

**Glyndon Lutheran Church**  
**Policy on Prevention of Sexual Abuse and Misconduct**  
**Including Protecting Children, Youth, and**  
**Vulnerable Adults in Church Activities**

**Adopted by Church Council on May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2013 and Reviewed November 16, 2015**

(Adapted from Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse in Your Church, published by Church Law and Tax Report, from Youth Protection Guidelines: Training for Volunteer Leaders and Parents of the Boy Scouts of America and from the Policy and Procedure Manual of Youth and Young Adult Ministry of the Episcopal Diocese of Milwaukee).

**Introduction:** On May 8th, 2013, the Church Council adopted this policy to help keep our church a safe sanctuary for our children, youth, and vulnerable adults. Fortunately, this was not initiated in response to problems within Glyndon Lutheran Church (GLC), but it is prompted by awareness of problems in other churches that have allowed for the abuse of children, youth, or vulnerable adults by paid and unpaid workers in the church, as well as by other minors and by recommendation of our insurance carrier. The advice of experts has shaped our response and assures us that what helps protect our children, youth, and vulnerable adults also helps protect our church from unfounded charges and legal liability. We do not feel this policy will restrict in any way our service of Christ; it will enhance it.

The following policy shall be followed by all professional and lay people in their work for GLC.

**A. Screening of Lay Workers/Volunteers (“Leaders”)**

Lay child and youth activity leaders, along with anyone working with a vulnerable adult in the church, must go through a standardized screening procedure, approved by the Church Council, who reserves the right to verify information regarding background and history of activities with minors and vulnerable adults, as well as doing a check on legal history.

This includes people working in youth activities, Faith Formation, music and educational activities, such as Sunday School. No one will be accepted who has not had a completed background check or who has had a criminal sexual or physical abuse violation. Leaders shall be informed of the rules they are required to follow in their activities with minors or vulnerable adults and shall be required to sign that they will faithfully follow these requirements.

Screening results will be kept on-file in a locked and secure file cabinet in the church office.

All lay workers/volunteers shall be informed of the rules in this policy and shall be required to sign and date a Receipt and Acknowledgement of Glyndon Lutheran Church Policy for Protecting Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults in Church Activities. Additional copies can be found in the church office or on the church website.

## **B. Screening of Employees**

All future and current employees must complete a pre-employment application, stating any criminal or pending criminal charges or convictions against them.

All future and current employees must go through a standard screening procedure. Glyndon Lutheran Church reserves the right to verify information regarding background and history or activities with minors and vulnerable adults, as well as conduct a criminal background check by proper authorities and conduct a fair and discreet investigation of all alleged incidents of sexual misconduct.

All employees shall be informed of the rules in this policy and shall be required to sign and date a Receipt and Acknowledgement of Glyndon Luther Church Policy for Protecting Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults in Church Activities. Additional copies can be found in the church office or on the church website.

## **C. History of Sexual Misconduct**

Any adult who has been convicted of sexual misconduct or abuse may not participate in any capacity in GLC programs for children, youth, or vulnerable adults without council and staff review and approval.

## **D. Two-deep Leadership**

Two adult leaders should be present at each activity with minors or vulnerable adults. Exceptions are to be approved by the Education Board, Church Council, Family Minister or Pastor.

## **E. Classroom Doors**

Activities will be held in rooms with a window in the door or with the door opened. All activities are subject to monitoring by staff or appointed personnel. Windows shall not be obscured. Where doors do not have windows, signs shall be erected and maintained by the Properties Board indicating, "This door to remain open when youth are present."

## **F. Individual Consultation**

Individual consultation between adults other than pastoral staff and minors or vulnerable adults must be done within the two-deep framework. In situations that require personal conferences, mentoring or counseling, this should be conducted in the church offices with at least one other approved leader present in the area (though not necessarily in the office.) As a rule, the counseling should be as public as possible, without sacrificing effectiveness.

Unplanned individual contact on outings (such as for counseling purposes) must be done in view of another adult or minor. Planned individual contact outside the church building must occur only in public places and with the prior consent of the minor or vulnerable adult and parent or guardian. Examples would be a ride home or a conversation over a soft drink between an adult and minor.

### **G. Respect of Privacy**

Adult leaders need to respect the privacy of minors and vulnerable adults in situations such as use of rest rooms, changing into swimming suits, or taking showers on overnight outings, and intrude only insofar as health and safety require. They also need to protect their own privacy in similar situations.

### **H. Separate Accommodations**

A minimum of two adults should be present at an overnight activity. If participants are both male and female, the adults will preferably be male and female. On other outings that require that an adult share the room with a minor (such as ELCA Gatherings) the minors and parents or guardians shall give prior consent. The adult will avoid occupying the same bed as a minor, with the exception of a parent or guardian.

### **I. Housing**

When private homes are used for overnight events, the program staff member will use the standardized screening procedure for all adults involved as hosts, hostesses and chaperons. At no time may only one child or youth dwell in one home.

### **J. No Secret Activities**

There are no “secret” activities or organizations recognized by GLC. All aspects of the church program are open to observation by parents and congregational leaders. Confidentiality or secrecy is not a privilege of adult leaders while involved in church activities with youth.

### **K. Constructive Discipline**

Discipline used in church activities should be constructive and reflect Christian values. Corporal punishment is never permitted.

### **L. Hazing Prohibited**

Physical hazing and initiations are prohibited and may not be included as part of any GLC activity or on GLC property.

### **M. No Sexualizing**

No sexual behavior is permitted on GLC property or with GLC sponsored events including among GLC minors or vulnerable adults. Other behaviors which are abusive, but do not involve physical contact, are also prohibited. Examples are sexual comments, the showing of sexual material and the exposure of sexual parts of the minor’s body and/or the adult’s body.

### **N. Gifts**

Leaders shall not give personal gifts or money to individual children or youth without first notifying the parents and direct supervisor. Gifts to entire classes are acceptable.

## **O. Authority**

Variance from this policy can only be permitted when written consent is given by the Church Council for deviation from a specific guideline for identified reasons.

The Pastor and Family Minister are responsible for screening and registering people working in their program area, informing them of these guidelines and are responsible for these policies being followed in their area.

Adult leaders are liable for disciplinary action for not following these guidelines, even if no abuse can be established

## **P. Transportation**

GLC has a document that outlines rules when it comes to transporting minors or vulnerable adults. Please see the *Glyndon Lutheran Church Transportation Policy*.

## **Q. Registered Sex Offenders**

GLC has a plan to monitor registered sex offenders. Please see *Glyndon Lutheran Church Registered Sex Offender Attendance Policy*.

## **R. Reporting Violations of These Rules or Sexual Abuse**

Persons covered by these rules are required to notify the Pastor, Family Minister, or Council President of any violations of these rules.

### **Who may report --**

1. The victim or a member of the victim's family.
2. A member of the congregation or another concerned person.
3. A pastor or church leader.

### **Who should be notified --**

1. Where to report sexual abuse of a child or youth:

According to Minnesota Statute 662.556, those having cause to suspect that a minor or vulnerable adult has been the victim of abuse must report the case to Clay County Social Services, the Clay Country Sheriff's Department, or the Glyndon Police Department. Glyndon's Police Department should be the first call so they can direct to appropriate people.

**Clay County Social Services:** 218.299.5200

**Clay County Sheriff's Department:** 218.299.5151

**Glyndon Police Department:** 218.498.2727

Any person who reports an incident in good faith is immune from either civil or criminal liability.

2. Where to report sexual abuse of an adult:

An adult victim must give their written consent, unless they are developmentally disabled, for sexual abuse to be reported.

After obtaining written consent, report to Glyndon Police Department at 218.498.2727. A call may also be put in to the Rape and Abuse Crisis Center at 701.293.7273. If it is an emergency, call 911.

Also report to the senior pastor at 218.498.2368.

3. Where to report sexual misconduct committed by church leaders, other than by a rostered leader:

Contact a pastor, either by phone or in person. If it is not possible to notify a pastor directly, write a letter stating the complaint to the pastor at:

Glyndon Lutheran Church  
P.O. Box 38  
Glyndon, MN 56547  
218.498.2368.

4. Where to report sexual misconduct committed by a rostered leader:

Anyone who knows or suspects that a rostered leader may have been involved in sexual misconduct should report that knowledge or suspicion to the bishop or an associate to the bishop:

The Rev. Larry Wohlrabe, Bishop, Northwestern Minnesota Synod of the ELCA  
310 14<sup>th</sup> Ave. S.  
Moorhead, MN 56560  
[wohlrabe@cord.edu](mailto:wohlrabe@cord.edu)  
218.299.3019

**RECEIPT AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE GLYNDON LUTHERAN  
CHURCH POLICY ON PREVENTION OF SEXUAL ABUSE AND  
MISCONDUCT INCLUDING PROTECTING CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND  
VULNERABLE ADULTS IN CHURCH ACTIVITIES**

I have received and read a copy of the Glyndon Lutheran Church Policy on Sexual Abuse and Misconduct.

By signing this form, the employee or volunteer acknowledges that this policy supersedes all previous church handbooks, policies, and any other published or unpublished statements concerning sexual abuse and misconduct. The signed original of this agreement should be given to the church office. This will be retained in the church office.

If you would like a copy of this agreement, please let us know and we would be happy to provide one.

Thank you.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_