



# TRI-COUNTY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL



## SAFETY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL (Child Services) 2022-23

Dear Volunteer or Staff Member:

Welcome to Tri-County Christian School (TCCS)!

At TCCS, we take our responsibility to care for children very seriously. These guidelines are intended to facilitate a safe and nurturing environment.

The pages of this handbook provide a general overview of procedures and guidelines for TCCS volunteers and staff members. Our policies are intended to create a safe environment for children, protecting children, you, and the mission of Tri-County Christian School. The following procedures have been adopted and will be strictly enforced.

After you have carefully read this policy manual, please sign and return the agreement form located on the last page.

Sincerely,

Wendy Schardt  
Administrator

# Tri-County Christian School Safety Policies & Procedures

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## **Overview of the Tri-County Christian School Safety System**

Because we care for children and desire to protect them, TCCS requires all volunteers and staff members to complete **4 SAFETY STEPS** *before employment or volunteer work begins.*

### **STEP ONE: Sexual Abuse and Maltreatment Prevention Training**

TCCS policies and procedures require that volunteers and staff members avoid abusive behavior of any kind. Volunteers and staff members are required to report any policy violations to the administrator or to a TCCS board member.

Volunteers and staff members should have a basic understanding of the characteristics of sexual abusers and their behaviors in 'grooming' a child for sexual abuse. Grooming is the process used by an abuser to select a child, win the child's trust (and the trust of the child's parent or 'gatekeeper'), manipulate the child into sexual activity and keep the child from disclosing the abuse.

To equip TCCS volunteers and staff members with information necessary to protect a child from sexual abuse or maltreatment, TCCS requires all volunteers and staff members to complete the Sexual Abuse Awareness Training provided live or online through Abuse Prevention Systems ([www.AbusePreventionSystems.com](http://www.AbusePreventionSystems.com)) or MinistrySafe ([www.MinistrySafe.com](http://www.MinistrySafe.com)).

**Sexual Abuse Awareness Training is required for all volunteers and staff members and must be renewed every year.**

### **STEP TWO: Screening Process**

Volunteers and staff members are required to complete the TCCS Screening Process, which requires volunteers and staff members to:

- complete an appropriate Application
- complete a face-to-face interview
- provide references to be checked

### **STEP THREE: Policies & Procedures**

Volunteers and staff members are required to review the policies contained in this manual and sign the last page indicating he or she has read and understood the material, and agrees to comply with policy requirements.

### **STEP FOUR: Criminal Background Check**

TCCS requires that all volunteers and staff members undergo a criminal background check. Depending upon position, differing levels or intensity of background check may be required.

## Child Safety Policy

### **ABUSE TOLERANCE**

TCCS has a **zero tolerance for abuse** in our programs and activities. It is the responsibility of every volunteer and staff member at TCCS to act in the best interest of each child in every program.

In the event that volunteers or staff members observe any inappropriate behaviors (i.e. policy violations, neglectful supervision, poor role-modeling, etc.) or suspected abuse (physical, emotional, or sexual) it is their responsibility to immediately report the observations to the TCCS administrator.

### **REPORTING SUSPICIOUS OR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS**

TCCS is committed to providing a safe, secure environment for children. To this end, any report of inappropriate behaviors or suspicions of abuse will be taken seriously and will be reported, in accordance with this policy and state law, to the TCCS administrator, TCCS Board of Directors, the Police Department, Child Protective Services, or other appropriate agency.

An element of the safe environment referenced above includes the fostering of a culture of reporting relevant information to a supervisor or to the TCCS administrator.

Because sexual abusers ‘groom’ children for abuse, it is possible a staff member or volunteer may witness behavior intended to ‘groom’ a child for sexual abuse. Staff members and volunteers are asked to report ‘grooming’ behavior, any policy violations, or any suspicious behaviors to the TCCS administrator.

### **ENFORCEMENT OF POLICIES**

TCCS staff members and volunteers who supervise other staff members or volunteers are charged with the diligent enforcement of all TCCS policies. Violations of these policies are grounds for immediate dismissal, disciplinary action, or reassignment from positions for both volunteers and staff members. Final decisions related to policy violations will be the responsibility of the TCCS administrator and the TCCS Board of Directors.

## Reporting Abuse or Suspicions of Abuse

### **REPORTING VIOLATION OF POLICY**

In order to maintain a safe environment for our children, TCCS staff members and volunteers must be aware of their individual responsibility to report any questionable circumstance, observation, act, omission, or situation that is a violation of these policies. All questions or concerns related to abuse of a child should be directed to the TCCS administrator.

### **CONSEQUENCES OF PROHIBITED OR HARMFUL ACT**

Any person accused of committing a prohibited act or any act considered to be harmful to a child will be immediately suspended from all child interaction and TCCS activities. This suspension will continue during any investigation by law enforcement or child protective agency.

Any person found to have committed a prohibited act should be prohibited from future participation as a staff member or volunteer in all activities and programming that involves children or vulnerable populations at TCCS. If the person is a staff member or employee, such conduct may also result in termination of employment from TCCS.

Failure to report a prohibited act to the designated person is a violation of this policy and grounds for termination of employment of a staff member or employee. Volunteers who fail to report a prohibited act may be restricted from participation in any activities involving children or vulnerable populations at TCCS.

### **REPORTING SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES**

The policy of Tri-County Christian School is to report all suspicions or allegations of abuse. In Illinois teachers and school personnel are “mandated reporters”. Mandated reporters are required by law to report suspected child abuse (physical abuse, physical neglect, emotional abuse, sexual abuse) to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services.

### **RESPONSE TO REPORT OF ABUSE**

The TCCS administrator will take appropriate action on behalf of the school when a report of abuse occurs.

### **WHEN A CHILD HAS BEEN VICTIMIZED**

If a staff member or volunteer has knowledge or a suspicion that a child is a victim of sexual abuse or other maltreatment, the information will be reported to the TCCS administrator and the appropriate authorities as outlined above.

In addition to notifying the appropriate authorities (if required), TCCS will provide the child or the child’s parent/caregiver/guardian with information to allow the child (or parent, on the child’s behalf) to obtain assistance and intervention, as well as available counseling options.

## **BATHROOM SUPERVISION AND ASSISTANCE GUIDELINE**

All staff members and volunteers will observe the following policies:

### **All Enrolled Children**

All children enrolling at TCCS must be potty-trained and be able to perform personal bathroom hygiene. This is the policy for our Preschool classes (as young as 3yrs. old) – 8<sup>th</sup> grade classes. Additional specifics for the preschool class are included in the preschool handbook.

If a staff member or volunteer must go to the restroom to check on an individual child, he or she should go to the exterior of the restroom and ask if the child needs assistance. In the preschool and kindergarten rooms where there is a bathroom in the room, the teacher may knock on the bathroom door, and ask if the child needs assistance. The staff person should verbally attempt to assist the student. If additional help is needed, the staff/volunteer should seek another worker to assist them as they progress to assist the child. If the child needs a change of clothes, the two adults can help in getting the child to the office where a parent can be contacted, if needed. In more extensive situations, a child may wait in the bathroom for a parent/guardian to be contacted to come and assist the child.

“Accidents” should be handled by reassuring the child, and making a call home in regard to extra clothes. Some extra clothing is available in the TCCS school office, if the parent has not furnished a clothing change. Students must be able to make the clothing change themselves or a parent/guardian may be called to assist.

### **MEDICATION**

Medication may be given to a child by a staff member with a doctor’s prescription. The medication must be in the original packaging, including over the counter medication. The school staff will administer Tylenol or Ibuprofen to students on the condition that (1) authorization is given in the medical section of the online enrollment packet, and (2) parents are available to give verbal consent over the phone at the time of administering request.

### **GIFT GIVING**

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from providing special gifts to any individual child. Special occasions or special accomplishments should receive group acknowledgement and can easily be rewarded with group recognition (i.e., mention during announcements; have the entire group sing Happy Birthday, etc.) Any requests for variance from this policy must be addressed to the TCCS administrator.

### **INTOXICANTS**

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drugs while in the facility, during a TCCS activity, or while working with children at TCCS (see Attachment C). Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from providing alcohol or illegal drugs to children.

## **TOBACCO**

TCCS is a tobacco-free facility. TCCS requires staff members and volunteers to refrain from the use or possession of tobacco products in the facility, and while in the presence of children or their parents. TCCS staff members and volunteers are prohibited from providing tobacco products to children.

## **NUDITY**

Staff members and volunteers at TCCS should never be nude in the presence of children in their care.

## **ONE-TO-ONE INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN**

TCCS recognizes that meeting program objectives may occasionally require that staff members and volunteers interact with children on an individual basis. Workers should observe the following guidelines when interacting with children:

### **Individual Meetings**

Staff members and volunteers should conduct one-to-one meetings with an individual child at a time when others are present nearby and where interactions can be easily observed. There will be no one-to-one meetings between a staff member or a volunteer and a child behind a closed door without a clear window. If a circumstance arises where a private one-to-one meeting does occur, the staff member or volunteers will notify the TCCS administrator immediately before or after the meeting.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Staff members and volunteers may from time to time be in a position to provide transportation for children. The following guidelines should be strictly observed when workers are involved in the transportation of children:

- 1) Children should never be transported without parental permission.
- 2) Children should be transported directly to their destination. No unauthorized stops should be made.
- 3) Staff members and volunteers should avoid physical contact with children while in vehicles.
- 4) No cell phones may be used by the driver while providing transportation for children.
- 5) Additional requirements are included in the Volunteer Driver's Form that must be completed by all drivers transporting TCCs students, including staff members and volunteers.
- 6) Children should not use a vehicle belonging to a staff member or volunteer.



## **PARENTAL CONTACT**

Parents who leave their children in the care of TCCS staff members and volunteers for services and activities will be contacted if their child becomes ill, injured, or has a severe disciplinary problem while participating in TCCS activities.

## **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

Parents are encouraged to be a part of the services and programs in which children are involved at TCCS (see Handbook). A parent accompanied by a child to any TCCS program or activity is responsible for their child's safety.

## **PHYSICAL CONTACT**

TCCS is committed to protecting the children in our care. TCCS has implemented a physical contact policy that will promote a positive, nurturing environment while protecting children. Physical contact in any form should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing. The personal behavior of TCCS staff members or volunteers must foster trust at all times – personal conduct must be above reproach. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by anyone working in TCCS programs:

1. Hugging, pats on the back and other forms of appropriate physical affection between staff members or volunteers and children are important for a child's development, and are generally suitable in the TCCS setting.
2. Physical affection should be appropriate to the child's age. These expectations would include staff/volunteer-to-child also child-to-child interactions. Inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection are forbidden. Any inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection should be immediately reported to the TCCS administrator.
3. Physical contact and affection should only be given when in the presence of other children or TCCS staff and volunteers. It is much less likely that touches will be inappropriate or misinterpreted as such when more than two individuals are present and the touch is open to observation.
4. Do not force any physical contact, touch or affection upon a reluctant child. A child's preference not to be touched must be respected.

## **RELEASE OF CHILDREN**

At the end of the program day or activity, TCCS volunteers and/or staff members are responsible for releasing children in their care only to parents, legal guardians, or other persons designated in writing by parents or legal guardians.

In the event that a staff member or volunteer is uncertain of the propriety of releasing a child, he/she should immediately locate or contact the TCCS administrator or their designee before releasing the child.

## **SEXUALLY ORIENTED CONVERSATIONS**

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from engaging in any sexually oriented conversations with children. Staff members and volunteers are not permitted to discuss any inappropriate or explicit information about their own personal relationships, dating, or sexual activities with any child in the program. This provision includes the use of cellular phones, text messages, e-mail, instant messaging and online chat rooms. A week long human development class is taught in the spring of the 5<sup>th</sup> grade level by competent staff and/or trusted pastorate.

## **POSSESSION OF SEXUALLY ORIENTED MATERIALS**

TCCS staff members and volunteers are prohibited from possessing any sexually oriented materials (magazines, cards, videos, films, etc.) on TCCS property or in the presence of children. If any such materials are purportedly necessary for classroom instruction, they must be approved in advance by the TCCS administrator.

## **INTERNET/ELECTRONIC MEDIA**

No computer at or related to TCCS is to be used by staff members, volunteers, children or volunteers to engage in computer chat room discussions or visit pornographic or sexually inappropriate websites. Violation of this policy will lead to discipline from the TCCS administrator. Any questions about inappropriate use of computers or the suitability of a particular website should be discussed with the TCCS administrator with a communication made to parents/guardians. TCCS utilized the company, Go Guardian, as our internet filter.

## **VERBAL INTERACTIONS**

Verbal interactions between staff members or volunteers and children should be positive and uplifting. TCCS staff members and volunteers should strive to keep verbal interactions encouraging, constructive, and mindful of their mission to provide nurturing care to children. Staff members and volunteers are expected to refrain from swearing in the presence of children.

**Tri-County Christian School (TCCS)**  
**Safety Policies and Procedures**  
**Statement of Acknowledgment and Agreement**

I have received and read a copy of Tri-County Christian School's Safety Policies and Procedures Manual and understand the importance of the matters set forth within the manual. I agree to follow and abide by these guidelines during my service at TCCS.

Further, I understand that the manual may be modified at any time, and that any guideline may be amended, revised, or eliminated at any time by TCCS.

***For Volunteers:***

*I acknowledge that I have reviewed and agree to fulfill the duties listed in my position description. While, ideally, I will serve in this position for the full term specified in the position description, I understand that I am serving as a volunteer and that I may choose to end this service at any time. (If possible, I agree to provide two weeks' notice to my supervisor).*

*I further acknowledge and understand that the materials and guidelines contained in this policy statement in no way express or imply a contractual employment relationship between My Program and me. If I am applying as a volunteer, I acknowledge and agree that I will receive no compensation for the hours I work.*

Finally, I understand that it is my responsibility to review new guidelines that are created and distributed, as well as manual guidelines that are changed or deleted.

I hereby acknowledge receipt of this policies and procedures manual.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Staff Member or Volunteer's name (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Staff Member or Volunteer's signature

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

[This page to remain attached to the TCCS Safety Policies]

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Staff Member or Volunteer's name (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Staff Member or Volunteer's signature

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

[This page to be signed, detached and delivered to the TCCS administrator]