church. Shortly thereafter, we adopted the following policy for the prevention of child abuse within our Trinity Lutheran congregation.

B. POLICY & PURPOSE: Trinity Lutheran Church of East Berlin’s purpose for establishing this policy is to reduce the risk of abuse by the following practical procedures of prevention. Our procedures demonstrate our absolute and unwavering commitment to the physical and emotional safety and spiritual growth of all our children and youth and to protect both our paid and volunteer staff.

II. DEFINITIONS

A. CHILD ABUSE – Quoted and/or paraphrased from the Pennsylvania Child Protective Services Law [CPSL (Title 23 PC.C.S. Chapter 63)]

1. Child sexual abuse or exploitation is:
“the employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement or coercion of any child to engage in any sexually explicit conduct or any simulation of any sexually explicit conduct for the purpose of producing any visual depiction, including photographing, videotaping, computer, depicting or filming, of any sexually explicit conduct or the rape, sexual assault, involuntary deviate sexual intercourse, aggravated indecent assault, molestation, incest, indecent exposure, prostitution, statutory sexual assault, or the form of sexual exploitation of children.”
2. Sexual abuse and harassment can include the following:
 - a) Verbal sexual suggestions, innuendoes, or jokes;

- b) Leering or ogling
 - c) Intrusive touching, including pats, squeezes, hugs, pinches, kissing, brushing against someone's body;
 - d) The use of pornography;
 - e) Sexual assault or attempted sexual assault.
3. Child abuse includes any of the following:
- a) "Any recent act or failure to act by a perpetrator which causes non-accidental serious physical injury to a child under 18 years of age;
 - b) An act or failure to act by a perpetrator which causes non-accidental serious mental injury to or sexual abuse or sexual exploitation of child under 18 years of age;
 - c) Any recent act, failure to act or series of such acts of failures to act by a perpetrator which creates an imminent risk of serious physical injury to or sexual abuse or sexual exploitation of a child under 18 years of age.
 - d) Serious physical neglect by a perpetrator constituting prolonged or repeated lack of supervision or the failure to provide essentials of life, including adequate medical care, which endangers a child's life or development or impairs the child's functioning."

B. RIGHTS OF PARENTS – Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to restrict the generally recognized existing rights of parents to use reasonable force on or against their children for the purposes of supervision, control, and discipline of their children. Such reasonable force shall not constitute child abuse.

C. Participation in events that involve physical contact with child. - An individual participating in a practice or competition in an interscholastic sport, physical education, a recreational activity, or an extracurricular activity that involves physical contact with a child does not, in itself, constitute contact that is subject to the reporting requirements of this chapter.

D. ADULT – A person eighteen (18) years of age or older

E. CHILD – Any person under the age of eighteen (18). For the purpose of this policy any person under the age of eighteen (18) shall be referred to as a child.

F. CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES - Any activity or program in which children are under supervision of staff persons or volunteers to include Trinity Lutheran church.

G. HELPER – Person who provides occasional assistance

H. MANDATED REPORTER – All church employees and volunteers who work with children in regularly scheduled programs or activities. All mandated reporters are required, when reasonable suspicion of child abuse exists, to notify state authorities.

Mandated Reporters include, but are not limited to:

- Sunday school teachers
- Vacation Bible school teachers
- Children's leaders
- Kids Cookie Break volunteers
- Children's choir director
- Rostered leaders: Pastor, Youth Director, Associates in Ministry, Deacons and Deaconesses.
- Other adults who have satisfied all the requirements of approved adults volunteers

I. PERSON(S) REQUIRED TO REPORT CHILD ABUSE - All who are involved in working with youth, children and vulnerable adults. We are mandated by PA law.

J. PERSON INVOLVED IN A CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES – Individual participating and responsible for the conduct of scheduled activity. In the case of non-church programs operating on church property, the duties of the "staff person in charge of a children's activity" shall be carried out by the non-local church lead staff or volunteer.

K. TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH – Trinity Lutheran Church, 117 West King Street, East Berlin, PA 17316

III. PROCEDURES

A. SCREENING

1. All staff and volunteers who have regular and direct contact with children shall be required to complete a Volunteer Application for Children and Youth Workers. All parts of the application must be completed. Information shall include, but not limited to: (Appendix 2)
 - a. Personal contact information.
 - b. Voluntary disclosure of past criminal history and allegations of criminal history.
 - c. Volunteer Verification and release allowing Trinity Lutheran Church to submit the necessary background information for the appropriate background checks. (Appendix 1)
 - d. Volunteers must have a minimum of six (6) months active relationship with Trinity Lutheran Church before being permitted a volunteer role in children's activities. In the event of new staff hire, references deemed adequate by the hiring supervisor will replace the 6 month required waiting period.
2. Background Checks and disclosures are good for 5 years. Employees must complete and submit items a, b, and c. Volunteers who are residents for more than 10 years must

complete and submit items a, b, and d. Volunteers who are residents for less than 10 years must complete and submit items a, b, and c.

- a. Pennsylvania Criminal Record Checks (SP4-164 for employees; SP4-164A for volunteers)
- b. Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearances (CY113)
- c. Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) Criminal Background Checks
- d. Disclosure Statement for Volunteers (Appendix 2)

3. All forms and reference reports shall be placed in the applicant's confidential personnel file which the church office will maintain. All clearances and reference checks shall be included in their personnel file. Clearances will be checked by staff annually during the summer to determine which ones require updates.

B. SUPERVISION

1. All staff and volunteers working with children in church activities shall be trained on an annual basis. Training shall include, but not limited to, review of the Child Protection Policy, how to recognize the signs of child abuse and report suspected abuse in accordance with current laws. Records of training will be kept in the church office. (Appendix 3)
2. The two UNRELATED adult rule will be followed. There will be two (2) unrelated adults for each activity involving children outside of Sunday school classes.
3. Overnight Rule: Overnight activities involving children shall be supervised by at least two Approved Adults. In the event involves children of both genders, then there should be at least one Approved Adult of each gender.
4. Each room or space where children are being cared for shall have a window in the door or the door shall be left open. All activities shall occur in open view. Should the children's activity be an outdoor program, or occur in a setting which makes it difficult to comply with this policy, the staff or volunteer person in charge of the activity shall take appropriate measures to make sure that the setting suits the activity, the equipment is in safe operation, and the children are properly supervised.
5. All activities in which Children are outside the direct supervision of their parents/guardians for more than a 24-hour period shall require signed, written permission forms. Parents/Guardians shall supply pertinent health information as well.
6. No person shall supervise an age group unless he/she is AT LEAST 18 years of age or older, and is five (5) years older than the oldest child being supervised.

7. Parents and other relevant family members will be informed regarding our policy once a year or when amendments are made.
8. Safe Ministry Communications: Any and All texting, Emailing and other forms of electronic communication between the Youth and Church staff or Volunteers must include a Parent or Guardian.

C. REPORTING: When suspicion of abuse arises, listen intently to our children, observe their behavior, and report any potential incident of abuse in the outlined manner:

1. A Mandated Reporter who witnesses or has reasonable suspicion that a child has been abused by anyone (including the child's family, guardians, an Approved Adult, or volunteer) must by law make an immediate and direct report in the following manner:
 - a. Electronically at www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis, a confirmation of which will be received from the PA Department of Human Services.
 - b. Orally to the Department of Human Services ChildLine (800-932-0313). An oral report must be followed up within 48 hours by a written report, which may be submitted electronically (www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis), within 48 hours. Paper written reports use PA State Form CY-47 (Appendix 4)
2. Notify the parent of the alleged victim and take any necessary steps to assure the child's safety. **The child's safety is the first concern.** Information such as the child's name, address, and family information should be gathered. If a parent is the suspected abuser, the next closest family relative should be notified.
3. **The Pastor is to be informed immediately.** If the Pastor is the suspected abuser, Council President should be informed immediately.
4. If the alleged abuse occurred on Trinity Lutheran Church's property by a church volunteer or staff, removal of the volunteer or staff from contact with children shall be immediate until the incident has been resolved. Care should be taken to handle this in a discreet manner, recognizing that an investigation is being conducted. The alleged abuser shall not be banned from other church ministries.

Pastoral support will be available to all persons involved with the incident.

Appendix 1



Trinity Lutheran Church
Box 1016
117 West King Street
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Children's/Youth work Verification and release

I recognize that Trinity Lutheran Church is relying on the accuracy of the information I provide on the Children's/Youth Work Application form. I attest and affirm that this information I have provided is absolutely true and correct.

I authorize the organization to contact any person or entity listed on the Children's/Youth Work Application form, and I further authorize any such person or entity to provide the organization with information, opinion, and impressions relating to my background or qualifications.

I voluntarily release the organization and any such person or entity listed on the Children's/Youth Work Application form from liability involving the communication of information relating to my background or qualifications. I further authorize the organization to conduct a criminal background check and child abuse history clearance.

I have carefully read the policy and procedure of the organization, and I agree to abide by them and to protect the health and safety of the children or youth assigned to my care or supervision at all times.

Printed name: _____
Signature: _____ Date: _____

(Please read this document carefully before you sign it.)



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Children's/Youth Work Application

Name: _____
Daytime telephone: _____
Address: _____

In which children's/Youth program(s) do you want to become involved?

What skills would you bring to the children's/Youth program?

What other children's/youth work experience do you have? (Please list up to 3)

Organization	Program	Dates	Contact
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Have you at any time ever:

Been arrested for any reason	Yes	No
Been convicted of, or pleaded guilty or no contest to, any crime	Yes	No
Engaged in, or been accused of, any child molestation, exploitation, or abuse	Yes	No

Are you aware of:

Having any traits or tendencies that could pose any threat to children, youth or others?	Yes	No
Any reason why you should not work with children, youth or others?	Yes	No

If the answer to any of these questions is "yes", Please explain in detail: _____

Church Activity

What church or Churches have you attended in the past five years?

Church name	Pastor's name	Years attended
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Appendix 3



Mandated Reporter Training Sign in Sheet

Print Name	Signature
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____
6. _____	_____
7. _____	_____
8. _____	_____
9. _____	_____
10. _____	_____
11. _____	_____
12. _____	_____
13. _____	_____
14. _____	_____
15. _____	_____

Appendix 4

**REPORT OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE
(CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICE LAW - TITLE 23 PA CSA CHAPTER 63)**

PLEASE REFER TO INSTRUCTIONS ON REVERSE SIDE. EXCEPT FOR SIGNATURE, PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE

1. NAME OF CHILD (Last, First, Initial)		SSN	BIRTHDATE	SEX <input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F
ADDRESS (State, City, State & ZIP Code)			COUNTY	
1A. PRESENT LOCATION IF DIFFERENT THAN ABOVE			COUNTY	
2. BIOLOGICAL/ADOPTIVE MOTHER (Last, First, Initial)		SSN	BIRTHDATE	TELEPHONE NO.
ADDRESS (City, State & ZIP Code)			COUNTY	
3. BIOLOGICAL/ADOPTIVE FATHER (Last, First, Initial)		SSN	BIRTHDATE	TELEPHONE NO.
ADDRESS (City, State & ZIP Code)			COUNTY	
4. OTHER PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR CHILD		SSN	BIRTHDATE	RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD
ADDRESS (City, State & ZIP Code)		COUNTY		SEX <input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F
5. ALLEGED PERPETRATOR (Last, First, Initial)		SSN	BIRTHDATE	RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD
ADDRESS (City, State & ZIP Code)		COUNTY		SEX <input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F
NAME OF ALLEGED PERPETRATOR'S EMPLOYER AND EMPLOYER'S ADDRESS				

Appendix 4 (continued)

7. ACTIONS TAKEN OR ABOUT TO BE TAKEN BY THE PERSON MAKING THE REPORT:			
<input type="checkbox"/> NOTIFICATION OF CORONER OR MEDICAL EXAMINER	<input type="checkbox"/> X-RAYS	<input type="checkbox"/> PHOTOGRAPHS	<input type="checkbox"/> HOSPITALIZATION
<input type="checkbox"/> POLICE NOTIFIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDICAL TEST(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> TAKEN INTO PROTECTIVE CUSTODY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (Specify)
8. SAFETY CONCERNS AND RISK FACTORS:			
A. DESCRIBE THE CHILD(REN)'S PHYSICAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH, GOOD MOOD AND TEMPERAMENT. DESCRIBE CHILD(REN)'S INTELLECTUAL FUNCTIONING, COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL SKILLS, SCHOOL PERFORMANCE AND PEER RELATIONS. INCLUDE WHETHER THE CHILD(REN) HAS EXPRESSED ANY SUICIDAL/HOMICIDAL IDEATION OR PLANS.			<input type="checkbox"/> INFORMATION UNKNOWN
B. DESCRIBE HOW THE ADULT CAREGIVERS FUNCTION COGNITIVELY, EMOTIONALLY, BEHAVIORALLY, PHYSICALLY AND SOCIALLY. INCLUDE WHETHER THE ADULTS HAVE ANY MENTAL HEALTH, SUBSTANCE USE ISSUES AND/OR CRIMINAL HISTORY. DOCUMENT ANY PAST OR PRESENT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE. RECORD THE EMPLOYMENT STATUS/SOURCE OF INCOME AND WHETHER THERE ARE ANY FINANCIAL STRESSORS IN THE HOME. INCLUDE ANY SAFETY OR SANITARY CONCERNS REGARDING THE CONDITIONS OF THE HOME AND WHETHER THERE ARE WORKING UTILITIES. WHAT IS THE PRIMARY LANGUAGE OF THE HOUSEHOLD?			<input type="checkbox"/> INFORMATION UNKNOWN
C. DESCRIBE WHETHER THE CAREGIVERS HAVE THE APPROPRIATE KNOWLEDGE, EXPECTATIONS AND SKILLS TO PARENT THE CHILD(REN) ADEQUATELY. DOES THE CAREGIVER ADEQUATELY SUPERVISE THE CHILD(REN)? ARE THEY WILLING AND ABLE TO PROTECT THE CHILD(REN)? DESCRIBE THE ABILITY OF THE CAREGIVER TO EMPATHIZE, NURTURE AND ADVOCATE FOR THE CHILD(REN).			<input type="checkbox"/> INFORMATION UNKNOWN
D. DESCRIBE THE CAREGIVERS' APPROACH/METHODS OF DISCIPLINING THE CHILD(REN). DESCRIBE WHEN DISCIPLINE OCCURS AND WHETHER DISCIPLINARY METHODS ARE AGE-APPROPRIATE? ARE THERE ANY CULTURAL PRACTICES IN THE HOME THAT WOULD INFLUENCE THE DISCIPLINARY METHODS USED?			<input type="checkbox"/> INFORMATION UNKNOWN
E. PLEASE PROVIDE ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION RELEVANT TO THE INVESTIGATION PROCESS THAT HAS NOT ALREADY BEEN ENTERED IN THIS REFERRAL. THIS MAY INCLUDE ADDITIONAL ADDRESSES TO LOCATE THE CHILD OR PERPETRATOR, ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR THE CHILD, EMAIL ADDRESSES, INFORMATION ABOUT ANY WEAPONS IN THE HOME OR CONCERNS YOU MAY HAVE FOR THE CASEWORKER'S SAFETY.			<input type="checkbox"/> INFORMATION UNKNOWN

INSTRUCTIONS TO MANDATED PERSONS:

A mandated reporter making an oral report of suspected child abuse to the department via the Statewide toll-free telephone number (800-932-0313) must also make a written report, which may be submitted electronically, within 48 hours to the department or county agency assigned to the case by using this form. If needed, attach additional sheet(s) of paper to provide all of the requested information on this form.

NOTE:

If the child has been taken into custody, you must immediately contact the county children and youth agency where the abuse occurred.

REPORTING SOURCE:			
PRINTED NAME AND SIGNATURE:			DATE OF REPORT:
ADDRESS:			
TITLE OR RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD:	FACILITY OR ORGANIZATION:	TELEPHONE NUMBER:	EMAIL ADDRESS: