

Volunteer Handbook



St. Philip Lutheran Church and School

2500 W. Bryn Mawr Ave., Chicago, Illinois 60659

(773) 561-9830

www.stphiliplutheran.com

Welcome!

Welcome to your new volunteer position at St. Philip Lutheran Church and School! The staff and lay leaders of the church and school are excited about your gifts and skills, and we look forward to your service as part of the church and school's ministry team

At our church and school, we sincerely believe that God equips all believers to serve in ministry. In 1 Peter 2:9, God calls His followers, "a royal priesthood;" 1 Corinthians 12:1 says that "God gives [spiritual gifts] to each one, just as He determines." We sometimes use the term "volunteers" as a convenient way of referring to those who serve, but what we are really talking about is people who lovingly respond to Jesus' call to serve in His ministry.

Responsibilities of Volunteers

In volunteers in our community, you agree to accept certain important responsibilities. These include:

- t Partnering with us in the Christian education and formation of young people;
- t Praying with us and for us and our shared ministry' ;
- t Reading all communications concerning volunteers and asking for clarification where necessary;
- t Arriving on time and remaining for the agreed-upon time;
- t Notifying the appropriate persons if you are going to be absent or late;
- t Understanding that we value your service, but may not always be able to honor your preferences for days, times, and places of service;
- t Keeping young people under your supervision safe and appropriately occupied; keeping confidential information that you have gained during your volunteer service that is private to young people and/or their families;
- t Discussing concerns and problems with the person (s) most directly involved before contacting legal authorities;
- t Promoting the ministries of St. Philip and speaking positively about us.

Open Door Policy

St. Philip Lutheran Church & School encourages all volunteers to provide input and suggestions concerning the ministry area in which they serve, as well as the overall operation and programs of the church and school.

Your input and suggestions will likely receive the timeliest attention and action if you initially bring your comments to the individual to whom you report—your ministry supervisor. This first step of providing input is especially vital in situations in which you have a problem with your supervisor. However, if for some reason that results in inaction or you do not receive a response, you should approach any ministry director or member of the Church Council to discuss your concern or suggestion.

This open door policy is important to increasing the quality of the church and school's ministries, as well as for correcting the problems that may exist in processes or relationships within areas of ministry. The church welcomes all input by volunteers, who should sense the freedom to voice any comments or concerns without fear of retribution or reprisal. We know it can seem difficult to initiate such conversations, but Jesus told us directly (see Matthew 18:15-16 below) that we should take the initiative in resolving such things.

"If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses."

Equal Opportunity

St. Philip Lutheran Church & School of the Northern Illinois District of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, is in full agreement with the intent of the Civil Rights Laws. It is our firm belief that the basis of volunteer selection for recruitment, promotion, transfer, training, job assignment, hours of work, and working conditions should be according to ability, not age, race, color, national origin, ancestry, gender, disability, or any other factors not considered pertinent to performance.

Because we are a church body, certain positions

demand extensive understanding of and commitment to the doctrinal view of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. For such positions, it is necessary for us to seek out individuals with specific religious training and/or Synodical recognition. In addition to the extent allowed by State Law for all positions, the congregation may give preference in recruiting volunteers on the basis of religion, including persons who are members in good standing of a Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod congregation.

Clearly, all Christians have God-given abilities, skills, passions, and gifts that God desires us to use to build the body of Christ and to glorify God. Whether your ministry is big or small, whether you serve in front of crowds or complete your duties with no one else around, God has a place He wants you to serve. Every position and every person working in ministry deserves your respect.

If at any time you have suggestions, questions, concerns, problems or complaints about this policy, you are invited to speak to any pastoral staff member, ministry director or Church Council or School Board member, as appropriate. You may want to submit your query in writing to ensure that you receive an answer and so that concerns and complaints can be investigated thoroughly. Each query will be investigated thoroughly, promptly, and in a confidential manner.

Confidentiality

Volunteers will, to the best of their ability, ensure confidentiality and privacy when it comes to the history, records, and conversations about the people St. Philip Lutheran Church & School serves. The best advice regarding the release of information about the people you serve is *don't!* This is true whether you are simply talking to a friend or family member or to a member of the news media. If anyone requests information from you, your wisest answer is, “Church policy does not allow me to give out that information.” If someone continues to question you for information, suggest that he or she talk to your supervisor or inquire at the church office.

The only exceptions to this policy are described below; generally, these exceptions relate to legal information and fulfillment of the church's ministry and mission. Again, these exceptions are provided more for your information. Rather than determining if a valid reason exists for releasing information, you should refer the

request to your supervisor who will either determine the validity of the request or seek additional advice about whether the request is legitimate.

- t No information requested by an individual outside the church will be provided over the telephone or via email. Again, volunteers should reply, “Church policy does not permit me to provide that information.” Refer the request to your supervisor.
- t Release-of-information forms should be explained and completed in the presence of the person whose information may be released—before it is released.
- t Any release of information or inspection of records must be specifically authorized by both the senior pastor and the chairperson of the Church Council or School Board, as appropriate. Even in these cases there should be no taking of notes, photocopying or removal of records from the church or school property.
- t Volunteers agree not to discuss any individual's circumstances or records with unauthorized individuals, whether in the process of serving or not. You will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement stating that you agree to and understand the importance of maintaining confidentiality about the individuals the church and school serves.

Dress Code & Appearance

As a representative of the church and school and of God, volunteers should exhibit a neat and well-groomed appearance. St. Philip Lutheran Church & School strongly encourages you to avoid radical departure from conventional dress or personal grooming.

Of course, guidelines of this type are very subjective. However, the church generally expects you to take pride in your appearance and to strive to project a positive image when representing the church, the school, and the Lord.

One biblical guideline to follow is 1 Corinthians 10:23-24.

“‘Everything is permissible’—but not everything is beneficial. ‘Everything is permissible’—but not everything is constructive. Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others.”

If your supervisor determines that the average church or school client might find your dress inappropriate or feels that your clothing might be a safety concern for you, co-workers or those you are serving, you may be asked to wear more appropriate clothing the next time you serve in your ministry position. In some instances, you may be asked to go home to change.

General Safety Standards & Emergency Procedures

St. Philip Lutheran Church & School strives to ensure an environment where members and visitors of all ages feel safe and secure. Just as the employees in a place of business are on the frontlines of ensuring the safety of customers, the volunteers of the church serve on the frontlines of ensuring the safety of those to whom we minister.

General Guidelines

In general, as a volunteer, you should strive to:

- t** Serve using good and common-sense safety practices.
- t** Respect the fact that St. Philip Lutheran Church & School is a smoke-, alcohol*, and drug-free workplace. (*With the exception of wine used for the Sacrament and served at the Seder Meal.)
- t** Refrain from unsafe acts that might endanger yourself, the people you serve or those who minister with you.
- t** Use any safety devices provided for your protection; for example, use safety belts in vehicles or rubber gloves when changing diapers in the nursery.
- t** Report any unsafe situations or acts immediately to your supervisor.

In addition, please note the safety procedures in the following specific areas:

Fire Prevention

- t** Turn off electrical equipment when not in use.
- t** Notify your supervisor of any equipment that has cracked or exposed wiring, is causing a shock or emitting sparks or appears to be a potential fire hazard.

Fire Emergency

- t** Familiarize yourself with the locations of fire exits, alarms, and extinguishers in the areas of the church in which you regularly serve.
- t** If you see smoke or fire, pull the fire alarm to alert people in the building. If it is a small fire, use a nearby fire extinguisher. Do not use the elevator during a fire alarm.
- t** If evacuation is necessary, use the closest unaffected exit. Guide the people with whom you are working in single file and proceed quickly and calmly. Do not run.
- t** If you and your group encounter smoke, stay low.
- t** Move as far away from the building as possible for your safety and make room for emergency vehicles.
- t** Only as time permits before evacuation of the building, secure classified information and closed doors.

Power Failure

- t** Remain where you are. Emergency lights will activate within one minute. By law emergency lights are located in strategic areas of the church and school corridors and stairwells.

First Aid

First aid supplies are located in every school classroom, the education wing conference room, both kitchens, at the back of the sanctuary, and in the gymnasium. Volunteers should become familiar with these locations.

Tornado Safety

In the event of threatening weather, staff will monitor the EDSA warning radio for developing information. A weather "watch" means conditions are favorable for the development of specific weather conditions. A weather "warning" means that specific conditions have developed, are confirmed, and are approaching. The City of Batavia warning siren will be monitored, but it should be noted that the siren might not be heard within the building. Note that there is no "all clear" siren. A second sounding means a second threat of severe weather.

Indoor Procedures

- t** The school and church offices will keep informed about developing weather conditions.
- t** When directed to take cover, move to the ramp hall-

way between the church building and the education wing, the music room or the locker rooms.

- t The Fellowship Hall, the church sanctuary, and the gymnasium are unsafe areas.
- t Once in a safe location, account for all individuals within your care.
- t Individuals should sit facing the wall with the left arm across the back of the neck and the right arm across the waistline.
- t Everyone must remain in the designated safety area until directed to move by a staff member or a representative of emergency services.

Outdoor Procedures

- t Upon hearing the outside warning siren, if it is not safe to return into the building, move to the nearest ditch, culvert or ravine.
- t Individuals should lie flat and cover their heads.
- t Be alert for the possibility of downed power lines.

Keeping Children Safe & Secure

St. Philip Lutheran Church & School cares deeply for the children and youth who join us in fellowship. It is our mission to lead them into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ. Physical, sexual, and emotional abuses endanger that mission. This policy is designed to ensure that the volunteers who assist with the various ministries of St. Philip Lutheran Church & School have been screened in an effort to protect the children entrusted to our care.

Any person age 17 and older, requesting to volunteer for more than 15 hours per ministry year at St. Philip Lutheran Church and School and work with children or youth, will be required to fill out a Volunteer Application form, supply three references, sign the Volunteer Covenant Statement, and undergo a background check conducted by a certified provider chosen by St. Philip Lutheran Church and School. Drivers for events conducted by St. Philip Lutheran Church & School will follow additional procedures to ensure adherence to Illinois State Law and the safety of the children and youth entrusted to their care.

Any person requesting to volunteer in the manner previously described shall be asked to

complete a Volunteer Application and Criminal Background Check form, which will then be given to the appropriate ministry director or designee, who is responsible for forwarding the forms to the ministry support team manager, who will initiate the background check process. Once the background check is completed, and if no concerns are found, the ministry support team manager will inform the appropriate ministry director or designee, who will then inform the potential volunteer.

If the background check shows a criminal history that may be determined to be of concern to St. Philip Lutheran Church and School, the senior pastor will be notified and will contact the potential volunteer. The potential volunteer shall then have the opportunity to discuss the results of the criminal background check with the senior pastor for the purpose of clarifying or disputing these results. Should the senior pastor then decide to disqualify the potential volunteer from a position at St. Philip Lutheran Church and School, the potential volunteer will have the right to appeal this decision to the Personnel Committee. The potential volunteer will have the right to present witnesses and/or other evidence on his or her behalf. If the potential volunteer disagrees with the decision of the Personnel Committee, he or she may appeal its decision to the full Church Council for review.

Volunteers supervising activities in classrooms and meeting rooms with doors that have windows shall leave an unobstructed view of the room through the window; the door may be open or closed. Doors without a window must be left open during activities supervised by volunteers.

An activity permission form shall be on file with the Director of Early Childhood for every middle school or high school youth participating in the church-sponsored events. The permission form shall be valid from the date signed by the parent through the next September. An event permission form for each specific activity shall be on file for each student attending a planned activity with St. Philip Lutheran Church and School. This form will include name, date, event, and parent signature.

A parent or guardian must provide written permission for the child to be transported to or from any scheduled activity, and in such cases, only staff members or volunteers approved as drivers may be used to transport children to or from the scheduled activity.

In addition to the aforementioned requirements, drivers for activities involving St. Philip children or youth will follow all state regulations.

Any program of St. Philip Lutheran Church & School that includes the supervision of children during overnight activities (any activity that extends beyond 12 midnight) will observe the following procedures:

- t Written permission from a parent or guardian of the child involved will be obtained in advance.
- t Only staff members and approved volunteers will be allowed to attend the overnight portion of the activity. There will always be two (2) staff members or volunteers on-site with the group (Two-Adult Rule). Children will not be allowed to leave the location of the overnight event with anyone except a parent or guardian; unless written permission from the parent or guardian has been given in advance.
- t Prior parental consent must be secured for all lodging arrangements.

Allegations of Abuse

St. Philip Lutheran Church & School will deal with all allegations of improper conduct involving children and youth with respect and dignity for all parties involved. Opportunities for spiritual and emotional support will be offered to all parties. St. Philip Lutheran Church will remain unbiased and supportive to all parties. Recognizing that abuse allegations are devastating to both the accuser and the accused, the policies of the Child Protection Plan will be carried out discreetly, tactfully, and without bias on the part of the reporting agent. All reports or allegations of misconduct will be confidential, and reporting agents will maintain the confidentiality of all parties, to the extent allowed by law, with the exceptions of required reporting to parental, legal, and social services authorities and the church's insurance and legal counsel.

The pastoral staff or their designee will notify the church's attorney, insurance company, and civil authorities, to the extent required by Synodical rules, regulations, policy or other governing instruments applicable to St. Philip Lutheran Church, about the alleged incident.

Care will be taken to avoid prejudging the situation, but all allegations will be taken seriously.

Pastoral care will be available to the suspected abuser and his or her family. The suspected abuser will be kept apprised of all developments and will be supported and treated with dignity. He or she will be relieved of responsibilities until the investigation has been completed.

The following steps will be followed when reporting an allegation of sexual misconduct:

All allegations of incidents involving improper touching, physical abuse or sexual abuse of a child or youth will be brought to the attention of the appropriate ministry director. Once reported orally to the pastoral staff, a brief written report will be completed by the Ministry Support Team Manager that will include the information listed below. This report will be forwarded to the pastoral staff.

- t Name of the child/youth involved and the name of the child's parent or guardian
- t Name of the worker/adult/other individual allegedly involved
- t A statement of the allegation of misconduct
- t Date, time, and location of the alleged incident
- t Witnesses or other individuals with knowledge or information about the allegation

A call to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services will be made as required by Illinois law.

Volunteer Files

St. Philip Lutheran Church & School keeps files on volunteers. Your file is considered to be confidential information and only your immediate supervisor, the ministry director for your area or lay leader (if different from your supervisor), the ministry support team manager, and the senior pastor of the church have access to your file.

Even that access is limited—only on a need-to-know basis. Of course, you may request to view your own file at any time.

Volunteer files typically contain the following types of personal information:

- t Application for volunteer service
- t Spiritual gifts testing and inventories
- t Copies of completion-of-training certificates

- t Ministry position descriptions
- t Letters and other records of affirmation/
appreciation
- t Background checks for those volunteers
who will be working or youth

Background Checks & Driving Records

Volunteers at St. Philip Lutheran Church & School who work with children and youth (and other vulnerable groups) must submit to various screening procedures. The primary type of background check includes a U.S. Criminal Record Indicator database search and a Social Security Number search

A U.S. Criminal Record Indicator database check searches electronic criminal files and record databases of government agencies, including sexual offenders' registries. Manual records of some records may also be needed in states or counties that do not keep electronic records. A Social Security number search verifies an individual's name, state, and last three addresses; this prevents people from providing false identification. Other screening procedures by the church and school might include a motor vehicle report or a local police record check.

The results of all screening procedures are kept in strictest confidence. Most of these procedures include certain rights for you as a volunteer, such as disclosure of the results.

This policy affects any individual who may need to drive a personal use vehicle while conducting church business or ministry. Prior to driving a vehicle, the following information must be on file in the church or school office:

- t Driver's license number, expiration date,
and any restrictions
- t A record check with the Bureau of Motor
Vehicles Proof of insurance

All information about the driving records of volunteers will be kept confidential. It is your responsibility to keep information up-to-date, including reporting to your supervisor any moving violations or changes in driving status within five days of the violation or charge. If a volunteer accumulates more than two moving violations, it will be up to the church's insurance carrier to

decide if the volunteer can continue serving in that particular ministry position. Safe driving practices, speed limits, and other driving laws must be observed at all times. The church and school is not responsible for fines incurred by volunteers while driving a personal vehicle while on church business. Volunteers must report accidents, no matter how minor, to the police before leaving the scene of the accident. Mileage for use of your personal vehicle will be reimbursed at the current rate allowed by the Internal Revenue Service.

