

Calvary Lutheran Church  
of Golden Valley

*Safe Haven for  
Children, Youth & Vulnerable Adults*

# **Safety & Abuse Policy**

June 2014

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**Calvary Lutheran Church**

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# Calvary Lutheran Church of Golden Valley

## Safe Haven for Children, Youth & Vulnerable Adults

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## Covenant to Be a Safe Haven for Children, Youth & Vulnerable Adults

We, the members of  
**Calvary Lutheran Church of Golden Valley**

*living out our faith at*

7520 Golden Valley Road  
Golden Valley, MN 55427

as a Lutheran Church

affirm our commitment to be a  
Safe Haven for  
Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults.

Knowing that living in this covenant is a lifelong process  
of learning and caring, and knowing that we work with others  
in our immediate community, the wider church and the world  
to develop programs and places  
where all people can flourish,  
we ask God to help us.

# Calvary's commitment

*“But 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*

As we “lead people into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ” we will care for all people within Calvary. It is the policy of Calvary Lutheran Church, Golden Valley, to provide a safe environment for the children, youth and workers in our church. Ministry to our children, youth and vulnerable adults is deeply valued and to that end, procedures will be followed to protect them from harm in our church.

Because the legal and social environment of our society is turbulent and changing rapidly, it shall be our policy to monitor this external environment in light of our mission to “lead people into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ.” As a Christian body, we shall be proactive in reviewing our policies and procedures to make changes when necessary to provide a safe environment for the children, youth, vulnerable adults, volunteers and staff of our church.

## Why is a safety and abuse policy necessary?

1. **To Protect Children, Youth & Vulnerable Adults** – The creation of a secure, safe environment for our youth is of utmost importance (*Matthew 18:1-10*). The application, interview, training and reference check processes are all screening procedures to assure the safety of our children.
2. **To Protect Volunteers and Staff** – It is necessary to protect church staff and volunteer workers from potential meritless allegations of abuse.
3. **To Raise Awareness Level** – The goal is not to raise suspicion, but to become educated about the process and systems regarding protection of people at Calvary Lutheran Church.
4. **Calvary's Position in the Community** – Because we are a leader in the greater Golden Valley community, we need to be the best advocates for children, minors and vulnerable adults we can be.
5. **Legal Protection of Calvary Lutheran Church** – There are several liability factors that dictate how we process our volunteers and paperwork.

## Parental Responsibility

All parents should be encouraged to assume individual responsibility for their children and not assume the church sponsored activity or presence on the church premises is a guarantee of the child's safety. Children should not be left unattended in the church building.

# marks of a safe haven

What does a Safe Haven for Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults look like? What does it give to a child or vulnerable adult? What does it feel like to the congregation? What does it say to the community? In Holy Baptism, we make commitment to “renounce all the forces of evil...” (*LBW, page 123*). What are the “forces of evil” that threaten the safety of children and vulnerable adults in your setting? How can our congregation boldly state its belief in a God who creates, redeems, and sanctifies? The following are characteristics of a Safe Haven for Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults.

## Children & vulnerable adults are safe from

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- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Stifling stereotypes
- Hunger
- Homelessness
- Rejection
- People are free from Financial Exploitation

## Marks of a Safe Haven

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Zero tolerance of physical violence  
Zero tolerance of sexual abuse  
Zero tolerance of emotional abuse  
Zero tolerance of racism, sexism, ageism  
Immediate assistance in times of crisis  
Understands the causes of poverty  
Allocates resources to create Safe Havens  
Zero tolerance of financial exploitation

## Children & vulnerable adults are safe to

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- Grow in faith
- Love God
- Love their neighbors
- Give
  
- Feel empathy
  
- Serve
- Discover
  
- Create
- Hope
- Be aware of their community
- Be aware of the world

## Marks of a Safe Haven

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Worship is child/vulnerable adult-friendly  
Worship is child/vulnerable adult-friendly  
Strong relationships between generations  
Commitment to teach and learn from children & vulnerable adults  
Time is taken to talk with and listen to children & vulnerable adults  
Challenged to grow in faith and service  
High standards for quality care and education  
Joy and fun, rather than boredom  
Encouragement and enthusiasm  
Strong connections both locally and globally  
Seeing life through the eyes of a child or vulnerable adult

# types of child abuse

While child abuse has gotten more attention in the last few decades (it wasn't until 1961 that the medical profession formally recognized child abuse), it is still a growing problem in our society. Child abuse can be described in four different categories: Physical, Mental, Sexual, and Neglect.

## Physical Abuse

- Inflicting injury upon a child by other than accidental means, which causes death, disfigurement, impairment of physical or emotional health, or loss or impairment of any bodily function.
- Placing a child in a situation where they will likely be injured.
- Characterized by injury from punching, kicking, biting, burning or otherwise physically harming a child.

## Mental Abuse

- Emotional, or psychological injury that causes, or could cause, behavioral, emotional, or mental disorders.
- Verbal comments, actions or statements that would cause a child to believe their person, emotions, physical form, family, race, background, religious background, or social status is somehow bad, inferior, unacceptable or shameful.
- Emotional abuse is almost always present with other types of abuse.

## Sexual Abuse

- Child sexual abuse is any sexual activity with a child in any setting. The abuser may be an adult, an adolescent, or another child.
- Child sexual abuse may be violent or non-violent.
- Child sexual abuse is criminal behavior that involves children in sexual behaviors for which they are not personally, socially or developmentally ready.
- Child sexual abuse may include actual or threatened touching or non-touching behavior.
- Types of child sexual abuse that involve touching include the following: fondling; oral, genital or anal penetration; intercourse; forcible rape; etc.
- Types of child abuse that do not involve touching, pornographic pictures; obscene phone calls; exhibitionism; allowing children to view sexual activity, verbal comments, etc.

## Neglect

- This can be physical, such as delay of nourishment or health care; educational, such as permitting a child to be truant from school; or emotional, such as extreme spousal abuse in front of the child; or failing to provide psychological care as needed; or financial, such as not providing adequately for the child.

While it is possible that only one type of child abuse could be noticed in a situation, it is more likely that more than one category of abuse will be present. As with any problem, an awareness of the indicators for that problem can be a big first step in the right direction.



# vulnerable adult abuse

## Who is a vulnerable adult?

A vulnerable adult in the state of Minnesota is a person who is 18 years of age or older and who fits the criteria of either categorical vulnerable adult or functional vulnerable adult.

**Categorical** ~ either a resident of a licensed facility, a recipient of services from a licensed facility or provider, or a recipient of licensed home health care services or MA funded personal care attendant services.

**Functional** ~ a person with physical or mental infirmity, or emotional dysfunction which impairs their ability to meet basic needs and their ability to protect themselves from maltreatment.

- *unable to meet own basic needs:* food, shelter clothing
- *unable to perform activities of daily living:* bathing, grooming, dressing, shopping, cooking, eating, cleaning, paying bills, administering medications, etc.
- *unable to protect self from maltreatment:* identify maltreatment, escape from maltreatment, ask for/call for assistance, develop and implement a protective plan
- has diminished mental capacity

## Types of abuse

### Assault

- Conduct producing pain or injury, such as: hitting, slapping, kicking, pinching, use of force to compel cooperation, involuntary confinement, deprivation
- Use of malicious language (oral, written, or gesture) toward a vulnerable adult: disparaging, humiliating, harassing or threatening
- Criminal sexual conduct
- Use of drugs to injure or to facilitate a crime
- Promotion of prostitution

### Neglect

- Failure to provide care or services such as: food, clothing, shelter, supervision, medical care
- May be caused by self or caregiver

### Financial Exploitation

- By legal fiduciary:
  - unauthorized expenditure or failure to use financial resources to provide basic needs of vulnerable adult
- By others:
  - willfully uses, withholds, or disposes of the vulnerable adult's funds or property
  - obtains control or interest in vulnerable adult's funds or property through undue influence, harassment, duress, deception or fraud
  - compels vulnerable adult to perform for the profit of another

## What to Report: Identify!

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- Vulnerable adult
  - Caregiver
  - Nature and extent of suspected maltreatment
  - Time, date, location of incident
  - Any evidence of previous maltreatment

For more information see [www.leg.state.mn.us](http://www.leg.state.mn.us)

## Calvary's procedures in preventing abuse

Legal requirements call for the church to take specific action in worker/volunteer selection and supervision and in the reporting of allegations of abuse. Calvary Lutheran Church has chosen to implement and follow the following procedures:

1. **Screening Process for all staff and volunteers**
2. **Training Process for all staff and volunteers**
3. **Supervision Guidelines for all staff**
3. **Reporting Obligations for all staff and volunteers**

Individuals who **will not** be allowed to work with children, youth or vulnerable adults

1. Individuals convicted of child abuse or molestation.
2. Convicted felons.
3. Individuals with illness or character problems that could affect or impair working with children, youth or vulnerable adults.

### **Calvary's Policy Regarding People with Disabilities**

We want all people to be included in the ministries and activities at Calvary. Because most events are run by volunteers and not trained medical/health care staff, our Safe Haven Policy does not allow staff or volunteers to take care of special health/physical needs of others, e.g., self-care, toileting, monitoring medications, feeding, etc. In order for each person to get the most out of events (especially overnight and day long retreats), those requiring assistance with physical cares will need to invite a friend, family member or attendant to assist them.

## Calvary's leadership expectations

The leaders of the programmatic areas of Children, Youth and Family Ministries are in a public and visible position within the church and are looked at as role models for the participants of our programs. Calvary Lutheran Church expects that these leaders, whether children or adults, live their lives in accordance with Biblical principles. The staff of Calvary reserves the right to make judgments about whether individuals should or should not be granted leadership roles based on those principles. These include, but are not limited to, background, recommendations, reputation within the community, lifestyle and participation in the life of Calvary Lutheran Church.

# volunteer screening process

All references to “children” and “youth” in the following procedures refer to children under the age of 18 and vulnerable adults.

The following screening process will be followed for any person who seeks to volunteer at Calvary Lutheran Church who may have or seeks to have access to children and vulnerable adults to whom Calvary Lutheran Church provides care, education, training, instruction or recreation:

1. Confidential Application and Authorization for Background Check (Form A)

All volunteers shall truthfully and fully complete, date and sign this document. It includes an Authorization for a Criminal Background Records Check.

With this authorization, Calvary Lutheran Church will request a background records check to determine whether the applicant is the subject of any reported conviction for background check crimes, under the provisions of the Child Protection Background Check Act.

2. Confidential Interview (Form E)

All volunteers shall meet with the staff leader of the ministry they are applying to serve in and complete a face-to-face interview.

3. Reference Checks (Form F)

All volunteers must have two references (non-family members and, if possible, institutional contacts) complete our **online reference form**. (NOTE: Please ask your references to complete and submit the form found on [calvary.org/reference](http://calvary.org/reference).)

If in the opinion of the Leadership Team the applicant presents a serious potential threat to the safety of children or vulnerable adults at Calvary, the applicant shall be denied the opportunity to work at Calvary Lutheran Church.

## About your privacy

A record of contact with references identified by the applicant shall be maintained and secured in the applicant’s personnel file, and shall contain information about each contact.

Calvary Lutheran Church will request a background records check of the applicant to determine if the applicant has been arrested or convicted of any child abuse crimes, murder, manslaughter, assault, kidnapping, arson, criminal sexual behavior, prostitution-related crimes or any other felonies. The applicant shall be informed that:

1. The applicant has a right to be informed by Calvary of the response of the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension to the background records check and to obtain from Calvary a copy of the background records check report.
2. The applicant has a right to obtain from the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension any record that forms the basis for the report.
3. The applicant has a right to be informed by Calvary Lutheran Church if the applicant has been denied an opportunity to work with children because of the response from the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension.
4. The applicant has the right to challenge the accuracy and completeness of any information contained in the background check report or record by appealing to the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension.
5. Only authorized representatives, approved by the Leadership Team may review the information contained in the response of the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension.

## safe haven guidelines for Calvary volunteers

1. All volunteers who work with children, youth or vulnerable adults shall complete the Volunteer Screening Process as outlined on page 7.
2. Volunteers considered for any position involving contact with children, youth or vulnerable adults should have been involved with Calvary for a minimum of six (6) months.
3. Persons who are known to have committed acts of sexual misconduct with children, youth or vulnerable adults or are known to have been accused of acts of sexual misconduct or other abuse are strictly prohibited from serving in ministry to children, youth or vulnerable adults unless the allegation is found to be without merit. Such persons may be encouraged to serve in other ministries where they have no contact with minors or vulnerable adults.
4. All staff and all volunteers working with children and youth are required to complete Calvary's one-time Safe Haven Training. All volunteers working with children, youth or vulnerable adults are required to attend specific safety and abuse training for their specific ministry areas as part of orientation sessions each year.

All staff and volunteers should be trained to identify inappropriate behavior with children, youth or vulnerable adults. Workers will be encouraged to advise each other when questionable behavior is displayed. Questionable behaviors should be reported to the proper supervising staff person.

5. Volunteers should be instructed that sexual contact or other abuse with minors or vulnerable adults can lead to a felony conviction and imprisonment in a state penitentiary.
6. Volunteers should not be alone with one child or youth in an area that has no public visibility. Volunteers working with vulnerable adults must follow their ministry area's accountability procedures including reporting of visits.
7. Calvary staff and/or other supervisory leaders will make random visit to classrooms and other areas used by children or youth.
8. Supervision of children should be provided before and after the event until all children are in the custody of parents or legal guardians.
9. Volunteers wishing to hold events on the church premises at alternate times or off of church premises must receive advance approval for the event by submitting the Alternate Event Form (Form B) to the appropriate Calvary staff person. These events also require signed Parental Permission Authorization and Release Forms (Form C). If transportation is involved, drivers must complete Form D.
10. In order to promote safety, it will be the responsibility of designated staff and/or leaders to supervise all programs and activities involving children, youth and vulnerable adults consistent with these stated policies.

# to report abuse

Our governing principle is that we know that it is in God's heart and will to care for and protect children and adults. Our considerations/goals are

- Care and protection for victim(s) and their families
- Clear and compassionate public stance
- Protection for members, public, Calvary
- Respect for accused

## Who Should Report Abuse?

- Volunteers (supervisors/staff can help you make report)
- Staff
- Mandatory reporters (are professionals, or professionals delegates, law enforcement, teachers, doctors, nurses, social workers).

## How to Report?

If you know or suspect that a child, youth or vulnerable adult is in **immediate** danger, call 911.

- **Reports for Children and Youth:** Child Protection - 612.348.3552
- **Reports for Vulnerable Adults:** Common Entry Point of County - 612.348.8526

Make report immediately or within 24-hours. When in doubt, make a report.

## 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.

# Minnesota State Law Governing the Responsibility to Report Suspected Child Abuse

Minnesota statutes govern the reporting of alleged abuse. The following statutes among others are important.

***Minn. Stat. § 626.556 subd. 1.***

“The legislature hereby declares that the public policy of the state is to protect children whose health or welfare may be jeopardized through physical abuse, neglect or sexual abuse. In furtherance of this public policy, it is the intent of the legislature under this section to strengthen the family and make the home, school, and community safe for children by promoting responsible child care in all settings; and to provide when necessary, a safe temporary or permanent home environment for physically or sexually abused or neglected children.

In addition, it is the policy of the state to require the reporting of neglect, physical or sexual abuse of children in the home, school, and community settings; to provide for the voluntary reporting of abuse or neglect of children; to require the assessment and investigation of the reports; and to provide protective and counseling services in appropriate cases.”

***Minn. Stat. § 626.556 subd. 3(a)(1).***

“(a) A person who knows or has reason to believe a child is being neglected or physically or sexually abused, as defined in subdivision 2, or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused within the preceding three years, shall immediately report the information to the local welfare agency, agency responsible for assessing or investigating the report, police department, or the county sheriff if the person is:

(1) a professional or professional’s delegate who is engaged in the practice of the healing arts, social services, hospital administration, psychological or psychiatric treatment, child care, education or law enforcement.”

***Minn. Stat. § 626.556 subd. 4(a)(1).***

“(a) The following persons are immune from any civil or criminal liability that otherwise might result from their actions, if they are acting in good faith:

“(1) any person making a voluntary or mandated report under subdivision 3 or under section 626.5561 or assisting in an assessment under this section or under section 626.5561.”

***Minn. Stat. § 626.556 subd. 4(a)(1).***

“Any person who knowingly or recklessly makes a false report under the provisions of this section shall be liable in a civil suit for any actual damages suffered by the person or persons so reported and for any punitive damages set by the court or jury, plus costs and reasonable attorney fees.”