

Child Safety Governing Policy

**“Jesus called the children to him and said,
‘Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for
the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these.’”
Luke 18:16**

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Adopted by the congregation on January 30, 2005

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CHILD SAFETY GOVERNING POLICY

Background

Child sexual abuse is a serious concern in our society and in many churches. Acknowledging the broken and sinful nature of our world, we accept it as our responsibility to provide as safe an environment as we can for our children and everyone who works with them.

Therefore, Peace Lutheran Church has established the following Statements of Purpose, Covenant, and Policies which, when taken together, constitute the congregation's Child Safety Governing Policy. An additional booklet is available from the Church Office which specifies the procedures, forms, and training materials used to implement the Child Safety Governing Policy at Peace Lutheran Church.

Statement of Purpose

Peace Lutheran Church's purpose for establishing a Child Safety Governing Policy is to demonstrate our absolute and unwavering commitment to the physical and emotional safety and spiritual growth of our children and those who work with them.

Statement of Covenant

As a Christian community of faith and a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, we, the members of Peace Lutheran Church, pledge to conduct the ministry of our congregation in ways that assure the safety and spiritual growth of our children and those who work with them.

Toward that end, we commit ourselves to:

- Follow established procedures in the selection and recruitment of employees and volunteers who work with children;
- Implement procedures which minimize the risk of sexual abuse to children;
- Educate our employees and volunteers who work with children about our Child Safety Governing Policy and the procedures associated with it;
- Make it known in the congregation that all the members of Peace Lutheran Church are an essential part of providing a safe environment for our children;
- Make copies of our Child Safety Governing Policy readily available;
- Follow clearly defined procedures for reporting a suspected incident of child sexual abuse that conforms to the requirements of the law; and
- Be prepared to respond to inquiries from the general public, the media, and/or members of the congregation if an incident of child sexual abuse occurs.

Statement of Policies

1. Peace Lutheran Church will provide to all new members, as part of the New Member Orientation Meeting, a copy of the Child Safety Governing Policy.
2. Peace Lutheran Church will employ a screening program for all employees who work with

children and are likely to be in potentially high risk situations with them. Examples of this would include employees who participate in mission trips and overnight events with children.

3. Peace Lutheran Church will employ a screening program for all volunteers who work with children and are likely to be in potentially high risk situations with them. Examples of this would include volunteers who participate in mission trips and overnight events with children.
4. Peace Lutheran Church requires that all screened employees and all screened volunteers have at least three references checked.
5. Peace Lutheran Church requires that all screened employees and all screened volunteers sign a release for a criminal background check.
6. It is Peace Lutheran Church's policy that no one with a known record who has been convicted of a sexual abuse crime of any kind will be allowed to work with children.
7. To ensure a safe environment for our children and to protect those who work with them from false accusations, Peace Lutheran Church will use a "two adult rule" for designated activities with children.
8. To ensure that the Child Safety Governing Policy has been effectively implemented, members of the Parish Relations Ministry will periodically review the policy and conduct training events for the employees of the congregation and the volunteers who work with children.
9. To provide added safety, all rooms in our church's building, except bathrooms and storage closets, will have windows in their doors.
10. Peace Lutheran Church encourages the use of its facility by visiting organizations and opens its doors to organizations which need space for events involving children. To ensure the safety of all children, Peace Lutheran Church requires that visiting leaders abide by the Child Safety Governing Policy.
11. Child sexual abuse is criminal behavior that involves children in sexual behaviors as defined by state and federal law. All employees and volunteers who work with children at Peace Lutheran Church are required to immediately report any concerns related to suspected incidents of child sexual abuse to the Parish Relations Ministry Chairperson, the President of the Church Council, or the Senior Pastor.
12. In responding to a suspected incident of child sexual abuse, Peace Lutheran Church will work with appropriate government agencies in a prudent manner to ensure the safety and dignity of the suspected victim and the person who has been accused.
13. Following the report of a suspected incident of child sexual abuse, Peace Lutheran Church will follow established procedures when responding to inquiries made by the general public, the media, and/or members of the congregation. First and foremost, these procedures will protect the rights of the suspected victim, as well as the rights of the person who has been accused.

Adopted by the congregation of Peace Lutheran Church on January 30, 2005

POLICY # 1: NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION

Peace Lutheran Church will provide to all new members, as part of the New Member Orientation Meeting, a copy of the Child Safety Governing Policy.

Those Responsible for Implementation

Parish Relations Ministry (primary)
Life and Growth Ministry

Procedures for Implementation

1. The Child Safety Governing Policy will be included as a part of the New Member Orientation materials given to all those who join Peace Lutheran Church.
2. During the New Member Orientation meeting, key points of the policy will be highlighted verbally by a member of the Parish Relations Ministry or designee thereof.

Associated Documents and/or Forms

Child Safety Governing Policy

POLICY # 2: EMPLOYEE SCREENING

Peace Lutheran Church will employ a screening program for all employees who work with children and are likely to be in potentially high risk situations with them. Examples of this would include employees who participate in mission trips and overnight events with children.

Those Responsible for Implementation

Parish Relations Ministry (primary)
Life and Growth Ministry

Procedures for Implementation

Application: To be used with all full-time and part-time employees, including clergy, who are likely to be in potentially high risk situations with children.

1. All applicants will complete and submit to the Parish Relations Ministry the Employment Application Form (Form A).
2. A member of the Parish Relations Ministry will serve as a member of the Interview Committee and will take detailed notes of the interview.
3. The Parish Relations Ministry member of the Interview Committee will contact the references listed on the Employment Application Form (Form A) and complete the Reference Contact Form (Form B). (See Policy # 4.)
4. All applicants will complete the Background Investigation Consent Form (Form C). Criminal record checks will be conducted by the Parish Relations Ministry member of the Interview Committee or designee thereof. (See Policy # 5.)
5. All forms, notes, and documents associated with the applicant will be collected together as part of the applicant's personnel record and filed for future reference by the Church Secretary. Form C - Background Investigation Consent Form will be considered confidential and will be kept in a locked file in the church office. Only the Parish Relations Ministry Chairperson, the Church Secretary, and the Senior Pastor will have access to the personnel files.
6. Appropriate action will be taken by the Parish Relations Ministry based on the information presented.

Associated Documents and/or Forms

Form A - Employment Application Form
Form B - Reference Contact Form
Form C - Background Investigation Consent Form

POLICY # 3: VOLUNTEER SCREENING

Peace Lutheran Church will employ a screening program for all volunteers who work with children and are likely to be in potentially high risk situations with them. Examples of this would include volunteers who participate in mission trips and overnight events with children.

Those Responsible for Implementation

Parish Relations Ministry (primary)
Life and Growth Ministry
Youth Ministry
Education Ministry

Procedures for Implementation

Application: To be used with all volunteers who are likely to be in potentially high risk situations with children.

1. All applicants will complete and submit to the Parish Relations Ministry the Volunteer Application Form (Form D).
2. A member of the Parish Relations Ministry, or designee thereof, will interview the volunteer applicant and will take detailed notes of the interview.
3. The Parish Relations Ministry member, or designee thereof, will contact the references listed on the Volunteer Application Form (Form D) and complete the Reference Contact Form (Form B). (See Policy # 4.)
4. All applicants will complete the Background Investigation Consent Form (Form C). Criminal record checks will be conducted by the Parish Relations Ministry member, or designee thereof. (See Policy # 5.)
5. All forms, notes, and documents associated with the applicant will be collected together as part of the applicant's personnel record and filed for future reference by the Church Secretary. Form C - Background Investigation Consent Form will be considered confidential and will be kept in a locked file in the church office. Only the Parish Relations Ministry Chairperson, the Church Secretary, and the Senior Pastor will have access to the personnel files.
6. Appropriate action will be taken by the Parish Relations Ministry based on the information presented.

Associated Documents and/or Forms

Form B - Reference Contact Form
Form C - Background Investigation Consent Form
Form D - Volunteer Application Form

POLICY # 4: REFERENCE REQUIREMENTS

Peace Lutheran Church requires that all screened employees and all screened volunteers have at least three references checked.

Those Responsible for Implementation

Parish Relations Ministry

Procedures for Implementation

1. As part of the application form (Form A or D), all applicants will provide a minimum of three (3) names to be used as references. These references are to be unrelated to the applicant either by blood or marriage.
2. A member of the Parish Relations Ministry, or designee thereof, will contact all three submitted references using the Reference Contact Form (Form B) to record all notes.
3. If a listed reference refuses to release any information to Peace Lutheran Church, this will be noted on the Reference Contact Form (Form B).
4. If a listed reference cannot be reached, this will be noted and a new reference will be provided by the applicant.
5. All information obtained from the reference contacts will be considered confidential. The completed Reference Contact Form (Form B) will be filed with the applicant's personnel file.
6. Appropriate action will be taken by the Parish Relations Ministry based on the information presented.

Associated Documents and/or Forms

Form A - Employment Application Form
Form B - Reference Contact Form
Form D - Volunteer Application Form

POLICY # 5: CRIMINAL RECORDS CHECK

Peace Lutheran Church requires that all screened employees and all screened volunteers sign a release for a criminal background check.

Those Responsible for Implementation

Parish Relations Ministry

Procedures for Implementation

1. All screened employees and screened volunteers must read and sign the Background Investigation Consent Form (Form C).
2. A member of the Parish Relations Ministry, or designee thereof, will submit the request for a criminal background check.
3. All forms, notes, documents and information obtained from the criminal background check will be kept in the applicant's personnel file and filed for future reference by the Church Secretary. This record will be considered confidential and will be kept in a locked file in the church office. Only the Parish Relations Ministry Chairperson, the Church Secretary, and the Senior Pastor will have access to the personnel files.
4. Appropriate action will be taken by the Parish Relations Ministry based on the information presented.

Associated Documents and/or Forms

Form C - Background Investigation Consent Form

POLICY # 6: APPLICANT WITH CRIMINAL SEXUAL ABUSE RECORD

It is Peace Lutheran Church's policy that no one with a known record who has been convicted of a sexual abuse crime of any kind will be allowed to work with children.

Those Responsible for Implementation

Parish Relations Ministry

Procedures for Implementation

1. Upon receiving notification that an applicant has a criminal sexual abuse record, a

member of the Parish Relations Ministry, or designee thereof, will notify the applicant that they will not be allowed to work with children in potentially high risk situations at Peace Lutheran Church. At this time the Parish Relation Ministry representative, or designee thereof, and the applicant will complete the Notification of Ineligibility Form (Form E).

2. Information and documents concerning the applicant's sexual abuse record will be considered confidential and will be kept in a locked file in the church office. Only the Parish Relations Ministry Chairperson, the Church Secretary, and the Senior Pastor will have access to the file.
3. Persons with criminal sexual abuse records will be encouraged to participate in ministries of the congregation which do not involve interaction with children.

Associated Documents and/or Forms

Form E - Notice of Ineligibility Form

POLICY # 7: TWO ADULT RULE

To ensure a safe environment for our children and to protect those who work with them from false accusations, Peace Lutheran Church will use a "two adult rule" for designated activities with children.

Those Responsible for Implementation

Youth Ministry (primary)
Education Ministry
Parish Relations Ministry

Procedures for Implementation

1. Whenever possible activities involving children will have at least two adults present in the church facility. At least one of the adults will be 21 years of age or older.
2. Whenever possible, employees and volunteers will avoid being alone with a single child unless visual access by another adult is possible.
3. This policy recognizes that unforeseen and unplanned encounters between children and adults will arise.

Associated Documents and/or Forms

None

POLICY # 8: REVIEW AND TRAINING

To ensure that the Child Safety Governing Policy has been effectively implemented, members of the Parish Relations Ministry will periodically review the policy and conduct training events for the employees of the congregation and the volunteers who work with children.

Those Responsible for Implementation

Parish Relations Ministry

Procedures for Implementation

1. Once each year the Parish Relations Ministry will review the Child Safety Governing Policy to determine if any amendments need to be made. If amendments are necessary, the policy changes will be documented and attached to the old policy. The new policy will reflect the date it was amended. All policy changes must be submitted

to and approved by the Church Council.

2. Once each year a member of the Parish Relations Ministry will conduct a training meeting on child safety for the employees and volunteers of the congregation who work with children.

Associated Documents and/or Forms

Child Safety Governing Policy
Booklet Specifying Procedures, Forms, and Training Materials

POLICY # 9: WINDOWS ON DOORS

To provide added safety, all rooms in our church's building, except bathrooms and storage closets, will have windows in their doors.

Those Responsible for Implementation

Property Ministry (primary)
Parish Relations Ministry

Procedures for Implementation

1. A member of the Property Ministry will conduct a periodic check of the church's building to make sure that nothing is obstructing the sight lines through the glass windows on all doors.
2. A report of this check will be made to the Parish Relations Ministry by the Property Ministry.

Associated Documents and/or Forms

None

POLICY # 10: VISITING ORGANIZATION USE OF THE CHURCH FACILITY

Peace Lutheran Church encourages the use of its facility by visiting organizations and opens its doors to organizations which need space for events involving children. To ensure the safety of all children, Peace Lutheran Church requires that visiting leaders abide by the Child Safety Governing Policy.

Those Responsible for Implementation

Church Secretary (primary)
Parish Relations Ministry
Education Ministry
Youth Ministry

Procedures for Implementation

1. Peace Lutheran Church will make available to the leaders of the visiting organization its Child Safety Governing Policy and the additional booklet which specifies the

procedures, forms, and training materials used to implement the policy.

2. Two representatives of the visiting organization who will be present during the scheduled event must fill out the Visiting Organization Form (Form F).

Associated Documents and/or Forms

Child Safety Governing Policy
Booklet Specifying Procedures, Forms, and Training Materials
Form F - Visiting Organization Form

POLICY # 11: REPORTING AN INCIDENT

Child sexual abuse is criminal behavior that involves children in sexual behaviors as defined by state and federal law. All employees and volunteers who work with children at Peace Lutheran Church are required to immediately report any concerns related to suspected incidents of child sexual abuse to the Parish Relations Ministry Chairperson, the President of the Church Council, or the Senior Pastor.

Types of sexual abuse that involve touching include but are not limited to: fondling; oral, genital, and anal penetration; intercourse; and forcible rape. Types of sexual abuse that do not involve touching include but are not limited to: verbal comments; pornographic videos; obscene phone calls; exhibitionism; allowing children to witness sexual activity.

Those Responsible for Implementation

Parish Relations Ministry Chairperson (primary)
Senior Pastor
Church Council President

Procedures for Implementation

1. If sexual abuse of a child is suspected, the employee or volunteer who suspects the abuse is required to immediately report the suspicion to the Parish Relations Ministry Chairperson, the Senior Pastor, or the President of the Church Council. Together, the employee or volunteer who suspects the abuse and the responsible person contacted will immediately report the suspicion to the appropriate government agencies. (See Policy # 12.)
2. The employee or volunteer will complete Form G, Report of Suspected Incident of Child Sexual Abuse, and submit this form to the Parish Relations Ministry Chairperson, the Senior Pastor, or the Church Council President.
3. In order to protect the individuals involved, all information regarding the situation will be considered confidential and the employee or volunteer will only discuss the situation with appropriate authorities.
4. All forms, notes, and documents associated with the incident will be filed and considered confidential. These records will be kept in a locked file in the church office. Only the Parish Relations Ministry Chairperson, the Church Secretary, and the Senior Pastor will have access to the file.

Associated Documents and/or Forms

Form G - Report of Suspected Incident of Child Sexual Abuse Form

POLICY # 12: GOVERNMENT REPORTING PROCEDURES

In responding to a suspected incident of child sexual abuse, Peace Lutheran Church will work with appropriate government agencies in a prudent manner to ensure the safety and dignity of the suspected victim and the person who has been accused.

Those Responsible for Implementation

Parish Relations Ministry Chairperson (primary)
Senior Pastor
Church Council President

Procedures for Implementation

1. The following statement comes from the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services: "Individuals whose employment brings them into contact with children are required by law to report any suspected abuse or neglect or threatened abuse or neglect to a child seen in the course of their professional duties. Anyone who suspects a child is being maltreated may make such a referral. Persons making reports in good faith are immune from criminal or civil liability. Reports are made to the county in which the child or the child's family resides."

2. Employees and volunteers at Peace Lutheran Church will follow the guidelines set forth in procedure # 1.
3. Reports of suspected child sexual abuse are to be made to the county Department of Human Services in which the child or child's family resides. Reports in Polk County should be made to:

Polk County Department of Human Services
300 Polk County Plaza Suite 110
Balsam Lake, WI 54810
Office Hours: 715-485-8400
After Hours: 715-485-8300

4. The person or persons responsible will contact legal representation, Peace Lutheran Church's insurance carrier (Church Mutual Insurance Company, Merrill, Wisconsin, 800-554-2642), and the office of the Bishop of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin (Bishop Robert Berg, Rice Lake, Wisconsin, 715-234-3373), to notify them of the report of suspected child sexual abuse.

Associated Documents and/or Forms

Form G - Report of Suspected Incident of Child Sexual Abuse Form

POLICY # 13: RESPONDING TO A SUSPECTED INCIDENT

Following the report of a suspected incident of child sexual abuse, Peace Lutheran Church will follow established procedures when responding to inquiries made by the general public, the media, and/or members of the congregation. First and foremost, these procedures will protect the rights of the suspected victim, as well as the rights of the person who has been accused.

Those Responsible for Implementation

Parish Relations Ministry Chairperson (primary)
Senior Pastor
Church Council President

Procedures for Implementation

1. If an accusation of child sexual abuse is made, the Parish Relations Ministry Chairperson, the Senior Pastor, and the Church Council President will meet to formulate a prepared statement.
2. This prepared statement will be used to respond to inquiries made by the general public, the media, and/or members of the congregation.

Associated Documents and/or Forms

None

This page is blank.

(Confidential Upon Completion)

Last

First

Middle

Yes

No

City:

State:

Zip:

Home Phone:

Position applied for:

Date available to start:

Qualifications:

Academic achievements: (Schools attended, degrees earned, dates of completion)

Continuing education completed: (Courses taken, dates of completion)

Professional organizations: (List any in which you have membership)

First aid training? ____ Yes ____ No Date completed: _____

CPR training? ____ Yes ____ No Date completed: _____

Previous Work Experience: Please list your previous employers during the past five years. Include the job title, a description of position, duties and responsibilities, the name of the company/employer, the address of company/employer, the name of your immediate supervisor, and the dates you were employed in each position.

Previous Volunteer Experience: Please list any relevant volunteer positions you have held and list the duties you performed in each position, the name of your supervisor, the address and phone number of the volunteer organization, and the dates of your volunteer service.

Have you ever been convicted of or pled guilty to a crime, either a misdemeanor or a felony (including but not limited to drug-related charges, child sexual abuse, other crimes of violence, theft, or motor vehicle violations)? _____ No _____ Yes
If yes, please explain:

References: Please list three individuals who are not related to you by blood or marriage as references.

1. Name: _____

Address: _____

Day Phone: _____ Evening Phone: _____

Length of time you have known reference: _____

Relationship to reference: _____

2. Name: _____

Address: _____

Day Phone: _____ Evening Phone: _____

Length of time you have known reference: _____

Relationship to reference: _____

3. Name: _____

Address: _____

Day Phone: _____ Evening Phone: _____

Length of time you have known reference: _____

Relationship to reference: _____

(Employment Application Form (Form A) page 2)

Reference Contact Form (Form B)

(Confidential Upon Completion)

Applicant name: _____

Reference Name: _____

Reference Address: _____

Reference Phone: _____

1. What is your relationship to the applicant?

2. How long have you known the applicant?

3. How well do you know the applicant?

4. How would you describe the applicant?

5. How would you describe the applicant's ability to relate to children?

6. How would you describe the applicant's ability to relate to adults?

7. How would you describe the applicant's leadership abilities?

8. Do you know of any characteristics that would negatively affect the applicant's ability to work with children? If so, please describe.
9. Please list any other comments you would like to make.

Reference inquiry completed by: _____
Signature Date

Background Investigation Consent Form (Form C)
(Confidential Upon Completion)

I, _____, hereby authorize Peace Lutheran Church and its agents to make an independent investigation of my background, references, character, past employment, criminal or police records, including those maintained by both public and private organizations and all public records for the purpose of confirming the information contained on my application and/or obtaining other information which may be material to my qualifications for employment now and, if applicable, during the tenure of my employment with Peace Lutheran Church.

I release Peace Lutheran Church and/or its agents and any person or entity, which provides information pursuant to this authorization, from any and all liabilities, claims or law suits in regards to the information obtained from any and all of the above referenced sources used.

The following is my true and complete legal name and all information is true and correct to the best of my knowledge:

Full Name (Printed)

Maiden Name or Other Names Used

Present Address How Long?

City/State Zip

Former Address How Long?

City/State Zip

Date of Birth Social Security Number Driver's License Number State of Issue

Signature

Note: The above information is required for identification purposes only, and is in no manner used as qualifications for employment.

Volunteer Application Form (Form D)

(Confidential Upon Completion)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Day phone: _____ Evening phone: _____

Occupation: _____ Employer: _____

Previous volunteer experience with children: _____

Special interests/hobbies/skills: _____

Why would you like to volunteer to work with children? _____

What qualities do you have that would help you work with children? _____

Have you ever been charged, convicted of, or pled guilty to a crime, either a misdemeanor or a felony (drug-related charges, child sexual abuse, or other crimes of violence)?

_____ No _____ Yes If yes, please explain:

References: Please list three personal references (people who are not related to you by blood or marriage) and provide a complete address and phone information for each.

1. Name: _____

Address: _____

Day Phone: _____ Evening Phone: _____

Relationship to reference: _____

2. Name: _____

Address: _____
Day Phone: _____ Evening Phone: _____
Relationship to reference: _____

3. Name: _____
Address: _____
Day Phone: _____ Evening Phone: _____
Relationship to reference: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Notification of Ineligibility Form (Form E)
(Confidential Upon Completion)

Applicant's name: _____

Date notified: _____

Reason for ineligibility:

Signature Parish Relations Ministry Representative Date

Signature Applicant Date

Visiting Organization Form (Form F)

Peace Lutheran Church encourages the use of its facility by visiting organizations and opens its doors to organizations which need space for events involving children. To ensure the safety of all children, Peace Lutheran Church requires that visiting leaders abide by the Child Safety Governing Policy.

Name of Organization: _____

Date(s) facility will be used: _____

Anticipated number of participants: Children _____ Adults _____

We hereby acknowledge that we have reviewed this copy of Peace Lutheran Church's Child Safety Governing Policy, Procedures, Forms, and Training Materials. We agree to provide a minimum of two adults for the duration of time that our organization uses Peace Lutheran Church's facility.

_____	_____	_____
Print Name of Visiting Adult Participant # 1	Signature	Date

_____	_____	_____
Print Name of Visiting Adult Participant # 2	Signature	Date

_____	_____
Signature Church Secretary Peace Lutheran Church	Date

The Church Secretary will retain this original document on file in the church office. A copy may be provided to the visiting organization if requested.

Report of Suspected Incident of Child Sexual Abuse Form (Form G)

1. Name of person observing or receiving disclosure of child sexual abuse: _____
2. Victim's name: _____ Victim's age/date of birth: _____
3. Date and place of initial conversation with/report from victim: _____

4. Victim's statement (give your detailed summary here): _____

5. Name of person accused of abuse: _____
6. Relationship of accused to victim (paid staff, volunteer, family member, other):

7. Date and time of report to Polk County Human Services: _____
Person spoken with: _____
Summary of conversation: _____

8. Date and time of report to Parish Relations Ministry Chairperson: _____
Date and time of report to Senior Pastor: _____
Date and time of report to Church Council President: _____
9. Date and time of report to victim's parent/guardian: _____
Summary of conversation: _____

Child Safety Governing Policy Training Materials

Bob sat dejectedly before the church board. His broad shoulders slumped as he tearfully retold his story. Bob has been sexually molesting his thirteen year old daughter for the last two years. This activity may have gone undetected except that Bob tried to abuse one of his daughter's girlfriends while chaperoning a Sunday School activity. The young girl reported the incident to her parents and Bob was apprehended. The church leaders hearing this confession sat in disbelief. How could Bob, a successful businessman, husband, father of three children, and respected church worker commit such actions?

Sexual abuse of children is a terrible reality of the world we live in. The church is not immune to this reality. At Peace Lutheran Church we want to provide a safe environment for all children and those who work with them. Those who work directly with children and supervise other volunteers play an important role in helping prevent child sexual abuse from occurring. This guide is designed to provide some basic training for key church workers. The training will help workers avoid high risk situations, competently supervise volunteers, be aware of basic sexual abuse symptoms, and be aware of what to do when a suspected case of child sexual abuse is reported.

What Is Child Sexual Abuse?

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

Sexual abuse of children may be violent or nonviolent. All child sexual abuse is an exploitation of a child's vulnerability and powerlessness in which the abuser is fully responsible for the actions.

Sexual abuse of children is criminal behavior that involves children in sexual behaviors as defined by state and federal law.

Sexual abuse of children includes behaviors that involve touching and non-touching aspects.

Types of abuse that involve touching include but are not limited to:

- Fondling
- Oral, genital, and anal penetration
- Intercourse
- Forcible rape

Types of abuse that do not involve touching include but are not limited to:

- Verbal comments
- Pornographic videos
- Obscene phone calls
- Exhibitionism
- Allowing children to witness sexual activity

What Does A Child Sexual Abuser Look Like?

Who is the typical child sexual abuser? Some church leaders assume that abusers are “strangers wearing trench coats” or “dirty old men.” These stereotypes are not only inaccurate but dangerously contribute to a false sense of security. Researchers in the field of child sexual abuse currently indicate that no one profile fits the various perpetrators of abuse. Church leaders can become preoccupied screening stereotypes, while not suspecting the real molester could be an active adult or teen in the church.

Symptoms Of Child Sexual Abuse

Church workers should be alert to physical signs of sexual abuse and molestation, as well as to behavioral and verbal signs that a victim may exhibit. Some of the more common signs are listed below.

Physical signs may include:

- Lacerations and bruises
- Nightmares
- Irritation, pain, or injury to the genital area
- Difficulty with urination
- Discomfort when sitting
- Torn or bloody underclothing
- Venereal disease

Behavioral signs may include:

- Anxiety when approaching church or nursery area
- Nervous or hostile behavior toward adults
- Sexual self-consciousness
- “Acting out” of sexual behavior
- Withdrawal from church activities and friends

Verbal signs may include the following statements:

- I don't like [a particular church worker]
- [A church worker] does things to me when we are alone
- I don't like to be alone with [a church worker]
- [A church worker] fooled around with me

What Peace Lutheran Church Is Doing

To protect our children and those who work with them Peace Lutheran Church created and adopted the Child Safety Governing Policy. This policy established worker screening, the two adult rule, windows on doors, child safety as part of new member orientation, ongoing review, and these worker training materials.

What You Can Do

As an adult volunteer or employee at Peace Lutheran Church you are an essential part of this church's efforts to provide a safe environment for our children. The effectiveness of the child safety efforts in our congregation is reliant upon your own awareness and understanding of child

safety concerns.

The Child Safety Governing Policy should not be viewed as something which restricts the way you can do ministry but rather it should be viewed as a resource to support your efforts in carrying out your ministry in a safe manner. It also provides you with a reasonable amount of personal protection from false accusations.

There are several “red flags” you can watch for that might be indicative of a problem. Watch for the symptoms of sexual abuse as they are identified on the previous page of these materials. Avoid stereotyping who might be a potential abuser when selecting volunteers. An adult who seems gifted and eager to work with children could be an abuser. Identify and eliminate situations that might put you or other workers in high risk situations whenever possible.

As an adult, it is your responsibility to notify the Senior Pastor or Parish Relations Ministry Chairperson if you feel a children’s event will place adults in potentially high risk situations with children. This will initiate the process of screening the adults who will be participating in the event.

When an allegation of abuse is made directly to you by either a child or another worker you must respond. If another worker notifies you of an allegation, encourage the worker who received the report directly from the child to contact the appropriate authorities. If that person is not willing to do so then it becomes your responsibility to make the report.

It is important to understand that as an employee or volunteer with children you are empowered to use your own best judgment when it comes to the safety of our children, yourself and others who work with children. Although you are required to follow the procedures outlined in the Child Safety Governing Policy there will most certainly be situations that are not covered by any particular procedure. It is at these times that you must use reasonable judgment to discern what the best action to take is. Listen to your “gut feelings”. If something does not seem right, do not hesitate to share your concern with another adult worker or change the situation.

Portions of these Training Materials were taken from Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse in Your Church, Church Law & Tax Report, 1993.