



Child Protection Policy

Our Savior Lutheran Church
Norfolk, NE



Our Savior Lutheran Staff and Volunteers,

Our Savior Lutheran Church is absolutely thrilled that we have a truly gifted staff and incredible volunteers like you that are willing to serve! When the church is successful in working with children and youth the difference isn't measured just in the lives of these children, we believe through Christ it will be seen for generations to come. Our Savior believes that together we can make an impact through this ministry that will change our community one precious life at a time.

What you do in working with children and youth is more than providing childcare. Too often people refer to children as the "church of tomorrow", we disagree. Children are the "church of the present" and these children are being equipped to point people to Christ right now!

As a staff or volunteer here at Our Savior, the church thanks you for your willingness to be used by God to do His work. Serving at Our Savior isn't just about giving. It's joining a team of other like-minded people who are willing to grow spiritually and want the same spiritual growth for our church youth. Our Saviors prayer is that through Family Life Ministry you will experience powerful and lasting life change as you make a difference in the lives of the children in our community.

Of utmost importance is that the church points children and youth to Christ in a safe environment. To do so we have adopted a Child Protection Policy to protect the children and youth at Our Savior. Our Savior Lutheran Church invites you to partner with us so that we together can point children and youth to Christ!

In Him,



DCE Christine Ekberg
Director of Family Life



Pastor Lee Weander
Senior Pastor



Trish Weander
Children's Ministry Director

*Edited by Jason Doele and Diane Becker

Child Protection Policy

Purpose:

We at Our Savior Lutheran Church of Norfolk, Nebraska, seek to honor God and our commitment to educating children and youth. Christ declares in Mark 10:13-14, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." We have resolved to provide a secure, safe, nurturing environment for the instruction and participation of children and youth. This policy has been established to protect all who participate in child and youth ministry, which includes but is not limited to children, youth, volunteers, paid ministry staff and the church family. These guidelines are to be followed by every individual who serves in our ministry to minors.

Guiding Principles:

What protects our children and youth also serves to protect our church from unfounded charges and legal liability. In no way will we allow these policies to interfere with our service of Christ; rather, they will enhance our Christian service. We are motivated because we are entrusted with the spiritual, educational and moral development of our children and youth. We are dedicated to providing an environment that nurtures the dignity and safety of each person and where healthy and appropriate relationships between all individuals are encouraged and expected.

Child abuse and sexual misconduct can tear the fabric of relationships within the church. These acts are reprehensible and disrespectful to our Heavenly Father, and the mission of the church cannot be achieved when such hurt is inflicted. It is practical to prevent such injuries and occurrences and to have a clear plan of action and response should an allegation be made. Abuse of any kind is not to be tolerated.

The Lord gives us guidance in Scripture:

"Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple." 1 Corinthians 3:16-17

"Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well. This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands." 1 John 5:1

"Jesus said to his disciples, 'Things that cause people to sin are bound to come, but woe to that person through whom they come. It would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around his neck than for him to cause one of these little ones to sin. So watch yourselves.' " Luke 17:1-3a

Standard of Conduct:

All workers whether volunteer or paid, full-time or part-time, that work with children 18 years of age and under, of Our Savior Lutheran Church are expected to comply with the established Child Protection Policy. Any actions contrary to the church policy will be dealt with swiftly and may include disciplinary measures up to and including termination, as well as legal ramifications when applicable.

Definition of Terms:

Abuse – Any form of conduct that is unlawful, contrary to the moral instructions and doctrines of the church, and/or causes injury to another person directly or indirectly.

Emotional Abuse – any attempt to control another person's life through words, threats, fears, and/or deprivation in such a way that it impairs a person's God-given sense of self-worth.

Physical Abuse – any non-accidental act that violates the dignity of the image of God in another person, inflicting dehumanizing pain or injury. Physically abusive behavior also includes physical neglect, which is failure to do what one is supposed to be doing to meet the physical needs of someone in his or her care.

Sexual Abuse – any sexual experience forced on one person by another, which may or may not involve physical contact between people. Sexual abuse also includes any inappropriate sexual encounter, even if consensual at the time.

Child Abuse – Any form of intentional or malicious infliction of injury to the detriment of the physical, moral, or mental well-being of a minor.

Minor – A person under the age of 18.

Personnel (sometimes "worker") – Any volunteer, employee, or church worker working in or on behalf of the congregation of Our Savior Lutheran Church Norfolk, Nebraska.

Supervisory role – Any adult in charge of a specified event or activity.

The Policy:

Our Savior Lutheran Church will engage in child risk management strategies in the selection of church workers, both paid and volunteer, who work with children and youth. The Director of Family Life, or other applicable leadership in the children and youth ministries of Our Savior Lutheran Church, is responsible for sharing the following guidelines with paid and volunteer personnel and monitoring their compliance.

For personnel over the age of 18:

1. All staff and volunteers working with a minor will be given a copy of the Child Protection Policy, and are expected to read the same.
2. All staff and volunteers are to fill out background check information online with Protect My Ministries and give permission to Our Savior Lutheran Church Norfolk, Nebraska to run the following information: Social Security Number Verification, Address History Trace, National Criminal Database Search and National Sex Offender Registry Search.
3. All staff and volunteers, as long as they are employed (paid or volunteer) by Our Savior Lutheran Church Norfolk will have their background check ran yearly.

For personnel under the age of 18:

1. With employee applicants and volunteers under the age of 18, it is not permissible to do background checks.

Guidelines:

1. Adults who have been convicted of either sexual or physical abuse of children/youth or those who have a history of inappropriate conduct with children will not be employed and shall not volunteer service in any church-sponsored activity or program for minors.
2. Staff and volunteers who work with children and youth shall observe the “two-person rule” or the “open door policy” at ALL times. The “two-person rule” requires that employees, volunteers and supervisors shall make every reasonable effort to avoid situations where an employed or volunteer worker is alone with children or youth without a partner. The “open door policy” requires the door be open at all times or have a window accessible to public viewing.
3. All children should be properly supervised when present in the building. Parents and workers should not leave children unattended or let them wander the building without proper adult supervision.
4. One light must remain on at all times in a classroom that is being used.
5. All special events, field trips, extra-curricular activities that are an off-campus activities require parental permission slips. Signed permission slips must be gathered by the adult worker coordinating the activity.
6. Personnel in supervisory roles shall document any incidents which could be perceived as sexual misconduct or child abuse. Personnel shall be required to record times, dates, circumstances, witnesses and any other such information as might be helpful in a follow-up investigation.
7. There are no “secret” activities or organizations recognized by Our Savior Lutheran Church. Parents are welcome to and encouraged to observe their child in any class or activity. As a courtesy to our personnel, we ask that parents inform the supervising adult of their desire to observe, prior to the beginning of the activity. Parents should not disrupt or interfere with the activity. Personnel reserve the right to deny any parent the opportunity to assist.
8. Alcohol should not be used by adult supervisors prior to or during activities scheduled with children and youth. Alcohol is not permitted to be provided to anyone under age 21. Alcohol is not permitted on church campus.
9. All workers should use good judgment when having physical contact with children and youth. Workers are cautioned not to touch minors in any way that would appear intimate, threatening or frightening.
10. If a worker suspects that a minor is in an unsafe or abusive home he/she must report it immediately to a supervisory church official.
11. If a worker is seen endangering a child or acting inappropriately, a church staff member must be contacted immediately.
12. At the time of registration, parents will be given an opportunity to decline having their child photographed or videoed for use in publications or displays.
13. Our guidelines and procedures for reporting suspected incidents of abuse, or any behavior, which seems abusive or inappropriate are labeled in the Child Protection Policy.

Child Protection Response Plan

Any worker in the church, professional or lay, paid or volunteer, who becomes aware of information that would lead a reasonable person to believe that child abuse has occurred will notify the Senior Pastor in person within five working days of becoming aware of the information. The same will also provide written statements documenting the behavior in question.

The Senior Pastor and other personnel (if expanded involvement is deemed necessary) will make every reasonable effort to conduct all proceedings in a manner that will protect the confidentiality of all parties. Parties to the complaint should treat the matter under consideration with discretion and respect for the reputation of all parties involved.

Our Savior Lutheran Church prohibits retaliation against an individual for reporting sexual harassment, or for participating in a process to rectify inappropriate situations.

Corrective Measures:

When it has been determined that sexual harassment has occurred, steps will be taken to ensure the harassment is stopped immediately. Corrective measures consistent with Biblical principles and the severity of the offense will be impressed and may include but are not limited to:

- a. Reprimand
- b. Suspension
- c. Dismissal

A record of such sanctions will become a part of the harasser's personnel records.

My fellow Christians, keep your minds on all that is true, all that is noble, all that is right, all that is pure, all that is lovely, all that is appealing—on anything that is excellent or that deserves praise... Then the God of peace will be with you.

Philippians 4:8-9

Confidential Child Protection Report

Our Savior Lutheran Church Norfolk, Nebraska

Name of worker (paid or volunteer) observing or receiving disclosure of child abuse _____

Victim's name _____ Victim's age/Date of birth _____

Victim's race _____ Victim's sex ____ Male ____ Female

Date of this report: ____/____/____ Date of incident: ____/____/____ Time of incident ____:____ am/pm

Location of incident _____

Victim's statement (detailed summary): _____

Name of person accused of abuse: _____

Relationship of accused to victim (paid staff, volunteer, family member, other) _____

Nature of the victim's condition, including any evidence of previous injuries, abuse or neglect:

Reported to:

Date

Name

Senior Pastor

Law Enforcement

Victim's Parents

Hospital

Doctor

Lawyer

Other

Name of person completing this report: _____

Phone number _____