

# **POLICY TO PREVENT ABUSE OF CHILDREN**

## **I. MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of Christ Our Shepherd Lutheran Church is to share God's love. With God's help we will witness to our family, our community and our world. Enabled by the Gospel and Sacraments, and as stewards of God's Word, we will be an unending source of worship, education, fellowship and Christian love.

### **Mission Statement - 2000**

Our mission is to glorify God and witness our faith to all:

Saved by God's grace

Surrounded by God's love

Sustained by Word and Sacrament

Sent to serve

Thanks be to God!

## **II. TWO ADULT RULE**

There will always be 2 adult (21 years of age or older) supervisors present when caring for minor children under the auspices of Christ Our Shepherd Lutheran Church.

## **III. APPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS**

In keeping with our mission, Christ Our Shepherd Lutheran Church seeks to provide a Christian environment where minors will be safe from physical and sexual abuse and will feel safe, secure and valued. Adult caretakers are to be models of Christ's love as they relate to minors. Everyone is a child of God and as such should treat each other with respect.

The following are appropriate behaviors for adults to use in relating to minors when working or volunteering for the church.

- A. Listen carefully to children and show interest in what they have to say.
- B. Pray that our children may grow in faith in God and respect for each other and creation.
- C. Be fair and consistent.
- D. Have a sense of humor, be flexible and giving, enjoy the children, smile often.
- E. Focus on positive behaviors and praise him/her for that behavior.
- F. Set clear limits that can be managed by adults and understood by children.
- G. Use appropriate, positive, steps when discipline is needed and focus on the behavior, not the child.

## **IV. PROHIBITED BEHAVIOR**

The following behaviors, particularly those defined by the Law of the State of Georgia, are prohibited for all paid employees and volunteers of Christ Our Shepherd Lutheran Church.

- A. Corporal Punishment, which is use of physical force to discipline a child.
- B. Physical abuse, which is any physical injury inflicted by an adult on a child by other than accidental means.
- C. Sexual abuse, which is a person's employing, using persuading, inducing, enticing, or coercing any minor to engage in any sexual act as defined by the Law of the State of Georgia.
- D. Sexual exploitation, which is conduct by a child's parent or caretaker that allows, permits, encourages or requires that child to engage in prostitution or child pornography.
- E. Inappropriate touching or fondling of a sexual nature by any adult of a minor.

V. **REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

- A. Mandated Reporters  
The Law of the State of Georgia requires that certain categories of persons who have reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused shall report or cause reports of that abuse to be made as provided by law. Christ Our Shepherd Lutheran Church directs all mandated reporters to comply with the requirements of the law.
- B. Non-mandated Reporters  
Christ Our Shepherd Lutheran Church directs all of its paid personnel and volunteers, whether mandatory reporters or not, to report their knowledge or belief of the abuse of minors when that knowledge is obtained while engaging in the ministries of Christ Our Shepherd Lutheran Church.
- C. Reporting Alleged Violations  
All paid personnel and volunteers of Christ Our Shepherd Lutheran Church are to report alleged violations of prohibited behaviors to the staff person associated with their ministry. That staff person shall report to the senior pastor. All such reports shall in made in compliance with the law of the State of Georgia.
- D. Reporting Alleged Violations to the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America)  
The senior pastor or his/her designate shall report all alleged violations to the Southeast Synod office of the ELCA when the alleged violator is a member of the clergy or associate in ministry.

Document revised 9-11-2000

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