

# Cross of Christ Lutheran Church Safe Haven Guidelines

As Revised July 29, 2015

*I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me. But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.* [Matthew 18: 3-6]

*But Jesus called the children to him and said, '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.'* [Luke 18:15-17]

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of these Guidelines is to ensure the safety of all God's children, youth, vulnerable adults, and everyone that participates in activities at Cross of Christ Lutheran Church ("CCLC" or "Church"). We do not implement these policies out of any lack of trust in workers, employees, or volunteers; rather our intent is to protect our children, community, and congregation and to do everything we can to maintain the safety of everyone who enters our Church.

## **SCOPE**

We intend these Guidelines to affect all Church activities whether or not conducted on Church property, and apply to all involved with those activities.

## **OBJECTIVES**

By creating, implementing and performing these guidelines we intend to:

- Provide a safe environment and setting for all Church activities including those conducted by non-members using Church facilities;
- Eliminate all abuse and bullying of any nature;
- Ensure appropriate reporting of any detected unsafe conditions, including abuse, bullying and other inappropriate conduct;
- Increase awareness and vigilance of all involved in Church activities, especially activities and events in which children, youth and vulnerable individuals participate;
- Comply with and help enforce all regulations and laws associated with the safety and well being of children and vulnerable individuals;
- Provide appropriate instruction and training for all involved with Church activities to ensure effective and just implementation and administration of these Guidelines.

## DEFINITIONS / POLICIES / PROCEDURES

### 1. DEFINITIONS

**Abuse** means intentional mental or physical harm or threatened harm to the health and welfare of an individual. Bullying is considered abuse.

**Adult** any individual 18 years of age and older.

**Bullying** means the act of verbally or physically intimidating a person to make them do something or feel bad.

**Child, Children, Youth** means any individual or individuals under the age of 18.

**Leader** means anyone directly responsible for supervising and overseeing a specific Church- related function, event, or activity.

**Participant** means any individual participating observing or present at a Church-related function, event, or activity.

**Sexual Abuse** includes: molestation, sexual exploitation and sexual harassment. And, means sexual contact, sexual exploitation, or sexual harassment of an individual, or the dissemination, exhibition, or display of sexually explicit material to any individual, regardless of whether such conduct is with or without the knowledge or consent of the individual.

**Sexual Contact** means the intentional touching of the intimate parts or the clothing covering such areas of any individual.

**Sexual Exploitation** means 1) allowing, permitting, or encouraging an individual to engage in prostitution, or in the photographing, filming, or creation of any images depicting an individual engaged in actual or suggestive sexual conduct; or 2) development of, or the attempt to develop, a sexual relationship between any individual and any child.

**Volunteer** means an individual qualified to participate as a leader or otherwise in Church related activities involving youth. A qualified individual is one of sufficient age, who consented to (and for whom the Church obtained) a satisfactory background check, has attended all required training, and has reviewed these Safe Haven Guidelines.

**Vulnerable Individual** means an individual who is at risk of abuse or harm due to life circumstances.

## 2. **POLICIES**

### **Bullying and Abuse**

- Abuse or bullying of any individual is prohibited at any Church or Church related activity.
- Any volunteer or individual participating in any Church related activity who observes bullying or suspects that bullying has occurred shall attempt to safely neutralize the situation and/or circumstances as practicable and must IMMEDIATELY report their observations to a leader.

### **Mandatory Reporting**

- Any leader, volunteer or participant who observes or suspects abuse or observes any inappropriate touching or indiscriminant displays of affection has occurred must IMMEDIATELY report their observations to a leader or pastor, and if appropriate, to the appropriate legal authorities as required by law. Individuals receiving such reports shall forward them to the Senior Pastor who shall report to the appropriate legal authorities as required by law and, at his or her discretion, share the report with the President of the Council. The Senior Pastor may elect to take appropriate interim action pending investigation and other appropriate action, including temporary suspension of the volunteer in question from further participation in CCLC youth activities.
- All parties shall be sensitive to and respect any alleged victim and his or her family, as well as to the accused. The Church shall make pastoral care available to all.

### **Technology**

- No individual may contact youth (directly or electronically) outside of Church related activities without the prior consent and knowledge of parents or guardians. Staff or volunteer-initiated electronic communication (including, email, text, IM, Facebook post, tweet and the like) shall also be sent to the parent as well, to the extent such technology allows.
- All computers and devices owned by the Church or used by staff for Church purposes shall be password protected to prevent unauthorized use, and shall, to the extent practicable, contain and run working inappropriate-content blocking software.
- All use, by youth, of computers and devices owned or sanctioned for use by the Church shall be monitored by either staff, leaders, or volunteers.

### **Discipline**

- No individual shall be subject to corporal punishment, ridicule, or abusive language.

## **Drug / Alcohol / Tobacco Use**

- No leader, volunteer, participant, youth, or child shall use illicit or illegal drugs, marijuana, or consume alcohol (except for ritualistic religious purposes) during or at a Church related youth activity.
- Volunteers and participants may use tobacco products off Church grounds, but then only in appropriate locations where such activity is otherwise allowed, and only with permission with the appropriate leader or pastor.

## **Best Practices**

- To the extent possible. Leaders, volunteers and participants shall never leave children and youth unsupervised, nor be alone in a room with a child or youth.
- If a volunteer, leader or participant is in a room alone with a child or youth, the doors shall remain open at all times, or they shall place themselves in view of a window, if practicable.
- The Church and staff shall keep all windows clear and free of obstructions.
- Children and youth shall not be left alone in the Church building or on Church grounds.
- Safe Touch
  1. Volunteers, leaders and participants should only touch children and youth:
    - to prevent imminent injury to person;
    - prevent serious damage to property;
    - to provide planned care;
    - to encourage or assist;
    - to reinforce physical presence when touch is not resisted or rejected by the child/young person.
  2. CCLC recognizes that there are times when children and youth need physical reassurance. Volunteers, leaders and participants should feel comfortable physically reassuring children and youth in an appropriate manner, so long as the child/youth accepts the gesture, appears reassured by and understands the intention of the gesture. “Appropriate” places to touch include only shoulders, arms, and back.
  3. Leaders, volunteers, and participants should never encourage children or youth to sit on their laps or lie down on top of them.

**\*Volunteers, leaders, and participants shall ensure compliance with this policy.\***

### 3. **PROCEDURES**

**Background Screening.** CCLC will obtain at least once every other year (and once every three years for Mentoring Program), from one or more generally available and reputable sources, a criminal background check (covering state and local convictions) for each individual who participates in any Church related activity and who has direct contact with youth. CCLC will also comply with any requirements for background screening imposed by any policy of insurance applicable to CCLC, to the extent such policy is more comprehensive. No individual who withholds their consent to such background checks shall be allowed to participate in Church activities during which they will have direct contact with youth. CCLC staff and employees (including employees of CCLC preschool) may be subject to a separate background screening policy.

**Volunteer Standards.** Every volunteer shall be at least 21 years of age for off-site activities and 18 years of age to act as a teacher or leader. Younger volunteers may be used when in the company of a qualified adult. Each volunteer must complete training appropriate for their position and duties, and become familiar with these Safe Haven Guidelines.

**Supervision.** All individuals involved with programming and activities for youth shall meet the standards identified above.

On-site activities shall at all times attempt to maintain a minimum adult-to-child ratio of:

- Infants — 1:6
- Preschool to eleven years of age — 1:12
- Eleven to eighteen years of age — 1:15

Off-site activities shall be offered only to children in first grade and above and shall at all times attempt to maintain a minimum adult-to-child ratio of:

- First Grade – Fifth Grade 1:6 (or a parent must attend with student)
- Middle School – High School 1:8

Overnight events are gender specific:

- Ratios for co-ed activities require a minimum of one volunteer of each gender, unrelated to at least one other volunteer, in addition to meeting ratios for off-site activities identified above, e.g. seven girls and two boys-all older than preschool-will need one male and two female adults to satisfy the above ratio.
- Overnight housing or sleeping events shall be gender segregated. Adults and youth shall never share a bed or be housed together alone in a room. An exception may be made for same-gender parent and child.

**Discipline / Classroom Management.** Volunteers shall use their discretion in managing classroom environments, intervening in disruptive situations and determining appropriate discipline. Volunteer training shall include classroom management techniques and measures of discipline appropriate to the participants and activity for which such training is provided. Under no circumstances may any youth be disciplined using corporal or physical means. Volunteers needing assistance in classroom management shall be encouraged to involve supervisors and CCLC staff when and where necessary.

**Instruction and Training.** All volunteers shall receive training appropriate for the event or activity in which they participate or for which they volunteer **and receive from the Church a copy of these Safe Haven Guidelines.**

**Transportation.** Transportation using private vehicles shall be consistent with any applicable CCLC vehicle use policies. The driver of such vehicle must maintain a current driver's license and proper vehicle insurance which includes appropriate bodily injury and other insurance in at least the amounts required by Colorado law. Evidence of such policies must be provided to CCLC upon request.

**Building Use Policy.** All groups not affiliated with CCLC who use CCLC facilities shall comply with any CCLC building use and rental policies.

**Documentation.** The following documentation shall be utilized in conjunction with performance of these policies:

**Releases, Waivers, Parental Permission.** All parents and guardians shall sign a release, waiver, and / or parental permission form appropriate for the activity in which they or their children are participating. Examples of such forms, which may be changed by CCLC staff from time-to-time as necessary, are attached hereto as **Exhibit A.**

**Reporting.** All incidents of injury, abuse or bullying shall be reported to supervisors or group leaders, who shall use their discretion as to whether to advance such report to CCLC staff. Any and all incidents involving bodily injury shall be reported on the Incident report attached hereto as **Exhibit B,** and a copy of such report given to the parent or guardian and CCLC staff.

**Consent to Background Check.** All individuals shall provide their consent to a background check in writing. CCLC shall maintain the confidentiality of, and keep all completed Background check consent forms and resulting background checks in a secure location, and shall destroy such completed Consents after the consenting individual leaves the Church and so requests in writing.