

## **Policies Regarding Child Abuse**

Trinity Church supports and maintains a zero tolerance against child abuse and neglect. Child abuse and neglect include physical or mental injury, sexual abuse, negligent treatment, or maltreatment. Sexual abuse is defined as the use, persuasion, or coercion of any child to engage in any sexually explicit conduct (or any simulation of such conduct).

It is against the law and against the policies of Trinity Church for any volunteer or employed staff, male or female, to physically, sexually, or mentally abuse or neglect any child.

Trinity Church will neither condone nor tolerate:

- Infliction of bodily injury upon any child or physically or sexually abusive behavior towards a child.
- Physical neglect of children, including failure to provide adequate safety measures, care, and supervision in relation to church activities.
- Emotional mistreatment of children, including verbal abuse and/or verbal attacks.

Trinity Church Children's Ministry volunteers have been trained to recognize behaviors intended to "groom" children for sexual abuse. These behaviors will be immediately investigated and reported to the appropriate authorities.

In the event that staff or volunteers observe any inappropriate behavior (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 immediate supervisor, the Family Ministry Director, or the Pastor.

## **Policies & Procedures Regarding Reporting and Responding**

Trinity Church Children's Ministry is committed to the prevention of any type of child abuse. In the event of any questionable or inappropriate activity involving a child, it is our policy to deal with that situation immediately and forthrightly, following these guidelines:

In the event of a breach of policy:

- 1) Any violation of church policies, allegations or suspicions of questionable behavior toward a child, or observed indicators of abuse or neglect should be immediately reported to the Family Ministry Director.
- 2) The Family Ministry Director will inform the Pastor.
- 3) The Pastor and the Family Ministry Director will investigate the situation, with every consideration for privacy and confidentiality.
- 4) The incident and all efforts to deal with it should be thoroughly documented in writing.

In the event that the allegations consist of physical or sexual abuse or neglect, the Family Ministry Director and the Pastor will:

- 5) As mandated reporters, inform the Indiana Department of Child Services and the parents of the child will be notified by the Family Ministry Director and/or Pastor if the abuse or neglect happened at Trinity or a Trinity sponsored event.
- 6) The incident will be immediately reported to the church insurance company and legal counsel.
- 7) The safety of the child will be secured before the accused is confronted.
- 8) Every effort will be made to minister to and relieve the pain of the victim and the victim's family.

9) The accused will be treated with dignity and support. If the accused is a volunteer at Trinity Church, that person will be temporarily relieved of his or her duties until the investigation is finished. If the accused is a paid employee of Trinity Church, that person will also be relieved of his or her duties until the allegations are cleared or substantiated. The Leadership Team will make the decision whether to maintain or suspend the employee's income for the duration of the investigation.

10) One spokesperson will be designated to represent Trinity Church to the congregation, the media, and the public at large. All other persons involved should refer questions to this spokesperson. The privacy and confidentiality of all parties should be safeguarded to the best of our ability.

In the case that Trinity Church becomes aware of a registered sex offender within the Trinity community, the Leadership Team will meet with the community member. The meeting will serve two purposes: to seek to understand the community member's situation and communicate the church's policies in place for the safety of our children.

## **Policies**

1. Any registered offender is expected to self-disclose his or her status as a registered offender (including his/her level designation) to an elder prior to attending any Trinity Church services or activities. Whether through disclosure or discovery, as soon as the registered status of an offender is realized, the protocols of this policy will be expected to be honored or the offender may not attend any Trinity Gatherings or activities.

2. A Category One offender may not attend any Trinity Gatherings or activities, including small groups, until signing the "Attendance Contract for Category One Offenders."

3. Offenders are prohibited from attending Trinity Church services and / or activities under any of the following circumstances: a. If any victim of the offender is a member of Trinity Church or known to regularly attend any Trinity gatherings. b. If the offender has a history of not following established contract agreements at other churches. c. If the offender does not agree to the conditions for fellowship at Trinity Church. d. If the offender does not comply with the conditions for fellowship at Trinity Church.

4. A Category Two offender is considered to have a moderate to high risk of re-offending. Given this heightened risk, Category Two offenders are prohibited from attending Trinity Church services, small groups, or activities. Individuals with these designations are encouraged to attend an online church that ministers to sex-offenders. For example, Light My Way at Sonrise Church. Website: <https://lightmyway.isonrise.com>. Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/clifford.jones.3950178>.

5. An offender may not attend any children- or youth-oriented services or activities. However, Category One Offenders are allowed to attend services and activities where children may be present, such as worship services, and are allowed to be in the church foyer or auditorium, for example, so long as five or more adults are present including the offender's assigned escort.

6. At such time as an individual ceases to be a registered offender, a copy of the "Certificate and Order of Discharge," or a similarly equivalent Court document, must be submitted to the individual's supervising elder to be included in the offender's file. At that time, an evaluation will be conducted to determine what continuing restrictions will remain in place, if any.

7. Any individual that at one time registered as an offender, but is no longer on the registry, is prohibited from entering into Trinity Church's children's ministry areas or participating as part of Trinity Church's children's

ministry without first receiving permission from the Leadership Team. Each individual's situation will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

### **Adult Sexual Abuse Policy\***

Trinity Church supports and maintains a zero tolerance against sexual abuse in any form. Trinity church will not condone or tolerate staff and leaders (including those in formal or informal leadership roles) using physical, verbal, or emotional abuse in order to persuade or coerce any person into any form of sexually explicit conduct (or any simulation of such conduct).

In the event that any Trinity community member observes any inappropriate or questionable behavior or suspected abuse (physical, emotional, or sexual) it is their responsibility to immediately report their observations to the Pastor and/or the Leadership Team.

### **Policies & Procedures Regarding Reporting and Responding**

Trinity Church is committed to the prevention of any type of abuse. In the event of any questionable or inappropriate activity, it is our policy to deal with that situation immediately and forthrightly, following these guidelines:

- 1) Any violation of these policies, questionable behavior toward another, or observed indicators of abuse should be immediately reported to the Pastor (or Leadership Team).
- 2) The Pastor will inform the Leadership Team.
- 3) The Pastor and Leadership Team will investigate the situation, with every consideration for privacy and confidentiality.
- 4) The incident and all efforts to deal with it should be thoroughly documented in writing.

In the event of a confirmed allegation of abuse:

- 1) The incident should be immediately reported to the Pastor and/or Leadership Team.
- 2) The Pastor will report the allegation to the Leadership Team and notify staff.
- 3) The incident will be immediately reported to the church insurance company and legal counsel.
- 4) If it is determined that a crime may have been committed a report will be made to the appropriate authorities. (If the behavior in question falls under conditions of mandated reporting, the suspected abuse will be reported to the appropriate authorities prior to contacting the insurance company and legal counsel.)
- 5) Following the guidance of legal counsel, the Pastor and/or Leadership Team will make a report to the parties involved and follow steps of accountability:
  - a) Both the victim and the accused will be assigned a care group.
  - b) Every effort will be made to minister to and relieve the pain of the victim and the victim's family. This includes the victim indicating needs.
  - b) The safety of the victim will be secured before the accused is confronted.
  - c) The care group will accompany the pastor or designated Leadership Team member when confronting the accused individual.
  - d) Care plans will be put in place for both the victim and the accused.
  - e) Follow up schedules for both the victim and accused will be adhered to and reports will be made back to the Pastor and/or Leadership Team for further review.

6) The accused will be treated with dignity and support. If the accused is in leadership at Trinity Church, that person will be temporarily relieved of his or her duties until the investigation is finished. If the accused is a paid employee of Trinity Church, the Leadership Team will make the decision whether to maintain or suspend the employee's income for the duration of the investigation.

7) One spokesperson will be designated to represent Trinity Church to the congregation, the media, and the public at large. All questions should be directed to this spokesperson. The privacy and confidentiality of all parties should be safeguarded throughout the process.

\*See policy specific to children in Trinity's Family Ministry Handbook.