

**2015**

Trinity Lutheran Church

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# **SAFETY PLAN**

**[TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH]**

Safety and Security Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines

104 1st Street SE Hayfield MN 55940

## **Safety and Security Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines**

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### **Trinity’s Mission Statement**

To proclaim God’s grace in Christ through Word and Sacrament;  
To nurture faith through Christian education and fellowship; and  
To bring the Gospel to the world community through Christian witness, sacrifice, and love.

### **Trinity’s Commitment**

The following policies and procedures are to help ensure that Trinity Lutheran Church’s ministry is a place where all people can feel they are safe, loved, and valued. The congregation is committed to providing a safe environment for all.

#### **Why is a safety and security policy necessary?**

To affirm and protect children and youth  
To affirm and protect volunteers and staff  
To raise awareness  
To be a leader and advocate in our community  
To affirm and protect Trinity Lutheran Church

#### **Parental Responsibility**

All parents should be encouraged to assume individual responsibility for their children and not assume the church sponsored activity or presence on the church premises is a guarantee of the child’s safety. Children should not be left unattended in the church building.

## Supervision Procedures

1. Adults responsible for any church activity involving individual contact with children/youth will be interviewed, must consent to complete background checks, and are encouraged to participate in training/preparation meetings. These steps are crucial to creating a safe and hospitable environment for children to grow in their faith. Training for adults is essential since some of these policies cannot be practiced with the children. It is expected that all volunteers who work with children at Trinity will participate in one safety training per year.
2. Two Deep Leadership: Employees and volunteer workers are encouraged not to be alone with children, but to work in groups—at least pairs. This is true in the church building and also at church sponsored events elsewhere. Doors must be left open if there is only one adult in a room with a minor. Speaking to a minor one on one should only be done in a public setting with others present.
3. Drop off/Pick up: Supervision of children/youth should be provided before and after the event until all participants are in the custody of parents or legal guardians or have left the premises. Parents please make sure your children/youth safely reach their leader. After Sunday school, parents/guardians or other authorized person need to pick up their Preschool through 1<sup>st</sup> grade children in the classroom as quickly as possible after the 10:15 end of class. After WASS, parents need to arrange for their child to be picked up no later than 5:30 pm. WASS is finished at 5 pm.
4. Parental permission including signed medical release and emergency contacts is needed before taking minors on trips. **Confirmation Group Guides will get a form for each child in their small group each fall, and keep that form in their folder so Cindy can have access to it if the youth goes on another church trip. Group guides will take forms with them on outings with their small group.**
5. Respect of Privacy: Adult leaders need to respect the privacy of minors in situations such as use of rest rooms, changing into swimming suits or taking showers on overnight outings and intrude only insofar as health and safety require. They also need to protect their own privacy in similar situations. Children needing to use the restroom should be escorted to the door of the appropriate restroom. The volunteer should wait at the door until the child is finished. If the child needs your help with buttoning or zipping, have them come out into the hall for your help.
6. Overnight Guidelines: A minimum of two adults should be present at an overnight event. If participants are both male and female, the adults should be both male and female. If these conditions cannot be met, the event should be canceled. On outings that require that an adult share the same room as a minor, the adult must not occupy the same bed as a minor, with the exception of a parent or guardian. Males and females should sleep in separate rooms/areas at events and have separate access to bathroom facilities. When separate facilities are not available, times for male and female use should be scheduled and posted for showers.
7. Transportation: Transportation to and from events is the responsibility of the families. If youth drive or ride with another youth to or home from a church sponsored event, it is with parental consent only. Transportation during an event can only be provided by a leader who is at least 21 years old. During events, drivers should avoid dropping off or picking up minors without being accompanied by another adult. The staff shall set standards for who is permitted to drive during events. All drivers must possess and show proof of a current driver's license and carry insurance. Any deviations should have prior consent of the parent and be reported to the next person in the line of responsibility (voice consent is acceptable).

8. Touch: Avoid all inappropriate touch. See guidelines for appropriate and inappropriate affection on page 4.
9. No sexual behavior is permitted with minors or between minors. Other behaviors which are abusive but do not involve physical contact are also prohibited. Examples are sexual comments, showing pornographic sexual material and the exposure of sexual parts of any person's body.
10. Volunteers should be alert for inappropriate behavior or relationships with children or youth. Questionable behaviors should be reported to the proper supervising staff person or pastor.
11. Alcohol/Drugs are prohibited for adults participating in youth events. Youth and child participants will be sent home immediately if found with alcohol or drugs. Supervising adults should be informed of prescription drugs brought to an event by a minor.
12. Firearms: The possession of firearms is prohibited during events.
13. Equality of Treatment: Adults should not give preferential treatment to certain minors and not to others. All minors are equals and should be treated as such.
14. Dating: Adult leaders cannot date or be romantically involved with youth.
15. Reporting of Abuse: It is the policy of Trinity Lutheran Church that anyone who has cause to suspect a minor has been or will be the victim of abuse or neglect, must report the case immediately (not more than 24 hours after cause) by telephone or personal visit to Trinity staff and/or appropriate authorities. Concern for the alleged victim, good judgment and open communication are the standards surrounding the reporting of an alleged case of abuse. Keep calm, stay with the participant and know that you don't have to deal with the situation or information alone. All reports are treated with confidentiality by Trinity staff and by authorities. Those who care for children and youth MUST report abuse!

## **How to Report Abuse**

If you do suspect a child is being harmed, reporting your suspicions may protect the child and get help for the family. Responding quickly is essential to prevent or stop abuse.

- If you suspect a child is being abused or harmed in any way, talk to the Pastor or Children, Youth and Family Ministry Director at Trinity.
- If a child or vulnerable adult is in immediate danger call **911**.

### **Protection for Reporters**

- No civil or criminal liability for good faith reports.
- Identity of reporter not divulged (except with consent or by court order).
- Penalties for retaliation against reporter.
- Civil protection for good faith investigative activities.

As people entrusted with a child, youth, or vulnerable adult's care, we must report abuse!

## Display of Affection Guidelines

### Appropriate

- Ask permission before touching
- Quick hugs
- Pats on shoulder or back
- Handshakes
- High-fives
- Verbal praise
- Touching hands, face, shoulders, and arms
- Arms around shoulders
- Hold hands in prayer or when person is upset
- Sitting close to small children
- Kneeling or bending down for hugs with small children
- Holding or picking up children 3 years old and younger

### Inappropriate

- Any form of unwanted affection
- Full frontal hugs or bear hugs
- Touching bottoms, chests, or genital areas
- Lying down or sleeping beside children
- Massages
- Patting children on thigh, knee, leg
- Tickling or wrestling
- Touching or hugging from behind
- Games involving inappropriate touching
- Kisses on the mouth
- Showing affection in isolated rooms of building
- Compliments that relate to physique or body development

## Fire Evacuation Plan for Trinity

In the event of a fire emergency, the following action should be taken:

1. Staff or supervising leaders will immediately dial 911 and report that Trinity Lutheran Church at 104 First Street SE in Hayfield has a fire. Emergency phone numbers and church address are posted by each phone in the building.
2. Staff, ushers, and leadership on site will immediately begin to assist any class, group, or volunteers out of the building through the nearest exit.
3. Sunday school teachers will move students directly out the nearest exit. PARENTS SHOULD NOT TRY TO GET THEIR CHILDREN OUT OF CLASSROOMS DURING A FIRE ALARM. THIS WILL CREATE CONFUSION AND DIFFICULTY IN EVACUATION. Teachers will take attendance lists with them. All fire exit doors are unlocked from the inside at all times.
4. All groups evacuating will come together on the empty church lot, a safe distance away from the structure and emergency vehicles. PARENTS MUST MEET CHILDREN AT THE EMPTY LOT. DO NOT TAKE CHILDREN OFF GROUNDS UNTIL THEY ARE ACCOUNTED FOR. Any available adults will help supervise children. If there is direct knowledge of people still in the structure, inform the fire department immediately upon their arrival.
5. Cars and vehicles should not leave the area until told. They may cause bottle neck at the intersections and make it difficult for emergency vehicles to get to the site of the fire. Let all emergency vehicles have the right of way.
6. Fire extinguishers are located: one in the resource room, one in the short hall between the resource room and the robe room, one in the narthex in a little nook beside the elevator, one in the kitchen under the first aid kit by the refrigerator, and one in the hallway outside the boiler room.
7. The staff as leaving the building will have pre-assigned areas (with focus on bathrooms) to check for any people left behind in evacuation before leaving the building themselves.

There are four exits that lead directly to the outside: two in the narthex, one in the SE corner of the church near the offices, and one in the rear of the building going from the puppet room (the room next to the Women's bathroom) up the stairs to the back alley of the church. During a fire, evacuate directly outside through the nearest exit and proceed to the empty church lot on the east side of the building.

Sunday school rooms will be posted with the nearest exit which should be used. If that exit is blocked by fire, teachers should calmly lead the children to the next closest exit.

## Storm Plan for Trinity Hayfield

If the area is under **a storm watch**:

- keep a close eye on the sky for bad weather.
- keep a battery operated device on hand for weather updates.
- be prepared to move indoors as soon as you are notified.
- Always have at least one adult in each room that the children are in.
- keep the kids calm by remaining calm yourself.
- In the event of a storm warning, all individuals will move quickly and calmly to the Fellowship Hall in the basement of the church.

If the area is under **storm warning or tornado watch**:

- keep the kids in the basement of the church, including the Fellowship Hall and lower level classrooms.
- keep a battery operated device on hand for weather updates.
- be prepared to move to safer areas under stairs soon as you are notified of tornado activity.
- Always have at least one adult in each room that the children are in.
- keep the kids calm by remaining calm yourself.
- In the event of a tornado warning, all individuals will move quickly and calmly to the designated shelter areas in the basement of the church.

If the area is under a **tornado warning**:

- Quickly and calmly move the kids to any of the following labeled storm shelters including:
  - the boiler room.
  - the WELCA closet in the short hall across from the boiler room.
  - the boys bathroom and storage area under the stairs by the movie theater.
  - Either of the two family/handicap accessible bathrooms at the west end of the Fellowship Hall.
  - the storage room between the family bathrooms at the west end.
  - You could also shut all the classroom doors in the basement level and use the SS Hallway as a storm shelter.
- Each of these rooms have a red label on the door which says, "STORM SHELTER".
- keep a battery operated device on hand for weather updates.
- there are flashlights located in each storm shelter rooms.
- Keep the kids calm by remaining calm yourself. You can lead them in singing or share happy stories.
- Always have at least one adult in each room that the children are in.

## Code Blue – Crisis and Emergency Management Policy

Emergency Building Security Procedures when a violent intruder is identified at the church. This policy is from the Hayfield School District thus using familiar language for the children in our church community.

1. When a violent intruder is identified in the building a “CODE BLUE” status will be implemented immediately.
2. Since we do not have an intercom system at Trinity, the person identifying the threat will shout, “CODE BLUE” to the nearest group of people, and they will shout the message on to the next group, etc.
  - a. The people in the kitchen (if this is during SS) or the ushers (if this is during worship) will call 9-1-1 and stay on the line with the 9-1-1 dispatcher.
  - b. Pertinent information for law enforcement authorities:
    - i. The Nature of the problem
    - ii. Our location and the specific location of any intruder
    - iii. Any injuries
    - iv. Suspect description, number of suspects, any weapons, etc.
3. “CODE BLUE” means:
  - a. All children, staff, and adults clear the hallways.
  - b. Go to the nearest secure place (any room with a lock on the door). Any children/adults in the hallways should immediately go to the closest lockable room.
    - i. upstairs that would include: Cindy’s office, Resource Room, Computer Lab
    - ii. downstairs includes: Kitchen, West Family bathrooms, Art room, Youth Room, Closet inside boys bathroom, WELCA closet, Boiler room
  - c. Lock doors to the classrooms.
  - d. Turn off all the lights in locked rooms.
  - e. Go to the most remote part of the room so you can’t be seen from the door/hall, or windows.
  - f. Close drapes and shades on all windows in the room.
  - g. Be very quiet.
  - h. Remain in the classroom until you hear the all clear password (CODE BLUE ALL CLEAR and the date that day) or directed by law enforcement.
4. WAIT
  - a. Once you have secured your room/area, do nothing until the all clear password (CODE BLUE ALL CLEAR and the date) is given, or until you have been given directions from a police officer.
  - b. If asked to do something, do it in PAIRS only. Use the buddy system.
  - c. You and/or your class may be directed by the police to the emergency staging area they set up.
5. If an armed individual comes into the classroom:
  - a. If possible, shout the “CODE BLUE” warning.
  - b. If possible call 9-1-1 and leave your phone on so the dispatcher can hear any conversation.
  - c. Do as the armed intruder demands.
    - i. Do not make sudden moves, which could frighten subjects (ask for permission to move).
    - ii. Never argue.
    - iii. Take your time and remain calm.



- iv. Keep children as calm as possible.
    - v. Physical force should not be used unless someone's life is in imminent danger.
  - d. Talk to the armed intruder
    - i. Learn as much as you can about the armed intruder.
    - ii. Keep the armed intruder's attention on you, not on your students.
    - iii. If more than one person is involved, concentrate on only the one person.
  - e. Be observant
    - i. Mentally record a detailed description of the individual and the weapon.
    - ii. Identify a distinctive feature and continue to concentrate on that one item.
    - iii. Remember what object the intruder touches and preserve them for Law Enforcement.
    - iv. It is critically important to preserve the crime scene and never touch or move or disturb any possible evidence or objects at that site.
6. If the armed intruder starts shooting:
  - a. Tell students to get down and lay on the floor.
  - b. Take cover on the floor and/or behind equipment.
7. If the threat is outside the church, we will shout "code blue external lockdown" and lock all of the outside church doors to keep the threat out.

## **Bullying Policy**

### **RATIONALE**

Trinity Lutheran Church is completely opposed to bullying and will not tolerate it. It is entirely contrary to the values and principles we work and live by. All members of the church community have a right to worship and participate in a secure and caring environment. They also have a responsibility to contribute, in whatever way they can, to the protection and maintenance of such an environment.

### **PRINCIPLES**

- Students have a right to learn free from intimidation and fear.
- The needs of the victim are paramount.
- Trinity will not tolerate bullying behavior.
- Bullied students will be listened to.
- Reported incidents will be taken seriously and thoroughly investigated.

### **DEFINITION OF BULLYING**

Bullying is an act of aggression, causing embarrassment, pain or discomfort to someone. It can take a number of forms; physical, verbal, making gestures, extortion and exclusion. It is an abuse of power. It can be planned and organized, or it may unintentional. It may be perpetrated by individuals or by groups of pupils.

### **FORMS OF BULLYING**

- Physical violence such as hitting, pushing or spitting at another student.
- Interfering with another student's property, by stealing, hiding or damaging it.
- Using offensive names when addressing another student.
- Teasing or spreading rumors about another student or his/her family.
- Belittling another student's abilities and achievements.
- Writing offensive notes or graffiti about another student.

- Excluding another student from a group activity.
- Ridiculing another student's appearance, way of speaking or personal mannerisms.
- Misusing technology (internet or mobiles) to hurt or humiliate another person.

#### The Responsibilities of Trinity Staff (both paid and volunteer)

- Foster in our children self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others
- Demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behavior we expect of our students.
- Discuss bullying with all classes, so that every student learns about the damage it causes to both the child who is bullied and to the bully and the importance of telling an adult about bullying when it happens.
- Be alert to signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying.
- Listen to children who have been bullied, take what they say seriously and act to support and protect them.
- Volunteers will report suspected cases of bullying to the pastor or CYF Ministry Director.
- Pastor and CYF Minister will follow up any complaint by a parent about bullying, and report back promptly and fully on the action which has been taken.
- Deal with observed instances of bullying promptly and effectively, in accordance with agreed procedures.

#### The Responsibilities of Students

- Refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity.
- Intervene to protect the student who is being bullied, unless it is unsafe to do so.
- Report to a member of staff any witnessed or suspected instances of bullying, to dispel any climate of secrecy and help to prevent further instances.

#### Anyone who becomes the target of bullies should:

- Not suffer in silence, but have the courage to speak out, to put an end to their own suffering and that of other potential targets.

#### The Responsibilities of Parents

- Watch for signs of distress or unusual behavior in their children, which might be evidence of bullying.
- Advise their children to report any bullying to Trinity staff and explain the implications of allowing the bullying to continue unchecked, for themselves and for other pupils.
- Advise their children not to retaliate violently to any forms of bullying.
- Be sympathetic and supportive towards their children, and reassuring them that appropriate action will be taken;
- Keep a written record of any reported instances of bullying
- Inform the church of any suspected bullying, even if their children are not involved;
- Co-operate with the church, if their children are accused of bullying, try to ascertain the truth.
- Point out the implications of bullying, both for the children who are bullied and for the bullies themselves.

#### The Responsibilities of All

- Work together to combat and, hopefully in time, to eradicate bullying.

#### PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH INCIDENTS OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

- If any bullying is reported at a church event, both victim and accused will have a private hearing for an explanation of what took place.
- Notes will be taken of both private discussions, and records will be kept.
- Parents of all involved students will be notified via telephone as soon as possible.
- an investigation of the incident will take place by church staff member

- Feedback will be given to those concerned as any further information is found.
- Sanctions will be put in place as necessary for those found guilty of bullying.

## **Background Check Policy for Trinity**

Trinity will conduct a criminal background check on all individuals that serve in any position that puts them in contact with children or youth. This includes all members of the staff, teachers, mentors, chaperones and anyone else identified as appropriate. Background checks will be conducted every three years through a professional screening and background check company. Background checks will be performed by Trinity regardless of any other checks that may have been conducted by the individual's place of employment.

The findings of all background checks will be considered confidential and maintained in a secure place. The process will be administered by two of three people, the Senior Pastor the Children's Ministry Director, and the Church Council President so no self-evaluation takes place. Individuals identified as needing a background check must complete the following process.

- ✓ Complete an authorization form for a background check.
- ✓ A background check will be completed through a reputable company.
- ✓ When the completed background check is received back, it shall be reviewed by the two administrators to ensure no issues are identified. Information will then be securely filed.
- ✓ In the event that an issue is identified, the administrators will respond as necessary. If the two administrators disagree on the findings, they will call on the third administrator to make the final decision on the identified issue's pertinence to the position applied for.

## **Guidelines for Photographs at Trinity**

- Images of adults engaged in congregation activities can be used without seeking permission. We will respect the wishes of anyone who does not want to be photographed.
- Permission will be sought to display photos of children from a parent or legal guardian for all children ages 17 and younger using no names.
- This permission is given when the parent signs the registration form at the beginning of each school year.
- Credit for who took a particular photo will be given if desired by the photographer. We honor any copyright wishes or restrictions.
- Photos will be removed immediately upon request.

## **Social Media Guidelines**

These Social Media Guidelines apply to all online tools for sharing content and discussing information, including but not limited to, social websites, blogs, message boards, wikis, podcasts, image- and video-sharing sites, live webcasting and real-time web communities. Because this is a constantly evolving area, this policy applies to all new social media platforms whether or not they are specifically mentioned in this policy. Members should:

- Be responsible. Social media are individual interactions, not official congregational communications. Members of the Trinity community are personally responsible for their posts.
- Be selective. Use the right medium for your message – a blog or social network might not be the right place for messages intended only for a small group, and email or other means might be best.
- Be smart. A blog or community post is visible to the entire world. Remember that what you write will be public, and potentially for a long time.
- Identify yourself. Use real identities to the greatest extent possible rather than anonymous posts and comments.
- Take care to safeguard the privacy of others. Do not publish the personal information of others in the community without their permission or, in the case of minors (17 and under), written permission of their parents or legal guardians. Do not disclose any information that can identify a particular person, including name, phone number, address or email address without written consent.
- Honor differences. Trinity is a faith community that encourages free expression and values civil debate. If you disagree with others, do so with care and respect.
- Obey Copyright Laws. Users must comply fully with copyright law when posting and uploading copyrighted materials. It is preferable to point to a link so the proper person can take credit for the materials.