



Trinity kids

Children's Ministry Policies and Procedures

Dear Trinity Parents,

Welcome to Trinity Children's Ministry!

At Trinity, we take our responsibility to care for children very seriously. These guidelines are intended to facilitate a safe and nurturing environment in which children can grow in relationship with Jesus.

The pages of this handbook provide a general overview of procedures and guidelines for Trinity volunteers. Our policies are intended to create a safe environment for children. The following procedures have been adopted and will be strictly enforced.

Every volunteer with Trinity has gone through a process that includes an application, interview, reference checks, background checks, Mandated Reporter training, Abuse Awareness & Prevention training, and signing off on these policies in agreement.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to Pastor Joel or the Children's Ministry Director.

Sincerely,

Trinity Staff

Trinity Policies & Procedures for Children’s Ministries

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Overview of the Trinity Safety System

Because we love children and desire to protect them, Trinity requires all volunteers working with children or students (and other vulnerable populations) to complete FOUR SAFETY STEPS before ministry work or volunteer placements begin.

STEP ONE: Sexual Abuse Awareness and Mandatory Reporter Training

Trinity Anglican Church's policies and procedures require that volunteers avoid abusive behavior of any kind. Volunteers are required to report any policy violations to a supervisor or a member of the Pastoral Staff. Volunteers should have a basic understanding of the characteristics of sexual abusers and their behaviors in 'grooming' a child for sexual abuse.

To equip Trinity volunteers with information necessary to recognize abuser characteristics and grooming behavior, Trinity requires all volunteers to complete MinistrySafe's Sexual Abuse Awareness Training (approx. 2 Hours). This training will be renewed every two years.

Furthermore, Trinity requires all volunteers to take the Illinois Mandatory Reporter Training (approx 1 hour).

STEP TWO: Screening Process

Volunteers are required to complete the Trinity Screening Process, which requires a volunteer to:

- complete the Safety Application
- complete a face-to-face interview
- provide references to be checked

*a volunteer must attend Trinity Anglican Church for six months before being eligible to serve in volunteer positions providing access to children, students or vulnerable populations.

STEP THREE: Policies & Procedures

All volunteers are required to review the policies contained in this manual and sign the last page indicating that he or she has read and understood the material, and agrees to comply with policy requirements.

STEP FOUR: Criminal Background Check

Trinity requires that all individuals volunteering in children's programming undergo a criminal background check. Depending upon position, differing levels or intensity of background check may be required. Individuals who have committed sexually-oriented or sex-related crimes may not serve in any area providing services to children or minors. In addition, certain other past criminal acts may preclude an applicant from serving minors.

Child Safety Policy

Abuse Tolerance

Trinity has a zero tolerance for abuse in ministry programs and ministry activities. It is the responsibility of every staff member and volunteer at Trinity to act in the best interest of all children in every program.

In the event that staff or volunteers observe any inappropriate behaviors (i.e. policy violations, neglectful supervision, poor role-modeling, etc.) or suspected abuse (physical, emotional, or sexual) it is their responsibility to immediately report their observations to their team leader, Pastor Joel Warren, or Fr. Nate Beasley.

REPORTING SUSPICIOUS OR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS

Trinity is committed to providing a safe, secure environment for children and their families. To this end, any report of inappropriate behaviors or suspicions of abuse will be taken seriously and will be reported, in accordance with this policy and state law, to the Trinity Pastoral Staff, and the Police Department, Child Protective Services, or other appropriate agency.

Enforcement of Policies

Trinity volunteers are charged with the diligent enforcement of all Trinity policies. Violations of these policies are grounds for immediate dismissal, suspension, or reassignment from a position in children's ministry. Final decisions related to policy violations will be the responsibility of the Congregational Pastor and the Congregational Council.

Reporting Abuse or Suspicions of Abuse

Reporting Violations of Policy

In order to maintain a safe environment for our children, Trinity volunteers must be aware of their individual responsibility to report any questionable circumstance, observation, act, omission, or situation that is a violation of these policies. All questions or concerns related to inappropriate, suspicious, or suspected grooming behavior should be directed to an immediate supervisor in the ministry area, the Congregational Pastor, or the Lead Pastor.

Consequences of Violations

Any person accused of committing a prohibited act or any act considered by the church to be harmful to a child will be immediately suspended from participation in Trinity Children's Ministry. This suspension will continue during any investigation by law enforcement or Child Protective agencies.

Any person found to have committed a prohibited act should be prohibited from future participation as a staff member or volunteer in all activities and programming that involves children, students, or vulnerable populations at Trinity.

Failure to report a prohibited act to the designated person is a violation of this policy and grounds for removal. Volunteers who fail to report a prohibited act may be restricted from participation in any activities involving children, students, or vulnerable populations at Trinity.

Reporting Allegations or Suspicions of Abuse To Law Enforcement

We report all suspected or alleged abuse or neglect of children to the Illinois Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS). Abuse Hotline: 1-800-252-2873

NO PERMISSION IS NEEDED from Trinity before reporting to law enforcement personnel or the Child Abuse Hotline. When in doubt, report. If you have any questions about reporting or feel uncomfortable doing so, please reach out to Pastor Joel Warren.

While not required by state law, please report all suspicions of child abuse or neglect (or any inappropriate or 'grooming' behaviors of a colleague or coworker) to an immediate supervisor or a member of the Trinity Pastoral Staff. This request is intended to assist the church in properly protecting children involved in Trinity programs.

Building Safety

Every ministry supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the ministry program area is monitored during programming serving children. This includes unobserved monitoring of staff members, volunteers and children. No child will ever be left unattended in a ministry area during regular programming, classes or activities.

Supervision

Only parents (dropping off children), screened ministry volunteers, church staff members, and children are allowed in areas where ministry to children is occurring. All other adults should be asked for identification and immediately escorted out of the area. If questions or concerns arise related to any person in the area, a ministry supervisor should be notified immediately.

Two Trained, Screened Adults Should Supervise Children At All Times.

Avoid being alone with an individual child in any room or during any ministry program. If one supervising adult must leave a group of children, another volunteer or employee must be notified so that the Two Adult Rule can be followed.

If two individuals serving in a room are related to one another, a third unrelated volunteer or staff member must be present.

If an unusual circumstance occurs and you find yourself alone with a single child, take the child to a room or building occupied by others, or to a location easily observed by others. (Example: if a child is the last in a class to be picked up by a parent, move to an adjoining room where other staff members or volunteers are present.)

If you need to talk with a child alone, do it in the hallway or a highly visible area, or have another leader with you.

After every ministry event, ensure that every room, area and restroom is checked prior to leaving.

Child Safety Measures

Worker to Child Ratio

Trinity is committed to providing adequate supervision in all Children's Ministries programs. Accordingly, the following worker to child ratios will be observed:

Program	Workers	Children
Nursery (under 15 mo)	2	8
Nursery (15-24 mo)	2	10
Preschool, 2 & 3 years old	2	12
Preschool, 4 & 5 years old	2	18
Elementary	2	20
VBS	2	20

If a worker is 'out of ratio' it is his or her responsibility to immediately notify the program supervisor or the Congregational Pastor. Supervisors will make diligent efforts to find substitute workers to immediately bring worker to children ratios into compliance with Church policy.

Check-In

Upon check-in, each child will receive a nametag and their parent or guardian will be given a claim tag. Volunteers must check each claim tag before releasing a child at pick up.

If a claim tag is lost, send the parent or guardian to Pastor Joel Warren, where proper identification must be shown to a staff member before the child is released. (Have the child stay in the classroom; the parent may pick up the child once cleared).

Release of Children

At any time that a child has been entrusted to Trinity staff members or volunteers, the Church incurs responsibility for the safety and well-being of the child. Staff members and volunteers must act to ensure the appropriate supervision and safety of children in their charge.

Children's Ministries staff members or volunteers are responsible for releasing children in their care only to parents, legal guardians, or other persons designated by parents or legal guardians at the close of services or activities.

It is presumed a person who drops off a child or student has authority to pick up the child.

In the event that staff members or volunteers are uncertain of the propriety of releasing a child, they should immediately locate or contact their immediate supervisor or the Congregational Pastor before releasing the child.

Disciplinary Policies

Discipline

It is Trinity's policy that staff members and volunteers are prohibited from using physical discipline in any manner for behavioral management of children. No form of physical discipline is acceptable. This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviors by children. When a child is misbehaving, follow these steps:

Go to the child and calmly ask him or her to stop the behavior. (Most children respond immediately and correct the behavior.) Give a warning and remind the child of class expectations, and redirect to a positive behavior. Do this individually when possible, try not to single out a specific child in a large group setting. *When working with younger children, some physical redirection may be necessary: for example, removing a toy from the hands of a child who is hitting another.

If the child repeats the action, guide them to a quiet place – separate from the other children – for a short but designated period of time. Stay within sight of others, and avoid being alone (or unseen) with the child.

Provide the child with a simple, understandable reason for the separation, and a clear explanation of your expectations. ("Terry, you didn't stop hitting Kelly when I asked you to, so it was necessary for me to separate you from the group.")

After a 3rd time, you may inform a parent or guardian, who may be asked to become involved in redirecting misbehavior.

Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported to the ministry supervisor.

NEVER...

Never yell at a child.

Never grab a child.

Never threaten a child. Always follow through with your words.

Never hit a child.

Never confront a parent in front of others.

Never openly humiliate a child in front of the class.

Incidents

If a child harms another child while in the classroom (ie hitting another child and causing a bruise or breaking the skin, biting), a volunteer will fill out an incident report that includes details of the event for parents to sign and return when picking up their child. Note: we do not disclose the other party involved in an incident; if there are at least three incidents between the same two children in a three month period, the Children's Ministry Director may schedule a conversation

with both sets of parents. (Example - If Terry bites Kelly, Terry's parents receive an incident report stating that Terry bit another anonymous child and Kelly's parents receive an incident report stating that Kelly was bitten by another anonymous child).

Room Usage

The rooms being used in Suite 303 for Trinity Kids are multi-purpose, and therefore will be designated as being only for use in Trinity Kid's Ministry from 9:15am-11:15am on Sundays. Outside of this time, the room may be used for Chicago Campus Initiative or Trinity meetings.

Restroom Policies

If a child who is in diapers requires a diaper change, one of the volunteers will contact a parent via the check-in system. If a child needs to use the restroom or has an accident, one of the volunteers will contact a parent via the check-in system. Volunteers are not allowed to change diapers or escort children to the restroom - only parents or guardians may do so.

Medication

Emergency medical intervention in life threatening situations (i.e. administering an epi-pen if a child has an allergic reaction) is the only time it is allowed to administer medication. If there is a life threatening situation, please first dial 911 and then notify a parent or legal guardian and an immediate supervisor in the ministry area, the Congregational Pastor, or the Lead Pastor. If there is a minor injury requiring only bandaging or an ice pack, a volunteer may administer those from a first aid kit in the classroom and must inform the parent or guardian upon pick-up and have them sign an incident report.

One-to-One Interactions with Children

Staff members and volunteers should never conduct one-to-one, unobserved meetings or interaction with children while participating in Trinity Children's Ministry. Another adult who has completed the Trinity application and screening process should always be present.

Physical Contact

Trinity is committed to protecting children in its care. To this end, Trinity has implemented a 'physical contact policy' which promotes a positive, nurturing environment for our Children's Ministries while protecting children. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by anyone working in Children's Ministries programs:

- Hugging, pats on the back and other forms of appropriate physical affection between staff members or volunteers and children are important for children's development, and are generally suitable in the church setting.
- Inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection are forbidden. Any inappropriate physical contact, touching or displays of affection should be immediately reported to an immediate supervisor, the Congregational Pastor, or the Lead Pastor.
- Physical contact should be for the benefit of the child, and never be based upon the emotional needs of a staff member or volunteer.
- Physical contact and affection should be given only in observable places or when in the presence of other children or children's staff members and volunteers. It is much less likely that touch will be inappropriate or misinterpreted when physical contact is open to observation.
- Physical contact in any form should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing. The personal behavior of staff members or volunteers in Children's Ministries must foster trust at all times. Personal conduct must be above reproach.
- Do not force physical contact, touch or affection on a reluctant child. A child's preference not to be touched must be respected.
- Children's staff members and volunteers are responsible for protecting children under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by others.
- Any inappropriate behavior or suspected abuse by a staff member or volunteer must be reported immediately to an immediate supervisor, the Congregational Pastor or the Lead Pastor.

Intoxicants

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drugs while in any Trinity facility, while traveling with children, or while working with or supervising children.

Tobacco Use

Trinity requires staff members and volunteers to abstain from the use or possession of tobacco products in church facilities, while in the presence of children or their parents, or during Trinity activities or programs. Trinity is a tobacco-free facility.

Sexually Oriented Conversations

Volunteers are prohibited from engaging in any sexually oriented conversations with children, and are not permitted to discuss any inappropriate or explicit information about their own personal relationships, dating, or sexual activities with any child in the program.

Sexually Oriented Material

Volunteers in Children's Ministries at Trinity are prohibited from possessing any sexually oriented materials (magazines, cards, images, videos, films, etc.) on church property or in the presence of children.

Nudity

Volunteers in Trinity's Children's Ministries should never be nude in the presence of children in their care. In the event there is a situation that may call for or contemplate the possibility of nudity (i.e. changing clothes during a pool party, weekend or overnight retreat, etc.), staff member/volunteer will submit a plan to the Congregational Pastor concerning arrangements for showering or changing clothes.

Parental Involvement

Parental Contact

Parents who leave a child in the care of Trinity staff members and volunteers during church services or activities will be contacted if their child becomes ill, injured, or has a severe disciplinary problem while participating in Children's Ministries programs.

Parental Involvement

Parents are encouraged to visit any and all services and programs in which their child is involved at Trinity. Parents have an open invitation to observe all programs and activities in which their child is involved. However, parents who desire to participate in or have continuous, ongoing contact with their children's programs at Trinity will be required to complete the Trinity volunteer application and screening process.