

## **SPECIFIC ACTS THAT ARE IN VIOLATION OF THE POLICY**

The following acts and omissions are violations of this policy and will not be tolerated or accepted during any activity or program and are to be immediately reported to the designated program staff after the safety of the child, youth, or minor involved has been assured.

- Any form of sexual abuse as described under the section titled “What Is Child Sexual Abuse”.
- Infliction or physically abusive behavior or bodily injury to a minor.
- Physical neglect of a minor, including failure to provide adequate supervision in relation to the activities of Epiphany Lutheran Church.
- The presence or possession of obscene or pornographic materials at any function of Epiphany Lutheran Church.
- The presence, possession, or being under the influence of any illegal or illicit drugs.
- Epiphany Lutheran Church is a weapon free, smoke free and drug free facility.

## **WORKER INFORMATION FORM**

Workers with minors of Epiphany Lutheran Church will be required to complete a Volunteer Worker Application providing personal and confidential information necessary to perform security background checks and reference checks on each individual worker. While this process understandably trespasses into the privacy of our lives, the security of our children outweighs the personal invasion inherent with such investigation and disclosures. All personal information voluntarily disclosed, and results of all security background and reference checks or the refusal of any person to participate in a program or activity in lieu of such disclosure requirements will be maintained in the strictest of confidence.

Only qualified persons (Pastor(s) and the Minister of Christian Education) may view information obtained on the criminal history record transcript.

EPIPHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH

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EPIPHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH

# **CHILD PROTECTION Policies and Procedures**

TRAINING GUIDE



**FOR VOLUNTEER WORKERS**

## INTRODUCTION

Thank you for volunteering to work in the Children and Youth Ministries at Epiphany Lutheran Church. Your participation will assist us as we work together to provide a safe place for our children to learn of God's love.

Churches need to be prepared! This is the legal reason for creating safety policies, but there is a deeper, more significant reason – to protect the children. Policies are only printed expressions of the value placed on children. If the only reason for safety policies is to protect the organization, the church has missed God's love for children.

Some people may think that our church is too small, or that our church "knows" everyone and therefore does not need to worry about these safety problems. Remember it's much easier to make plans and develop safety policies as a means of prevention, rather than wait until they are needed as a reaction to an abuse case.

Some churches tend to take the biblical concept of trusting God to an extreme. They think nothing bad can happen to Christians. We must not be unwise regarding children's safety. There is no automatic protection from evil for the faithful. We're to watch and be ready. Accidents will always happen. There will always be unforeseen circumstances that need to be handled. But the church should build into its organization sturdy safety-policy fire blocks into the walls of its ministry to protect children.

Epiphany Lutheran Church desires to be "a church that cares" through the implementation of this Child Protection Policy. Understanding the provisions and the use of these provisions will enable Epiphany Lutheran Church to provide a more safe and secure environment for each individual of our church family and its guests.

## WORKER SUPERVISION BEHAVIORS

### "BEST PRACTICES" *(continued)*

- The doors of the meeting room that involve children/youth activities should be left open whenever possible. This rule does not apply if the door contains a window.
- Epiphany has an "open door" policy, which means that any parent or guardian or church leader may enter a meeting room at any time.
- Child Protection Incident Reports should be completed whenever anyone has reason to believe that a child has been abused. Completed forms should be kept in a locked file for a period of two years.
- Non-Abuse incident reports, permission forms, and code of conduct forms (for youth) must be used. Completed forms should be kept in a file for a period of two years.
- Incidents of suspected child abuse must be reported immediately to the Pastor, the ministry leader and to the authorities. (See Child Abuse Reporting)
- The safety and protection of children and youth should be part of the planning of every activity and event.

## WORKER SUPERVISION BEHAVIORS

### “BEST PRACTICES”

- Epiphany Church leaders shall follow the “**two adult/two child**” rule, which means no one adult shall be left alone with one child.
- If a youth worker is going to be alone with a child or youth for some appropriate reason, written permission must be given by the parent or guardian prior to the meeting. The written permission must include the reason for and the date of the meeting and be signed by the parent or guardian.
- If an emergency situation results in the need for an adult to be left alone with a child or youth, the supervisor must call the parent or guardian and must then complete a follow up form explaining the emergency reason and circumstances.
- Activities, on site and off site must be supervised at all times.
- No child or youth will ever be left alone. Supervision must continue until all children and youth are picked up by their parent or guardian.
- All activities, whether “in house” or “off site”, should be concluded at the church. The parent or guardian may then pick up the children. Paid church leaders should not transport any child, other than their own, home after an event.
- For all overnight activities, where there are both male and female youth involved, there must be at least one unrelated male and female supervisor.

### PURPOSE

It is the purpose of the members and staff of Epiphany Lutheran Church to provide a safe and secure environment for preschoolers, children, youth and mentally handicapped persons entrusted to our care. We do this to encourage those preschoolers, children, and youth and their families to grow in their relationship with God and one another.

A safe and secure environment includes a formal, written policy to help prevent the occurrence of child abuse. The following policy and procedures are for the protection of our preschoolers, children, youth, employees, volunteers and our entire church family at Epiphany Lutheran Church.

### SCOPE

This policy shall apply to all current and future workers, compensated and/or volunteer who will have the responsibility of supervising the activities of preschoolers, children, youth, and mentally handicapped persons 18 and older.

### DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this policy the following definitions shall apply:

1. “Preschooler,” “child,” “children,” “youth,” and “minor” shall be defined as any individual under the age of eighteen (18)
2. “Mentally Handicapped” shall be defined as anyone eighteen or older whose mental capacity is that of a minor.
3. “Adult” shall be defined as any individual at least eighteen (18) years of age.
4. “Worker” shall be defined as any adult who serves as a volunteer and/or paid person given the responsibility of working with or caring for minors.
5. “Teenage Worker” shall be defined as any worker at least fourteen years old or older, but under the age of eighteen (18) enlisted to assist with the care of minors.
6. “Child Abuse” shall be defined as verbal, physical, emotional, or sexual abuse of a preschooler, child, youth, or minor.
7. “Criminal Background Check” (CBC) is the procedure used by qualified agencies to check the background of adult workers for criminal activity.

## WHAT IS CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE?

In general, child sexual abuse includes any form of sexual contact or exploitation in which a minor is being used for the sexual stimulation of the perpetrator.

“Sexual Abuse: any act of a sexual nature upon or with a child. The act may be for the sexual gratification of the perpetrator or a third party. This would, therefore, include not only anyone who actively participated in the sexual activity, but anyone who allowed or encouraged it.” (Ohio Department of Human Services Office of Compliance and Review)

Child sexual abuse includes behaviors that involve touching and non-touching aspects.

Types of abuse that involve touching include: fondling; oral, genital, and anal penetration; intercourse; forcible rape.

Types of sexual abuse that do not involve touching include: verbal comments; pornographic videos; obscene phone calls; exhibitionism; allowing children to witness sexual activity.

## CHILD ABUSE REPORTING

Any person having cause to believe that a child’s physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect shall report the person’s belief in accordance with this procedure. During the hours of 9 AM until 4 PM, abuse or neglect is reported to Fairfield County Job and Family Services at 740-653-4060. Outside of those hours, reports are filed with the Fairfield County Sheriff’s Department at 740-653-5223.

## CHILD ABUSE REPORTING PROCEDURE

1. This procedure is not only required as a condition of your job or volunteer position, but it may also be required by law.
  2. Upon the first suspicion of an instance of child abuse, the following steps should be taken immediately:
    - a. Do not treat the suspicion as frivolous.
    - b. Document what you have seen and heard at once, being as specific as possible.
- It is the policy of Epiphany Lutheran Church that any abuse or neglect occurring on our property, at an Epiphany sponsored event, or by any of our staff members be reported immediately to one of the paid staff ministers of the church (excluding the accused) even if you chose to file a report with the authorities yourself.
  - Data concerning the child, name, address and other pertinent information will be obtained through discussions with the initial reporter and other staff members. The names and address of the person responsible for the care of the child, if available, will be obtained. **Use the Child Protection Incident Report located in the Administrative Policy document.**
  - The minister receiving the initial report will be responsible for filing a report with the authorities that same day or confirming that a report has already been filed with the authorities. The minister must then proceed with further steps outlined in the Child Abuse Reporting section of the Administrative Policy.

**IMPORTANT: A complete listing of the reporting steps are available in the appendix section of the Administrative Copy of this policy. The Ministry Leader may ask you to assist with some portions of those steps.**