

St. Matthew Lutheran Church: Child Safety Policy
Drafted January 2014, Revised February 2014

St. Matthew Lutheran Church desires to create a safe, nurturing, and welcoming environment for people of all ages. We especially desire to create such an atmosphere for our children. It is a gift to share in the upbringing of children and in the strengthening of families, and we seek to honor this gift in the ways we conduct ourselves. The following policies address the ways in which we promise to protect the well-being and promote the safety of all staff, volunteers, members, and participants of St. Matthew Lutheran Church so that the work of the Spirit might flourish in this place and God's love be made known to all.

Nursery Policies:

1. All paid staff are to be trained in infant/child CPR, basic first aid, and in use of the AED.
2. All paid staff must have a multi-state background check completed; this is to be done every three years.
3. All parents are to sign their child in and out each Sunday. Children will not be released to other adults unless consent has been given by a parent ahead of time.
4. No unauthorized personnel are allowed to be present in the nursery while it is in use. Examples of unauthorized personnel include spouses or friends of paid staff, and adults without children being watched by nursery staff.
5. There must be two trained and background-checked adults working in the nursery if there are five or more children present.
6. The nursery will be a peanut-free zone, where nothing containing peanuts is served.
7. Should suspicious activity or suspicious individuals appear in the nursery, or should matters arise that exceed the nursery supervisor's jurisdiction, the nursery supervisor shall report to any Pastor or church congregational council member.

Driving Policies:

1. When taking children or youth (aged 18 and younger) on off-site, official outings, all drivers must be 21 years of age or older. All drivers must also have had their license for three or more years, and must have a copy of their Driver's License and Insurance Card on file at the church.
2. There will not be more passengers in a vehicle than seatbelts. Each individual in a car is required to wear a seatbelt when traveling for official St. Matthew outings.
3. All those driving minors for church-related activities must also be aware that in case of an accident, the driver's insurance is primary, while the church's insurance is secondary.

Trip/Retreat Policies:

1. All church-related trips or retreats must follow the 1:5 ratio, where there is one adult over the age of 21 to 5 youth (aged 18 and younger).
2. There must be at least two adults in attendance for all trips or retreats. If the trip includes both boys and girls, a chaperone of each gender is required. The one exception to this policy is the following: if there are five or fewer minors of the same gender on a trip or retreat, only one same-gendered adult is needed to chaperone.
3. All chaperones on trips lasting more than three days will be required to complete a background check. These will remain on file at the church, and will be kept confidential aside from the Pastors.
4. No unrelated adult may share a bed with a minor on a trip or retreat.
5. Each youth participant on the trip will be expected to live up to the code of conduct agreed to prior to departure. If this code of conduct is not lived up to, discipline measures will be taken. Such measures will be at the discretion of the trip leader.
6. Alcohol, tobacco, drugs, or pornography are not allowed to be in the possession of any youth participant on any church-related trip or retreat. If such items are found, they will be confiscated immediately and

the youth will be disciplined. The consequence for possession of these items may be that the youth is sent home immediately, at the expense of his or her family.

General Policies:

1. The Rule of Three must be followed at all times: in any setting or situation, there should be at least two adults and one youth or two youth and one adult.
2. When assisting young children (age 4 or under) in the restrooms, the Rule of Three must be adhered to. An adult will not be alone with a child in a bathroom stall.
3. If an adult or pastor needs to have a private, confidential conversation with a youth, they should try to do so in a public place—where others can see, but not hear them. If this is impossible, they may meet in a classroom or office, so long as the door remains open.
4. No sexual, or inappropriate touch, will be tolerated. Appropriate touch is non-demanding, supportive, and public; it is shared with many people—not just one particular youth.
5. Individuals with a past history of sexual misconduct of any kind will not be allowed to volunteer with the children, youth, or family ministries.
6. No physical discipline, verbal abuse, or threats of any kind will be used with the youth at St. Matthew.
7. No hazing, bullying, discrimination, or excessive pranks will be tolerated at St. Matthew or on official St. Matthew trips/retreats.
8. Guns are not allowed on the property of St. Matthew; the signage denoting this can be found by the door at the circle drive. In addition, guns are not allowed on any St. Matthew-sponsored trip, retreat, or outing.
9. Accidents occurring within the nursery will require an incident report to be completed and kept on file in the church office.

Procedures for Reporting Inappropriate Behavior/Abuse:

1. Allegations of any inappropriate contact, discipline, harassment, threat, or abuse should be reported immediately to the adult in charge. Together, the adult and the youth should write down what happened. The adult in charge will then report to the Pastor of Youth and Family, who will be in conversation with the Lead Pastor. From here, the Pastors will work together to discern the best course of action. Know that Pastors are mandatory reporters. The sexual or physical abuse of a minor must be reported.
2. When responding to an allegation, take it seriously. Do not pre-judge the situation or attempt an autonomous investigation. Do not minimize the incident, cast blame, or share details with anyone other than the pastors. Confidentiality, trust, and responsibility are of the utmost importance.

The preceding policies have been set in place to protect the children, youth, and adults of St. Matthew Lutheran Church, and to aid in the creation of an environment where all are welcome and safe. These policies shall be shared with the entire congregation, and shall be distributed to all those in volunteer or paid capacities.