

# TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

## Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Policy

Trinity Lutheran Church desires that it be a safe and secure place for all children, youth and adults who attend or who participate in activities. Incidents of child sexual abuse or neglect cut across every racial, social, economic, and religious boundary. Each year, over one million children are victims. Sexual abuse is devastating. It causes deep and sometimes lifelong psychological damage to the victim.

### I. Definition

- A. Child sexual abuse is any sexual activity with a child under eighteen (18) years of age. The abuser may be an adult, an adolescent, or another child, provided the child is four years older than the victim.
- B. Child sexual abuse may be violent or non-violent. All child sexual abuse is an exploitation of a child's vulnerability and powerlessness in which the abuser is fully responsible for the actions.
- C. Child sexual abuse is criminal behavior that involves children in sexual behaviors for which they are not personally, socially, or developmentally ready.
- D. Child sexual abuse includes behaviors that involve touching and non-touching aspects.
  1. Types of abuse that involve touching include, but are not limited to:
    - Fondling
    - Oral, genital, and anal penetration
    - Intercourse
    - Forcible rape
  2. Types of abuse that do not involve touching include, but are not limited to:
    - Verbal comments
    - Pornographic videos or pictures
    - Obscene phone calls
    - Exhibitionism
    - Allowing children to witness sexual activity
- E. Sexual behavior between a child and an adult is always considered forced whether or not consented to by the child.

## II. Child Sexual Abuse Policies

- A. All employees and volunteers must complete and submit a Self-Disclosure Statement prior to any involvement with Trinity Lutheran Church programs or activities. Annually, a Self-Disclosure Statement must be completed in order to continue employment.
- B. All volunteers who work with children or youth must complete the Self-Disclosure Statement prior to any involvement with Trinity Lutheran Church programs or activities. No exceptions will be allowed.
- C. Adults who have been convicted of or have pleaded guilty to either child sexual abuse or physical abuse will not be permitted to work with children or youth in any capacity.
- D. Survivors of childhood sexual or physical abuse must discuss their desire to work with children or youth with a professional counselor (i.e. therapist, pastor, psychologist) prior to engaging in any staff or volunteer capacity.
- E. Any inappropriate conduct or relationship between an adult and a child or youth must be confronted immediately and investigated. Such inappropriate behavior must be reported to the Pastor or President of the Church Council. In the event that the Pastor or President of the Church Council commits inappropriate behavior, the report should be made to the Vice President of the Church Council.