

Safe Church Policy of St Paul Lutheran Church and School

As members of St Paul Lutheran Church and School, God calls us to be a vibrant community of faith where children and adults may participate in ministry in a safe and secure environment ... where children and other vulnerable persons are protected from all forms of exploitation, abuse, and/or neglect. To that end, we adopt this policy for the volunteers at our school and church. A copy of this policy will be on file in the church office and will be a part of the permanent record of the church as adopted by the Church council and recorded by the Secretary of the Congregation. Any future revisions to this policy will be presented to the Board of Directors for adoption.

Volunteer Ministries covered in the scope of this policy shall include but shall not be limited to: Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, Confirmation Ministry, Youth Ministry, Nursery and Pre-School Programs, and any other group within St Paul Lutheran Church and School or its organizations that use the facilities in ministry to or care of children and/or youth.

Terms and Definitions (as they apply to this written policy):

Child Abuse or Neglect – Physical or mental injury, sexual abuse, negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child or youth by an adult or adolescent caregiver responsible for the child or youth's welfare.

Emotional abuse – Abuse which results in impaired psychological growth and development, including belittling, rejection, constant unequal treatment, verbal assaults, excessive demands on a child or youth's performance and isolation from normal social activities.

Neglect – Failure or inattention on the part of the caregiver to provide for a child or youth's basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter, medical care and supervision.

Physical Abuse – Non-accidental abuse which results in physical injury, including but not limited to bruises, burns, cuts, welts, fractures and internal injuries.

Sexual Abuse – Includes but is not limited to any contact or interaction between a child or youth and an adult or a child and a youth when the child is being used for sexual stimulation of the adult or youth person, or of a third person. The behavior may or may not involve touching. [The behavior may involve the taking or showing of sexually explicit photos or images.] Sexual behavior between a child or youth and an adult or between a child and a youth is always considered forced whether or not consent has been given by the child.

Children/Youth

Child – Any person age 12 or under. May also include any persons over age 12 who are not able to fully protect themselves from exploitation or give consent to sexual activity due to intellectual or physical impairments, or other incapacities.

Youth – Any person age 13 years through age 18 years old.

Adult – Any person age 19 years or older.

Childcare Providers

Primary Worker – (Age 21 years or older and trained)

Any person, volunteer or compensated, 21 years of age or older who works with children or youth on a regular basis and who assumes a primary responsibility for their care and supervision at a church-sponsored activity, whether the activity is on- or off-site. Primary Workers must consent to a criminal background check, and sign a covenant agreeing to St Paul Lutheran Church and School Safe Ministries Policy and Procedures before working with children and/or youth.

Secondary Worker – (Age 18 years or older volunteer)

Any person who occasionally works with children or youth. A secondary worker must be under the supervision of a trained primary worker. Examples of those persons who fall into this category may include but is not limited to parents of participants who supervise activities or parents who stay with their children. Secondary workers must fill out and sign volunteer form.

Caregiver/ Teenage workers – (Age 12-17 year old volunteer)

Any volunteer who is at least 12 years of age who works with children at any church-sponsored activity. A primary or trained secondary worker must be assigned to provide oversight for a caregiver.

“Friend” of St Paul Lutheran Church and School

Person in regular attendance at St Paul Lutheran Church or School for a minimum of six months but who is not a member of the congregation.

Mandated Reporter

Any person with the primary responsibility for the care of children is a mandated reporter. Missouri law states that if a caregiver has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been or may be subjected to abuse or neglect, or observes a child being subjected to conditions or circumstances that would result in abuse or neglect, that person shall immediately report or cause a report to be made to the Missouri Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline, 1-800-392-3738.

Basic Procedures for Screening and Hiring or Volunteer Staff

- a. Paid worker will complete a formal application process; volunteer workers will “apply” through an informal application process if volunteering in the area of children’s or youth ministry or any other ministry area that involves interaction with children.
- b. Applicant shall consent to a criminal background check at the congregation’s expense.
Anyone with a prior conviction or adjudication of any form of child abuse or neglect will NOT be eligible to work with children/youth in any capacity.
- c. All paid workers will be interviewed by a screening committee or appropriate staff person(s). All volunteer workers will be interviewed by the appropriate ministry leader.
- d. Volunteer applicants may also be asked to submit two personal references, in writing.
- e. Paid and volunteer applicants will be required to read, answer and sign the Safe Church Covenant of St. Paul Lutheran Church and School Agreement.
- f. All of the above information will be read and reviewed by the appropriate ministry leader and staff liaison.
- g. Upon completion of the review, a recommendation will be made by the appropriate ministry leader/staff liaison.
- h. After an applicant has been hired for a paid position, he/she will be required to review the Safe Church policy and sign the Safe Church Covenant of St. Paul Lutheran Church and School Agreement within the first two weeks on the job. Furthermore, he/she will be required to attend a workshop on Safe Ministries as soon as one is available and within six months on the job.
- i. Should circumstances or events arise (after an applicant is hired or serving as a volunteer with children/youth ministries) that indicate that a person is no longer suitable for working with children or youth, steps will be taken to remove said person from involvement or contact with children or youth.
- j. All primary and secondary workers and caregivers must be members or “friends” of St Paul Lutheran Church and School for a minimum of six months before he/she can work with any child or youth activity.

Procedures for St. Paul Lutheran Church and School Volunteers

1. At least one primary worker and one secondary worker or caregiver will be present at all times during a church-sponsored program, event or ministry involving children or youth.
2. All events will be open-door when working with children and youth unless the room where the event takes place contains a door or hallway window which is free of any visual obstructions.
3. When possible, children will be encouraged to take care of their own bathroom needs. Should assistance be required, the outer bathroom door must remain ajar while the worker assists the child if there is no other adult present during that time.
4. Children will be released to family members at the door of the activity room. Persons other than the child’s family members or guardian must be authorized in writing to pick up the child.

5. A positive approach to discipline will be practiced. Clear, consistent, age-appropriate limits will be established to help the children function appropriately. Corporal punishment is never allowed.
6. All primary and secondary workers will participate in a training session which addresses appropriate discipline and supervision of children and youth.
7. All primary workers will be required and all secondary workers encouraged to participate in a re-orientation at least once every three years or when policy or procedural changes are made.
8. As procedural changes in the policy occur, the congregation will be informed through the church newsletter, the weekly announcement folder, and/or by letter when appropriate.

Off-Site Ministry Activities

9. When trips off-site are necessary for church-sponsored programs and events involving children or youth, at least one of the workers must be a primary worker.
10. If there is more than one vehicle being used for the outing, all vehicles must travel together in a caravan as much as is possible.
11. For overnight trips, at least one opportunity must be provided for all parents of children/youth on the church-sponsored event to meet or contact the primary/secondary workers before the trip.
12. All drivers must be at least 21 years of age and must provide proof of insurance.
13. There must be enough seat belts for everyone, and everyone must wear a seat belt.
14. Written permission of the parent/guardian of all minor passengers will be obtained prior to being transported. This permission will include all relevant details pertaining to the event, such as date and location, name of driver(s), time of departure and time of return.

Procedures for Responding to Allegations of Abuse or Neglect

1. The Volunteer or Worker Responsibilities

When an allegation of child or youth abuse is made against a worker or anyone in the church, the alleged incident should be reported immediately to the Primary most person who is in charge of the activity where the alleged incident occurred. Every allegation will be taken seriously. No person who in good faith reports abuse or neglect will be subject to any liability for doing so.

The Primary-most person who receives the allegation will:

- a. Place the alleged victim of abuse in a secure area with the supervision of at least two persons not involved in the abuse incident until the child's parents arrive. One of the persons must be an adult.

- b. Determine if the child/youth sustained injuries requiring first aid, and if necessary contact emergency medical personnel to manage the child's injuries.
 - c. Contact The Principal or Pastor responsible for mandated reporting of the alleged abuse or neglect.
 - d. The Principal or Pastor will call the parents of the alleged abused child.
 - e. The Principal or Pastor must call the police and report the alleged incident.
 - f. Notify the Pastor and President of the Congregation as soon as possible of the alleged incident.
 - g. If neither of them is available, notify Vice President of the Congregation of the alleged incident.
 - h. The Principal or Pastor is required to call the Missouri Child Abuse and Hotline at 1-800-392-3738 and report the alleged abuse incident, as soon as possible, within the 24-hour mandated time limit, of receiving the allegation.
 - i. Complete the "Report of Suspected Incident of Child Abuse" form within 24 hours of receiving the allegation. The completed form should be given to the President of the Congregation. A copy should also be given to the Pastor. A copy of the Report of Suspected Incident of Child Abuse form is attached to this document.
 - j. If medical attention is sought, the "Accident Report Form" must also be completed by the Primary Worker and given to the people listed in section i. above.
2. The Responsibilities of the notified administrator (President, Pastor, Vice President, Principal)

Upon notification, the administrator will:

- a. If they have not already been contacted, contact the parents of the child/youth immediately.
 - b. Make sure that the police have been notified and the alleged abuse reported.
 - c. Make sure that the Children's Division has been notified and the alleged abuse reported within 24 hours of receiving the allegation.
 - d. Make sure that the local church insurance agent has been contacted.
 - e. Make sure an attorney has been contacted for the church.
 - f. Make sure that any appropriate Missouri District personnel have been contacted.
 - g. Keep a written record of each step taken including times and dates.
3. Furthermore, the President of the Congregation, Principal or the Pastor will:
- a. Serve as the news media liaison for the church.
 - b. Prepare a short, truthful, and carefully-worded statement to the Church Council and the congregation, withholding the names of the alleged victim, his/her parents and the alleged abuser.
 1. Make sure that the alleged abuser has been informed of the allegation. This person will be removed from further participation in church-sponsored programs or ministry involving children/youth until the allegation has been confirmed or dismissed. Based on the final outcome of the abuse allegation, the person's further involvement in church-

sponsored programs involving children and youth will be the joint decision of the Pastor of Public Ministry and President of the Congregation. The Pastor and the President of the Congregation may choose to involve a maximum of three other people in the decision-making process. It will be necessary to share the identity of the alleged victim and the alleged abuser with those people at that time. Those additional persons will keep all information shared with them confidential.

4. When a Pastor Is Accused:

If the Pastor is accused of a child abuse incident, then the senior-most person should

- a. Follow Steps 1a - j listed above under Basic Procedures for Responding to Allegations of Abuse
- b. It shall be the responsibility of the President of the Congregation, or Vice President of the Congregation to follow steps 1-10 under the Responsibilities of the Notified Administrator above.

St. Paul VBS, Sunday School, Youth Guidelines/ Procedures

Open Door Policy

Classroom doors should remain open unless there is a window in the door or a side window beside it. Doors should never be locked while persons are inside the room.

Teenage Workers

We recognize that there may be times when it is necessary or desirable for babysitters (paid or volunteer) who are themselves under age 18 to assist in caring for children during programs or activities. The following guidelines apply to teenage workers:

Must be at least age 14

Must be screened as specified above.

Must be under the supervision of an adult and must never be left alone with children.

Check-in/Check-out Procedure

For children below third grade, a security check-in/check-out procedure will be followed. The child will be signed in by a parent or guardian, who will receive a "child check" for the child similar to a claim check. The parent or guardian must present the "child check" in order to sign out the child from our care. In the event that a parent or guardian is unable to present the "child check," The director of that event will be contacted. the program director will be responsible for releasing the child to the care of a parent or guardian after discussing the surrounding circumstances with the parent or guardian.

Sick Child Policy

It is our desire to provide a healthy and safe environment for all of the children at St. Paul Church/School. Parents are encouraged to be considerate of other children when deciding whether to place a child under our care. In general, children with the following symptoms should NOT be dropped off:

Fever, diarrhea, or vomiting within the last 48 hours

Green or yellow runny nose

Eye or skin infections

Other symptoms of communicable or infectious disease

Children who are observed by our workers to be ill will be separated from other children and the parent or guardian will be contacted to request that the child be picked up for the day.

Medications Policy

It is the policy of St. Paul Church not to administer either prescription or non-prescription medications to the children under our care. Medications should be administered by a parent at home. Please see handbook for medication policy for distribution during school hours. Parents are reminded of our sick child policy.

Exceptions to the medications policy may be granted to parents of children with potentially life-threatening conditions (such as asthma or severe allergic reactions). Parents of such children should address their situation with school/church secretary to develop a plan of action.

Discipline Policy

It is the policy of St. Paul Lutheran Church and school not to administer corporal punishment, even if parents have suggested or given permission for it. There should be no spanking, grabbing, hitting, or other physical discipline of children. Workers should consult with specified Leader of the function if assistance is needed with disciplinary issues.

Restroom Guidelines

Children five years of age and younger should use a classroom bathroom if one is available. If a classroom bathroom is not available, workers should escort a group of children to the hallway bathroom. They should always go in a group, never taking a child to the bathroom alone. The workers should check the bathroom first to make sure that it is empty, and then allow the children inside. The workers should then remain outside the bathroom door and escort the children back to the classroom. If a child is taking longer than seems necessary, the worker should open the bathroom door and call the child's name. If a child requires assistance, the workers should prop open the bathroom door, and leave the stall door open as they assist the child.

For children over the age of five, at least one adult male should take boys to the restroom and at least one adult female should take girls. The worker should check the bathroom first to make sure that the bathroom is empty, and then allow the children inside. The worker should then remain outside the bathroom door and escort the children back to the classroom.

For the protection of all, workers should never be alone with a child in a bathroom with the door closed and never be in a closed bathroom stall with a child. Parents are strongly encouraged to have their children visit the bathroom prior to a scheduled function.

Accidental Injuries to Children

In the event that a child or youth is injured while under our care, the following steps should be followed:

For minor injuries, scrapes, and bruises, workers will provide First Aid (Band-Aids, etc.) as appropriate and will notify the child's parent or guardian of the injury at the time the child is picked up from our care.

For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple First Aid, the parent and/or guardian will immediately be summoned in addition to the event director/coach/teacher. If warranted by circumstances, an ambulance will be called.

Once the child has received appropriate medical attention, an incident report will be completed in the case of injuries requiring treatment by a medical professional.

Training

St. Paul Lutheran Church/School will provide training on this child protection policy to all new childcare workers on an as needed basis. All workers are strongly encouraged to attend these training events.

**Safe Church Covenant of
St. Paul Lutheran Church and School**

St Paul Lutheran Church and School is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children, youth, and volunteers who participate in ministries and activities sponsored by the church. The following policy statements reflect our congregation's unwavering commitment *"In Christ, We Strengthen the Saved and Seek the Lost"* with each other and those who are not yet a part of God's family by demonstrating the love of Christ in ways that will encourage and strengthen each person in the faith.

1. No adult or youth who has been convicted of any of the following, sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, violent crime or neglect of a minor or adult, will be allowed to work with children or youth at any church-sponsored event or activity.
2. All adult or youth volunteers involved with children or youth of our congregation must be regularly-attending members or friends of the congregation before beginning a volunteer assignment.
3. No adult or youth will ever be completely alone with children and/or youth during a church-sponsored event or activity.
4. Adult/youth volunteers and/or staff who work with children and youth will attend training and educational events provided by the congregation to be informed of church policies.
5. Adult/youth volunteers and/or staff shall immediately report to their supervisor any behavior that seems inappropriate.

Please answer each of the following questions:

1. As a volunteer or staff member in this congregation, are you committed to demonstrating the love of Christ in ways that will encourage and strengthen each person in the faith?

☐ Yes ☐ No
2. As a volunteer or staff member in this congregation, do you agree to observe and abide by all church policies as they relate to your volunteer position?

☐ Yes ☐ No
3. As a volunteer or staff member in this congregation, do you agree to refrain from being alone at any time with a child or youth at any church-sponsored activity or event?

☐ Yes ☐ No
4. As a volunteer or staff member in this congregation, do you agree to participate in training and educational events provided by the congregation that are related to your area of volunteer ministry?

☐ Yes ☐ No

5. As a volunteer or staff member in this congregation do you agree to promptly report abusive or inappropriate behavior to your supervisor? _____ Yes _____ No

6. As a volunteer or staff member in this congregation, do you agree to inform the Pastor or President of the Congregation if you have ever been convicted of child abuse/neglect? _____ Yes _____ No

7. I have read and will abide by any and all guidelines outlined in the **Safe Church Policy of St Paul Lutheran Church and School.** _____ Yes _____ No

By filling in my full name and the date below, I acknowledge that I have read the **Safe Church Policy of St. Paul Lutheran Church and School** and this **Safe Church Covenant**, and I agree to observe and abide by the policies set forth therein. I further acknowledge that my full name and date recorded below are equivalent to my legal signature.

Signature of Applicant

Date

Full Name - Printed

**Authorization and Request for Criminal Records Check
for St. Paul Lutheran Church and School**

I, _____, hereby authorize St Paul Lutheran Church and School to conduct a criminal records check. I further authorize any agency, police department, sheriff's office, or reference to release information regarding any record of charges or convictions contained in its files, or in any criminal file maintained on me, whether said file is a local, state, or national file, and including but not limited to accusations and convictions for crimes committed against minors, to the fullest extent permitted by state and federal law. I do release said agency, police department, and/or person from all liability that may result from any such disclosure made in response to this request.

Signature of Applicant

Date

Print applicant's full name: _____

Print all other names that have been used by applicant (if any):

Date of Birth: _____ Place of Birth: _____

Social Security Number: (Required) _____

Street Address: _____ Phone Number: _____

City, State, ZIP: _____