

Mount Olive Lutheran Church Safety and Security Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines

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Mount Olive’s Commitment

The following policies and procedures are to help ensure that Mount Olive Lutheran Church’s ministry is a place where all people can feel they are safe, loved, and valued. The congregation is committed to providing a safe environment for all—including children, youth and vulnerable adults in our midst.

Why is a safety and security policy necessary?

- To affirm and protect children, youth, vulnerable adults, and adults
- To affirm and protect volunteers and staff
- To raise awareness
- To be a leader and advocate in our community
- To affirm and protect Mount Olive Lutheran Church

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.

Supervision Procedures

1. Adults responsible for any church activity involving individual contact with children/youth must be actively involved in worship and congregational life for at least six months. They will be interviewed, must consent to complete background checks, and are encouraged to participate in training/preparation meetings. Leaders under 21 years of age (who have been active participants) may serve if paired with a screened adult over 21 years of age, or when a roaming supervisor is present.
2. Supervising staff and leaders will make random visits to classrooms and other places children/youth use.
3. History of Sexual Misconduct: Any adult who has been convicted of sexual misconduct or abuse may not participate in any capacity involving programs for children, youth, or vulnerable adults.
4. Two Deep Leadership: Employees and volunteer workers are encouraged not to be alone with children, but to work in groups—at least pairs. This is true in the church building and also at church sponsored events elsewhere. Doors will be left open if one adult needs to leave the room temporarily. Speaking to a minor one on one should only be done in a public setting with others present.
5. Drop off/Pick up: Supervision of children/youth should be provided before and after the event until all participants are in the custody of parents or legal guardians or have left the premises. Parents please make sure your children/youth safely reach their leader. After Sunday school, parents/guardians or other authorized person need to pick up their preschool-3rd grade children in the classroom. Authorized persons must be listed in writing by the parents (on the Sunday School Registration Form or other written document). Fourth and Fifth Graders may be allowed to self-release if given such permission by their parent(s).
6. Parental permission including signed medical release and emergency contacts is needed before taking minors on trips.
7. Respect of Privacy: Adult leaders need to respect the privacy of minors 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. Children needing to use the restroom should be escorted to the door of the appropriate restroom. The volunteer should wait at the door until the child is finished. For very young children, assistance will be given if they ask for help. The door will remain open in this situation.
8. Overnight Guidelines: A minimum of two adults should be present at an overnight event. If participants are both male and female, the adults should be both male and female. If these conditions cannot be met, the event should be canceled. On outings that require that an adult share the same room as a minor, the adult must not occupy the same bed as a minor, with the exception of a parent or guardian. Males and females should sleep in separate rooms/areas at events and have separate access to bathroom facilities. When separate facilities are not available, times for male and female use should be scheduled and posted for showers.

9. Transportation: Transportation can only be provided by a leader who is at least 21 years old. Transportation to and from events is the responsibility of the families. During events, drivers should avoid dropping off or picking up minors unaccompanied. Drivers should never be left one-on-one with a minor. The staff shall set standards for who is permitted to drive during events. All drivers must possess a current driver's license and carry insurance. Any deviations should have prior consent of the parent and be reported to the next person in the line of responsibility (voice consent is acceptable). Minors are not allowed to drive groups during events unless the parents provide consent otherwise.
10. Touch: Avoid all inappropriate touch. See guidelines for appropriate and inappropriate affection on page 7.
11. No sexual behavior is permitted with minors or between minors. Other behaviors which are abusive but do not involve physical contact are also prohibited. Examples are sexual comments, showing pornographic sexual material and the exposure of sexual parts of any person's body.
12. Volunteers should be alert for inappropriate behavior or relationships with children or youth. Questionable behaviors or should be reported to the proper supervising staff person or pastor.
13. Alcohol/Drugs are prohibited for adults participating in youth events. Youth and child participants will be sent home immediately if found with alcohol or drugs. Supervising adults should be informed of prescription drugs brought to an event by a minor. All prescription drugs will be turned into adults in charge at youth events unless other arrangements have been agreed upon by the parents and the adults in charge.
14. Firearms: The possession of firearms is prohibited during events.
15. Equality of Treatment: Adults should not give preferential treatment to certain minors and not to others. All minors are equals and should be treated as such.
16. Dating: Adult leaders cannot date or be romantically involved with youth.
17. Reporting of Abuse: It is the policy of Mount Olive Lutheran Church that anyone who has cause to suspect a minor has been or will be the victim of abuse or neglect, must report the case immediately (not more than 24 hours after cause) by telephone or personal visit to Mount Olive staff and/or appropriate authorities. The alleged perpetrator should be removed and supervised until proper authorities arrive on the scene. Concern for the alleged victim, good judgment and open communication are the standards surrounding the reporting of an alleged case of abuse. Keep calm, stay with the participant and know that you don't have to deal with the situation or information alone. All reports are treated with confidentiality by Mount Olive staff and by authorities. Those who care for children and youth MUST report abuse!

How to Report Abuse

The first step in helping abused or neglected children is learning to recognize the signs of child abuse and neglect. The presence of a single sign does not prove child abuse is occurring in a family; however, when these signs appear repeatedly or in combination you should take a closer look at the situation and consider the possibility of child abuse.

If you do suspect a child is being harmed, reporting your suspicions may protect the child and get help for the family. Responding quickly is essential to prevent or stop abuse.

- If a child or vulnerable adult is in immediate danger call **911**.
- If you suspect a child is being harmed, contact your local child protective services agency within 24 hours: Olmsted County Day Crisis Phone: 507 328-6400, After Hours Crisis Phone: 507 281-6248
- 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.
- You may also talk to the pastor.

As people entrusted with a child, youth, or vulnerable adult's care, we must report abuse!

For more information about where and how to file a report, call the Childhelp USA® National Child Abuse Hotline 1-800-4-A-CHILD® (1-800-422-4453)

Recognizing Child Abuse

The following signs may signal the presence of child abuse or neglect.

The Child:

- Shows sudden changes in behavior, school performance, or withdrawal from previously enjoyed activities.
- Has not received help for physical or medical problems brought to the parents' attention.
- Has learning problems (or difficulty concentrating) that cannot be attributed to specific physical or psychological causes.
- Is always watchful, as though preparing for something bad to happen.
- Lacks adult supervision.
- Is overly compliant, passive, or withdrawn.
- Comes to school or other activities early, stays late, and does not want to go home.
- Complaining about people or activities they used to like.
- Becoming isolated or has unexplained anxiety.

Older children or youth:

- Depression
- Aggressive behavior
- Moodiness
- Drastic change in school work
- Sudden promiscuity or indiscretion in sexual activity
- Distance from family

The Parent:

- Shows little concern for the child.
- Denies the existence of—or blames the child for—the child's problems in school or at home.
- Asks teachers or other caretakers to use harsh physical discipline if the child misbehaves.
- Sees the child as entirely bad, worthless, or burdensome.
- Demands a level of physical or academic performance the child cannot achieve.
- Looks primarily to the child for care, attention, and satisfaction of emotional needs.

The Parent and Child:

- Rarely touch or look at each other.
- Consider their relationship entirely negative.
- State that they do not like each other.

Types of Abuse

The following are some signs often associated with particular types of child abuse and neglect: physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, and emotional abuse. It is important to note, however, these types of abuse are more typically found in combination than alone. A physically abused child, for example, is often emotionally abused as well, and a sexually abused child also may be neglected.

Signs of Physical Abuse

Consider the possibility of physical abuse when the **child**:

- Has unexplained burns, bites, bruises, broken bones, or black eyes.
 - Has fading bruises or other marks noticeable after an absence from school.
 - Seems frightened of the parents and protests or cries when it is time to go home.
 - Shrinks at the approach of adults.
 - Reports injury by a parent or another adult caregiver.
- Consider the possibility of physical abuse when the **parent or other adult caregiver**:
- Offers conflicting, unconvincing, or no explanation for the child's injury.

- Describes the child as "evil," or in some other very negative way.
- Uses harsh physical discipline with the child.
- Has a history of abuse as a child.

Signs of Neglect

Consider the possibility of neglect when the **child**:

- Begs or steals food or money.
- Lacks needed medical or dental care, immunizations, or glasses.
- Is consistently dirty and has severe body odor.
- Lacks sufficient clothing for the weather.
- Abuses alcohol or other drugs.
- States that there is no one at home to provide care.
- Consider the possibility of neglect when the **parent or other adult caregiver**:
- Appears to be indifferent to the child.
- Seems apathetic or depressed.
- Behaves irrationally or in a bizarre manner.
- Is abusing alcohol or other drugs.

Signs of Sexual Abuse

Consider the possibility of sexual abuse when the **child**:

- Has difficulty walking or sitting.
- Suddenly refuses to change for gym or to participate in physical activities.
- Reports nightmares or bedwetting.
- Experiences a sudden change in appetite.
- Demonstrates bizarre, sophisticated, or unusual sexual knowledge or behavior.
- Becomes pregnant or contracts a venereal disease, particularly if under age 14.
- Runs away.
- Reports sexual abuse by a parent or another adult caregiver.
- Consider the possibility of sexual abuse when the **parent or other adult caregiver**:
- Is unduly protective of the child or severely limits the child's contact with other children, especially of the opposite sex.
- Is secretive and isolated.
- Is jealous or controlling with family members.

Signs of Emotional Maltreatment

Consider the possibility of emotional maltreatment when the **child**:

- Shows extremes in behavior, such as overly compliant or demanding behavior, extreme passivity, or aggression.
- Is either inappropriately adult (parenting other children, for example) or inappropriately infantile (frequently rocking or head-banging, for example).
- Is delayed in physical or emotional development.
- Has attempted suicide.
- Reports a lack of attachment to the parent.
- Consider the possibility of emotional maltreatment when the **parent or other adult caregiver**:
- Constantly blames, belittles, or berates the child.
- Is unconcerned about the child and refuses to consider offers of help for the child's problems.
- Overtly rejects the child.

Display of Affection Guidelines

Appropriate

- Ask permission before touching
- Quick hugs or Side hugs
- Pats on shoulder or back
- Handshakes
- High-fives
- Verbal praise
- Touching hands, face, shoulders, and arms
- Arms around shoulders
- Hold hands in prayer or when person is upset
- Sitting close to small children
- Kneeling or bending down for hugs with small children
- Holding or picking up children 3 years old and younger

Inappropriate

- Any form of unwanted affection
- Full frontal hugs or bear hugs
- Touching bottoms, chests, or genital areas
- Lying down or sleeping beside children
- Massages
- Patting children on thigh, knee, leg
- Tickling or wrestling
- Touching or hugging from behind
- Games involving inappropriate touching
- Kisses on the mouth
- Showing affection in isolated rooms of building
- Compliments that relate to physique or body development

Fire Evacuation Plan

In the event of a fire emergency, the following action should be taken:

- Staff or supervising leaders will immediately dial 911 and report that Mount Olive Lutheran Church, 2830 18th Avenue NW has a fire.
- Staff, ushers, and leadership on site will immediately begin to assist any class, group, volunteers or residents out of the building through the nearest exit. Sunday School teachers will move students directly out the nearest exit. **PARENTS SHOULD NOT TRY TO GET THEIR CHILDREN OUT OF CLASSROOMS DURING A FIRE ALARM. THIS WILL CREATE CONFUSION AND DIFFICULTY IN EVACUATION.** Teachers will take attendance lists with them, if possible. All fire exit doors are unlocked from the inside at all times.
- All groups evacuating will come together at the far side of the parking lot, a safe distance away from the structure and emergency vehicles. **PARENTS MUST MEET CHILDREN AT THE southwest corner of the parking lot. DO NOT TAKE CHILDREN OFF GROUNDS UNTIL THEY ARE ACCOUNTED FOR.** Any available adults will help supervise children. If there is direct knowledge of people still in the structure, inform the fire department immediately upon their arrival.
- Cars and vehicles should not leave the parking lot. This may cause bottle neck at entry, parking lot, and intersection. Let all emergency vehicles have the right of way.
- Fire extinguishers are located: in the gathering area, at each end of the back hallway, outside of the library, outside of the sanctuary, in the nursery, in the fellowship hall (by the windows), and by the emergency exit in the offices, among other closets as well. One designated staff member such as the Facility Manager or Pastor will begin a search of the building to determine if there is smoke or fire or if it could be a false alarm. Upon the sight of any smoke, immediately evacuate and inform the arriving fire department where the smoke was located.
- There are nine exits that lead directly to the outside: two in the sanctuary, in the gathering area, in the kitchen, and in the rear of the fellowship hall, two in the Sunday School hallway, the back of the offices and of course the front doors. During a fire, evacuate directly outside through the nearest exit and proceed to the southwest corner of the parking lot.
- The building is equipped with sprinkler systems throughout the building as well as emergency lights.

Tornado Evacuation Plan

In the event of a tornado warning, the following action should be taken:

- All groups and people in the church will move to the following interior windowless rooms/areas: the nursery, the bathrooms across from the music room, the hallways (music room to in front of the nursery and gathering area to the back council room), the Sunday School Supply room and the coat closet.
- Staff, ushers, and leadership on site will immediately begin to assist all people to the designated areas. Sunday school teachers are responsible for guiding their students to these locations. Teachers will bring attendance lists if possible.
- Staff or supervising leader will monitor the weather alert radio located in the office area.

Crisis and Emergency Management

- In the event of an emergency or crisis, a crisis team consisting of the pastor and executive committee will meet. Others may be included as needed.
- The crisis team will appoint a spokesperson.
- The crisis team will communicate with additional council members and staff, the synod office, and the congregation as appropriate.
- Information to share—Confirm facts. Are people safe? Are they being cared for? Describe action plan.

Background Check Policy

Mount Olive will conduct a criminal background check on all individuals that serve in any position that puts them in contact with youth or vulnerable adults. This includes all members of the staff, teachers, mentors, chaperones, nursery volunteers, and anyone else identified as appropriate. Background checks will be conducted every three years through the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension. Background checks will be performed by Mount Olive regardless of any other checks that may have been conducted by the individual's place of employment.

The findings of all background checks will be kept on file in the office. This information will be considered confidential and maintained in a secure place. The process will be owned and maintained by the church administrator. Individuals identified as needing a background check must complete the following process.

- Complete an 'Authorization for Background Records Check' form, available from the Church Administrator.
- Have completed form notarized. Rochester Title has agreed to perform this service free of charge for Mount Olive, or you may go to your bank or any other place where this service can be obtained.
- Submit completed form to Church Administrator
- The Church Administrator will obtain a check from the Treasurer to cover the cost of all applications being submitted. The current cost is \$8.00 per person. The check should be made out to Bureau of Criminal Apprehension.
- The package should include completed forms, check, and self-addressed (to Mount Olive; Attn: Senior Pastor or Church Administrator), stamped envelope for the return of the information.
- The completed package should be sent to:
 - Bureau of Criminal Apprehension
 - Criminal Justice Information Systems/Records Section
 - 1430 Maryland Avenue E.
 - St. Paul, MN 55106
- When the completed background check is received back. It shall be reviewed by the Senior Pastor to ensure no issues are identified, and then be filed by the Church Administrator.
- In the event that an issue is identified, the Background Check Issue Notification process shall be followed.

**Mount Olive Lutheran Church
Rochester, Minnesota
Authorization for Background Records Check**

I have been informed that the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension will be asked to conduct a background records check under the Minnesota Child Protection background Check Act, Minnesota Statute 299C.61, et.seq.

I understand that I will be the subject of this background check for purposes of my employment to determine whether I have been arrested or convicted of any crime defined under the Act.

I understand I have the right to be informed of the response to request for a background records check and to obtain a copy of the report, or any record that forms the basis of the report, from the requesting party.

I understand I have the right to challenge the accuracy and completeness of any information contained in the report or record under the relevant information provisions of the Data Practices Act.

I understand that I have the right to be informed by Mt. Olive Congregation if my employment may be terminated because of the report from the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension.

I authorize the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension to disclose all criminal history record information to Mt. Olive Lutheran Church.

Applicant Signature: _____ Date: _____

The above applicant personally appeared before me, a Notary Public of Olmsted County in the State of Minnesota.

Notary Stamp:

Notary Public Signature: _____

Date: _____

Applicant Signature: _____
Last First Middle

Maiden Name: _____
(if applicable)

All Aliases: _____

Driver's License #: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Place of Birth: _____
City State Country

Social Security Number _____

Background Check Issue Notification

In the event that a **staff member's** background check identifies an issue of concern, the following steps should be taken:

- The Senior Pastor will consult with the staff member to determine if the reported issue is accurate, gaining additional information as appropriate.
- If the issue is valid, it will be up to the Senior Pastor and the Executive Committee to determine how this may affect their position at Mount Olive.

In the event that a **volunteer's** background check identifies an issue of concern, the following steps should be taken:

- The Senior Pastor will consult with the person in question to determine if the person in question to determine if the issue is accurate, gaining additional information as appropriate.
- If the issue is deemed to be accurate, the pastor will notify the staff member in the appropriate area (for example, the Children, Youth and Family Director, if the person is a prospective Sunday School teacher). The staff member and pastor will work together to determine how this may affect their volunteer activities at Mount Olive.
- If there's an appeal by the prospective volunteer, after the pastor and staff member have made their decision, the matter will be brought before the Executive Committee for review.

Guidelines for Photographs

- Images of adults engaged in congregation activities can be used without seeking permission. We will respect the wishes of anyone who does not want to be photographed.
- Permission will be sought to display photos of children from a parent or legal guardian for all children ages 18 and younger.
- Photographic releases will be included on SS, VBS, and other registration forms.
- No names will be included with photos unless written consent is obtained (except pastors and staff).
- Credit for who took a particular photo will be given if desired by the photographer. We honor any copyright wishes or restrictions.
- Photos will be removed immediately upon request.
- No photos will be used for commercial use without permission.

Social Media Policy

This Social Media Policy applies to all online tools for sharing content and discussing information, including but not limited to, social websites, blogs, message boards, wikis, podcasts, image- and video-sharing sites, live webcasting and real-time web communities. Because this is a constantly evolving area, this policy applies to all new social media platforms whether or not they are specifically mentioned in this policy. Members and staff of Mount Olive should:

- Be responsible. Members of the Mount Olive community are personally responsible for their posts.
- Be selective. Use the right medium for your message – a blog or social network might not be the right place for messages intended only for a small group, and email or other means might be best.
- Be smart. A blog or community post is visible to the entire world. Remember that what you write will be public, and potentially for a long time.
- Identify yourself. Use real identities to the greatest extent possible rather than anonymous posts and comments.
- Take care to safeguard the privacy of others. Do not publish the personal information of others in the community without their permission or, in the case of minors (18 and under), written permission of their parents or legal guardians. Do not disclose any information that can identify a particular person, including name, phone number, address or email address without written consent.
- Honor differences. Mount Olive is a faith community that encourages free expression and values civil debate. If you disagree with others, do so with care and respect.
- Obey copyright Laws. Users must comply fully with copyright law when posting and uploading copyrighted materials. It is preferable to point to a link so the proper person can take credit for the materials.
- Minors: Any site operated by Mount Olive that is oriented toward youth between the ages of 13 and 18 must require registration for all users and must be password-protected so that only registered users may access the site. In the case of Facebook, the youth and children's ministry sites will be closed groups to provide some protection of privacy. Users of such a site may not post images of minors without the prior consent of a parent or legal guardian of any minor depicted. Such permission is included on the Sunday School, Vacation Bible School and Youth Registration forms.

Mount Olive Discipline Guidelines

The words *disciple* and *discipline* come from the same Latin word *discere* which means “to learn”. Our goal is to create an open, warm, loving, and understanding environment where all students can learn.

1. The first step in creating a safe and open place to learn is to set up some classroom guidelines. Let the students know what is expected of them. Decide on class rules and then post them. Some examples of guidelines you may want to use are:
 - Respect other people.
 - Respect other peoples’ property.
 - Listen to each other.
 - Follow directions.
 - Be safe.
 - Use the buddy system, buddies (shepherds) protect and watch out for each other

Some language you could use:

- “Use your manners with people and things”
- “Find your manners”
- “Take care of each other, take care of our place”
- “Treat each other with care and respect”

Types of Discipline that are prohibited:

- All physical discipline is strictly prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to spanking, hitting, pushing or grabbing.
- Verbal threats
- Shaming, teasing, making fun of a child, or engaging in name calling, saying shut up, swearing
- Cyber-bullying is strictly prohibited (this includes indirect cyber bullying).

2. Catch the students being good. Praising good behavior sets a positive classroom mood.
3. If a child behaves inappropriately, gain their attention in a respectful way.
 - Establish eye contact.
 - Say their name in a respectful way.
 - Move the student to another place.
 - Verbal Redirect with the child
 - Give the student choices.

If that doesn't work, remove the student from class if disruptions are hindering the rest of the class. Flag down the Sunday School superintendents and /or the Children, Youth and Family Director so that they can take that child to their parent or if a parent is not available, the child will stay with the superintendents or the CYF Director.

4. If problems continue, hold an individual conference with the student after class about their behavior before it becomes serious.
 - Write a contract with a goal.
 - Find a cue that reminds the child of their behavior without alerting class.

5. In case of a problem which you are unable to deal with in class, you have the following options. Remember we want a positive learning environment for ALL our students without on-going disruptions.
 - Talk with the CYF Director about techniques.
 - Talk with a pastor.
 - Talk with the parents about techniques; they may have ideas of what works with their child.
 - Invite the parent to attend Sunday School with the student.

6. Always follow through with consequences that you set up in your classroom. Students like to know the boundaries and will test them. Everyone will feel safe if they know their limits.

Lock-Down Procedures

Run-Hide-Act

This is for Active Shooter and Armed Intruder Lockdowns.

1. **Run** – If there is an accessible escape path, attempt to evacuate the premises. Be sure to:
 - Have an escape route and plan in mind.
 - Run regardless of whether others agree to follow.
 - Leave your belongings behind
 - Help others escape, if possible.
 - Prevent individuals from entering an area where the active shooter may be
 - Keep your hands visible
 - Follow the instructions of any police officers.
 - Do not attempt to move wounded people.
 - Call 911 when you are safe.

2. **Hide** – If running (evacuating) is not possible, find a place to hide where the active shooter is less likely to find you. Your hiding place should:

- Be out of the active shooter's view.
- Provide protection if shots are fired in your direction (i.e. an office with a closed and locked door).
- NOT trap you or restrict your options for movement.

To prevent an active shooter from entering your hiding place:

- Lock the door.
- Blockade the door with heavy furniture.

If the active shooter is nearby:

- Lock the door
- Silence your cell phone and/or pager.
- Turn off any source of noise.
- Hide behind large items
- Remain quiet.

If evacuation and hiding out are not possible:

- Remain calm
- Dial 911, if possible to alert police to the active shooter's location.
- If you cannot speak, leave the line open and allow the dispatcher to listen.

3. **Act** – As a last resort, and only when your life is in imminent danger, attempt to disrupt and/or incapacitate the active shooter by:

- Acting as aggressively as possible against him/her.
- Throwing items and improvising weapons.
- Yelling.
- Committing to your actions.