

Our Savior's Lutheran Church Guidelines for Safety and Respect

Mission Statement

We are called to proclaim God's love and grace through Christ as we relate to each other and the world.

Our Savior's Commitment

The following policies and procedures are to help ensure that OSLC 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, youth, and vulnerable adults
- To affirm and protect volunteers and staff
- To raise awareness
- To be a leader and advocate in our community
- To affirm and protect Our Savior's Lutheran Church

Expectations

All members and visitor 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 then can, to the protection and maintenance of such an environment.

The Responsibilities of Our Savior's Lutheran Church Staff and Volunteers

- 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.
- Be alert to signs of distress and other possible indications of inappropriate behavior towards others.
- Listen to children we are distressed; take what they say seriously; and act to support and protect them.
- Volunteers will report suspected instances of inappropriate behavior to a member of the pastoral or children, youth, and family staff.
- The pastoral or children, youth, and family staff will follow up on any concern by a parent about inappropriate behavior and report back promptly and fully on any action which has been taken.

- Deal with inappropriate behavior promptly and effectively in accordance with agreed upon procedures.

The Responsibilities of Students

- Refrain from becoming involved in any kind of inappropriate behavior, even at the cost of incurring temporary unpopularity.
- Intervene to stop inappropriate behavior, unless it is unsafe to do so.
- Report to a member of staff any witnessed or suspected instances of inappropriate behavior, to dispel any climate of secrecy and help to prevent further instances.
- Be aware of social media guidelines and take personal responsibility for appropriate conduct.

The Responsibilities of Parents and Guardians

- Watch for signs of distress or unusual behavior in their children.
- Advise their children to report any instances of inappropriate behavior to an OSLC pastor or children, youth and family staff.
- Be supportive towards their children and reassure them that OSLC is a safe place.
- Parents remain responsible for their children while on church premises or attending church sponsored activities. OSLC staff and volunteers will be vigilant providing a safe environment for children, youth, and vulnerable adults who attend worship and other church sponsored activities.
- Parental permission including signed medical release and emergency contacts is needed before taking minors on trips.
- Keep contact and health information up to date by registering children annually for Sunday school.

Supervision Policies

These steps are crucial to creating a safe and hospitable environment for children to grow in their faith.

- Adults who have been with church for 6 months or longer will be interviewed and a background check completed prior to working with youth.
- Two Deep Leadership: Employees and volunteer workers are encouraged not to be alone with youth, but to work in groups—at least pairs. This is true in 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.
- Drop off/Pick up: Supervision of children/youth should be provided before an event until all participants are in the custody of parents or legal guardians or have left the premises. Parents please be sure your children/youth safely reach their leader and that you pick them up promptly at designated end times.
- Parental permission including signed medical release and emergency contacts is needed before taking minors on trips.

- 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 if 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 help with buttoning or zipping, have them come out into the hall for your help.
- Overnight Guidelines: A minimum of two adults should be present at an overnight event. 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 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.
- 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. Drivers should avoid dropping off or picking up minors without being accompanied by another adult unless parental permission is given. The staff shall set standards for who is permitted to drive during events. *All drivers must possess and show proof of current driver's license and carry insurance.* A copy of each driver's license and proof of insurance will be maintained on site.
- 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.
- Alcohol/drugs are prohibited for adults participating in youth events. Youth and children will be sent home immediately if found with alcohol or drugs.
- Firearms: The possession of firearms is prohibited during events.

Mutual Respect with Youth and Adults

Appropriate

- Ask permission before touching, unless initiated by youth.
- Quick hugs.
- Pats of 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
- If unsure about a display of affection, please contact a pastor or children, youth, and family staff.

Inappropriate

- Any form of unwanted affection
- Touching bottoms, chests, or genital areas
- Lying down or sleeping beside youth
- Tickling or wrestling
- Games involving inappropriate touching
- Kisses on the mouth

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 a pastor or children, youth, and family staff at Our Savior's.
- 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!

Tornado Safety for Our Savior's

If the sirens go off for severe weather quickly and calmly move everyone in the building to the Sunday school pods and classrooms. Teachers and leaders will help those in their care to the appropriate location.

First Aid Kits

First aid kits are located:

-Above the sink in the kitchen

-In the nursery

-In the Sunday school kitchen

Fire Evacuation Plan for Our Savior's

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

1. Staff or supervising leaders will immediately dial 911.
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. 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.
3. Fire extinguishers are located in all the major hallways:
 - Outside kitchen
 - Outside the Middle school classroom
 - In each Sunday school pod
 - By restrooms near choir room
 - Outside intern/associate pastor office
 - Outside nursery
 - Across the hall from Sunday school officeA fire extinguisher is also located in the kitchen.
4. Note a sprinkler system is in place in the building.

Guidelines for Photographs

- Images of adults engaged in congregational activities can be used without seeking permission. We will respect the wishes of anyone who does not want to be photographed.
- Photos of children ages 17 and younger will be displayed without names.
- A form is available in the church office for anyone who does not want their photo or their children's photos shared on the website.
- Credit for who took a particular photo will be given if desired by photographer.
- Photos will be removed immediately upon request.

Social Media Guidelines

- Official church communications comes through the OSLC office administrator.
- Be responsible. Social media are individual interactions, not official congregational communication. Members of the OSLC 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 a message intended for only a small group.
- Be smart. A blog or community post is visible to the whole world. Remember that what you write will be public and will remain 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 and in the case of minors (17 and under) written permission of parents or legal guardians is required. Do not disclose any information that can identify a particular person including name, phone number, address, or email address without written consent.
- Honor differences. OSLC is a faith community that encourages free expressions 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.

Background Check Policy for Our Savior's

Our Savior's will conduct a criminal background check on individuals that serve in a position that puts them in contact with children or youth. This includes 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 Our Savior's 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, Family Ministry Coordinator, 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 to ensure no issues are identified. Information will then be kept in a secure location.
- 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.

**Our Savior's Lutheran Church
Rochester, Minnesota
Authorization for Background Records Check**

I have been informed that an independent reporting agency will be asked to conduct a background records check for purposes of my employment or volunteer leadership with children to determine whether I have been arrested or convicted of any crime defined under the Minnesota Child Protection background Check Act, Minnesota Statute 299C.61

I understand I have the right to be informed of the response to request for a background records check and to obtain a copy of the report, or any record that forms the basis of the report, from the requesting party.

I understand I have the right to challenge the accuracy and completeness of any information contained in the report or record under the relevant information provisions of the Data Practices Act.

I authorize an independent reporting agency to search for and disclose all criminal history record information to Our Savior's Lutheran Church.

Applicant Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____
Last First Middle

Maiden Name: _____ (if applicable)

All Aliases: _____

Driver's License #: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Place of Birth: _____
City State Country

Social Security Number: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

*Have you ever participated in, been accused of, been convicted of, or plead guilty or no contest to ANY abuse or sexual misconduct? _____ If so, please explain:

***Attach a copy of driver's license and insurance for those driving children & youth.**