

FBC Children and Youth Safety Policy and Procedure



I. Purpose

- A. To help First Baptist Church of Calumet and Laurium provide a caring, safe, and secure environment for children and youth in all possible venues of church life and to protect teachers should allegations of abuse or child endangerment be made.
- B. To help First Baptist reduce its legal risk and liability exposure.

II. Biblical Foundation

First Baptist Church seeks to express God's love of children and provide for their well-being. This caring community seeks to prevent child abuse of any form to our children and youth and to minister to victims of abuse and their families. The Bible is the foundational upon which all policies, procedures, and ministries must stand.

And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receives me. ⁶But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Matthew 18:5-7

Our goal in response to Jesus' words is to maintain a safe and loving place where children may grow--a place where volunteers minister appropriately to their needs.

III. Child Abuse Prevention Policy

First Baptist DESIRES TO BE A SAFE PLACE FOR ALL CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND ADULTS WHO ATTEND ANY ACTIVITY OR CLASS. Individuals whom children and youth know and trust sometimes victimize them. The church is not immune to such abuse, either by its members or by those in leadership positions. Incidents of child abuse or neglect cut across racial, social, economic, and religious boundaries.

Although no organizations or individual can assure complete protection, this manual reflects First Baptist Church's commitment to help to protect children from harm and applies to all who work with the children and youth of First Baptist Church.

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First Baptist Church will not tolerate child abuse or neglect. Your cooperation in this commitment not only reflects your concern about children's and youth's safety in this society, but also your willingness to take steps towards halting child abuse and its detrimental effects.

For the safety and protection of our children and workers, all people who participate in church-sponsored activities with children or youth are required to comply with guidelines provided in this manual.

IV. Definitions

In this manual the following definitions apply:

- A. Adult- Any person 18 or older
- B. Child- Any person 0-12 years of age
- C. Youth- Any person 13-17 years of age
- D. Child Abuse- Child abuse refers to an act committed by anyone, including parent, caregiver or person in a position of trust (even though he/she may not care for the child on a daily basis) which is not accidental and which harms or threatens to harm a child's physical or mental health or welfare. The law typically uses the following definitions and explanations in determining whether abuse of a child has occurred.
 - 1. **Physical Abuse-** Physical abuse is a non-accidental injury to a child. Physical abuse may include, but is not limited to, burning, beating, kicking and punching. There may be physical evidence of bruises, burns, broken bones or other unexplained injuries. Internal injuries may not be readily apparent.
 - 2. **Sexual Abuse-** Sexual abuse encompasses several different types of inappropriate sexual behavior: • Any intentional touching/contact that can be reasonably construed as being for the purpose of sexual arousal, gratification, or any other improper purpose. • Sexual penetration. • Accosting, soliciting, or enticing a child to commit, or attempt to commit, an act of sexual contact or penetration, including prostitution.
 - 3. **Maltreatment-** Child maltreatment is defined as the treatment of a child that involves cruelty or suffering that a reasonable person would recognize as excessive.
 - 4. **Mental Injury-** A pattern of physical or verbal acts or omissions on the part of the parent and/or person responsible for the health and welfare of the child that results in psychological or emotional injury/impairment of a child or places a child at significant risk of being psychologically or emotionally injured/impaired

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(e.g., depression, anxiety, lack of attachment, psychosis, fear of abandonment or safety, fear that life or safety is threatened).

5. **Neglect-** Child neglect encompasses several areas:

- **Physical Neglect-** Negligent treatment, including but not limited to failure to provide or attempt to provide the child with food, clothing, or shelter necessary to sustain the life or health of the child, excluding those situations solely attributable to poverty.
- **Failure to Protect-** Knowingly allowing another person to abuse and/or neglect the child without taking appropriate measures to stop the abuse and/or neglect or to prevent it from recurring when the person is able to do so and has, or should have had, knowledge of the abuse and/or neglect.
- **Improper Supervision-** Placing the child in, or failing to remove the child from, a situation that a reasonable person would realize requires judgment or actions beyond the child's level of maturity, physical condition, or mental abilities and results in harm or threatened harm to the child.
- **Abandonment-** The person responsible for the child's health and welfare leaves a child with an agency, person or other entity (e.g., DHS, hospital, mental health facility) without obtaining an agreement with that person/entity to assume responsibility for the child and/or without cooperating with the department to provide for the care and custody of the child.
- **Medical Neglect-** Failure to seek, obtain, or follow through with medical care for the child, with the failure resulting in or presenting risk of death, disfigurement or bodily harm or with the failure resulting in an observable and material impairment to the growth, development or functioning of the child.

E. Volunteer Worker- Any individual who works with children or youth at any church-sponsored activity.

F. Corporal Punishment- Any punishment applied to the body but not limited to slapping, spanking, pinching, pulling, or squeezing.

V. **Reducing the Risk of Child Abuse**

In an effort to create the safest possible environment within First Baptist Church, several abuse prevention measures will be used. These measures include screening of children and youth workers, provision for regular training on child abuse issues to these workers, use of the two-adult rule, standards for appropriate classroom discipline, and open classrooms.

A. **Six-Month Rule**

Volunteer workers must have been attending First Baptist Church for at least six months prior to the time they begin serving with children or youth. There is however

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an exception to this six-month guideline. If a volunteer worker is pursuing church membership and:

1. Has served in a ministry with children for at least six months in the church he or she attended or in a Christian ministry prior to coming to First Baptist Church;
2. Can provide a reference from the staff person with whom they worked at that church or ministry. Then they may be considered for service prior to the six months of regular attendance at First Baptist Church.

B. Screening

The following procedures reflect First Baptist Church's commitment to provide protective care for all children, youth, and workers who participate in church-sponsored children/youth ministries.

1. All volunteers who work in children or youth ministries must complete the following procedures before participating in church-sponsored children or youth activities.
 - a. Complete a standard application and disclosure form;
 - b. Participate in interview upon request of staff person responsible for the area of ministry;
 - c. Attend orientation/training activities appropriate to the level of involvement;
 - d. Sign a written acknowledgement stating they have received and reviewed a copy of the FBC Children and Youth Safety Policy and Procedure Manual.
2. No adult members of First Baptist Church who have been convicted of a crime against a child or youth will provide services in any church-sponsored activity or program for children or youth.
3. Volunteers for children and youth ministries will be subject to background checks for the purpose of obtaining information regarding criminal history or child abuse findings.
4. Applications and the results of any screening will be kept confidential by authorized church staff.

C. Two-Adult Rule

1. **Children and Youth Ministries-** Volunteers will be assigned in teams of two or more in church nursery and preschool ministries and Awana Cubbies Ministry.

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Although junior church, junior Sunday School, Sparks, and T-n-T class will be taught by only one volunteer, a designated supervisor will conduct at least one brief observation each scheduled time to provide accountability. Other church-sponsored groups of children, whether they meet at the church or elsewhere, must have two or more adult sponsors present. When a church-sponsored outside activity involving children has both male and female participants, both male and female adult sponsors must also be present. All one-on-one counseling must be done in a public place.

2. **Youth Ministries-** No adult is ever to be alone with the opposite gender even in public places. Pastors and appointed leadership (appointed by the education committee or voted on by church membership) may choose to take a group (2 or more) to a public place. When the opposite gender is included, more than one youth must attend or more than one adult youth leader must attend. A car is a private location, not a public place. Therefore, all standards apply to transportation as well.
3. **Overnights-** Overnight trips must include at least 2 adult youth leaders and at least one for each gender in attendance. All safety standards stated above are to be applied to any situation that may occur during the trip. Housing: All sleeping arrangements are to be gender specific, are to include more than one youth per room, and must include one youth leader of the same gender per room. Adult leaders are not to share beds with youth.

D. Classroom Discipline

All volunteers will use the following discipline measures. If a child or student is behaving inappropriately, the teacher or worker will tell the child or student specifically what he/she is doing that is not acceptable and state what the expected behavior is. If this measure is not effective, the child/student's parents will be called and asked to remove the individual from their ministry venue. No corporal punishment or verbal abuse is to be used.

E. Open Classrooms

Classrooms or childcare rooms may be visited without prior notice by church staff or other properly screened volunteers. A designated supervisor will conduct brief observations of childcare rooms during regular hours of activity.

F. Overnight Trips

Situations where staff members are taking children or youth away from the church campus for long periods of time or for overnight outings are to be carefully planned. Only screened volunteers will be permitted to sponsor/chaperone the trips. In no circumstance will one adult be allowed to take children or youth on an overnight

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outing. On an outing where members of the opposite sex are both in attendance at least two male and two female chaperones must also be present.

VI. Age-Specific Guidelines for Working in Children's Ministries

A. Infant/ Toddler Nursery (Birth to age 3)

1. A minimum of two adult caregivers must be present in each nursery regardless of how few children are in attendance
2. For the protection of the children, security stickers are used in the nursery. Matching stickers that display identical numbers are used (one sticker for the child and a matching sticker for the parent). Parent should present his/her security sticker when picking up the child.
3. The windows of the nursery will remain uncovered to allow a clear view of all activities.
4. Only female volunteers may change diapers.
5. Children will be released to parents at the nursery counter. Persons other than the child's parent or guardian must have the appropriate sticker. No one under the age of 13 may pick up a child from the Nursery even if they have a sticker.
6. Though parents are allowed to observe the nursery at any time, only the child and the child's belongings should enter the room (as is reasonable).
7. Corporal punishment is never allowed.

B. Preschool (Ages 3-Kingergarten)

1. A minimum of two adult caregivers must be present with each group of children regardless of how few children are in attendance.
2. For the protection of the children, security stickers are used in the preschool classroom. Matching stickers that display identical numbers are used (one sticker for the child and a matching sticker for the parent). Parent should present his/her security sticker when picking up the child.
3. The windows of classroom doors will remain uncovered to allow a clear view of classrooms activities.
4. Workers will not assist children in the bathroom. If child needs assistance, parent or guardian will be contacted.

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5. Children will be released to parents at the classroom counter. Persons other than the child's parent or guardian must have the appropriate security sticker. No one under the age of 13 may pick up a child from preschool class.
6. Though parents are allowed to observe the classroom at any time, only the child and the child's belongings should enter the classroom (as is reasonable).
7. A positive approach to discipline will be practiced. Corporal punishment is never allowed. If a child's behavior puts himself or others at risk of physical harm, the parent should be contacted to remove the child from the classroom for the day.

C. Jr. Church (Grades 1-5)

1. One adult volunteer will be assigned to teach junior church. The assigned supervisor will conduct at least one brief observation each Sunday to provide accountability.
2. Junior church children will be dismissed from the service and escorted by the teacher to the classroom. Children will be escorted and released into the main auditorium at the end of the service to find their parents and guardians. Teacher should ensure first and second graders connect with parents/guardians.
3. If only one child is in attendance, junior church will be cancelled for the day and the child should be immediately escorted back to his or her parent/guardian.
4. The windows of classroom doors will remain uncovered to allow a clear view of classrooms activities.
5. Children will be responsible to take care of their own bathroom needs.
6. A positive approach to discipline will be practiced. Corporal discipline is never allowed. If a child's behavior puts himself or others at risk of physical harm, the parent should be contacted to remove the child from the classroom for the day.
7. Counseling of a child must be done in a public area where both volunteer and child are visible by others or at least two volunteers present.

D. Awana (Age 4- Grade 6)

1. A minimum of 2 adult workers must be present in Cubbies classes regardless of how few children are in attendance.
2. Workers will not assist children in the bathroom. Children are responsible to take care of their own bathroom needs. If a child needs assistance a parent/guardian will be contacted.

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3. Awana children will follow a check-in and check-out procedure when entering and exiting the church facilities.
4. Parents/guardians will sign a release for each child if their child is scheduled to receive transportation by the church.
5. Parents will sign an Awana Registration packet saying who may or may not take their child home. Parents are to call ahead if unspecified person will be picking up their child. Children must have signed permission by the parent/guardian to leave the church facility on their own.
6. Visitors will sign in and sign out when entering and exiting church building.
7. The windows of classrooms will remain uncovered to allow clear view of classroom activities.
8. One adult worker will conduct at least one brief observation at each scheduled activity change during Awana to provide accountability.
9. All counseling will be done in a public place or with at least two adults present.
10. A positive approach to discipline will be practiced. Corporal discipline is never allowed. If a child's behavior puts himself or others at risk of physical harm, the parent should be contacted to remove the child from the classroom for the day.
11. Church van transportation will have two adult volunteers present.
12. Anyone helping in Awana under the age of eighteen should never be left alone with the children. An adult screened volunteer is always required to be present.
13. Any other person apart from approved volunteer staff must have a visitor's pass to participate in Awana activities. Visitors are never to be left alone with children.

E. Youth (Grades 7-12)

1. A minimum of 2 adult workers must be present during youth group activities on church property. No adult is ever to be alone with the opposite gender even in public places. Pastors and appointed leadership (appointed by the education committee or voted on by church membership) may choose to take a group (2 or more) to a public place. When the opposite gender is included, more than one youth must attend or more than one adult youth leader must attend. A car is a private location not a public place. Therefore, all standards apply to transportation as well.
2. In an activity where members of the opposite sex are participating, there must be adult leaders or chaperones from both genders involved unless a parent or

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guardian has signed a release giving their child permission to be with the screened leader.

3. All youth group activities held in the church building will be in public places that will allow a clear view of all classroom activities.
4. When a teen has left the facility before the scheduled dismissal time without permission his/her parents/guardians will be notified by the youth leader.
5. All counseling will be done in a public place or with at least two adults present.
6. Any activity for youth outside of the church building will have a parental/guardian activity release form signed.

VII. Reporting Child Abuse

If First Baptist Church receives an allegation of child abuse, it will respond with the utmost concern to the victim, parent, or other party making such an allegation. The accused will be treated with dignity and support. Without clear and convincing evidence to the contrary, First Baptist Church personnel will assume that such complaints are made in good faith. Persons making such complaints should have no doubt that First Baptist Church takes them seriously and will take appropriate action.

When it becomes necessary to report suspected child abuse or neglect, the protection of children must be the most important concern. It is the legal responsibility of any person with responsibility for the care of children to report all cases of child abuse they observe, and further, to report visible signs of abuse. Failure to report could lead to liability on the part of the church, the observer, or both. First Baptist Church has determined that it is the responsibility of the volunteers to report all cases of suspected child abuse to the pastor. The pastor has the responsibility of reporting suspected child abuse to the proper authorities or agencies. While the confidentiality of the pastor/parishioner relationship is very important, reporting reasonable suspicion of child abuse has the potential for helping individuals receive help for a problem and may prevent further harm to a child, that person, or others.

What is reasonable suspicion? Reasonable suspicion means that there is credible evidence or a discrepant or inconsistent history in explaining a child's suspected abuse.

A report based on reasonable suspicion does not require proof that abuse or neglect has actually occurred or that the reporter witnessed the incident in question. Reporting is not a determination that child abuse or neglect has actually occurred; rather, it is a request for an assessment of the condition of the child.

Because we believe children are our most important concern, First Baptist Church has adopted the following guidelines for reporting:

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- A. Treat each allegation of child abuse seriously.
- B. Attempt to assure the safety and protection of persons who have been or might be harmed.
- C. Pray for the church and all persons affected by the allegation.
- D. Immediately begin documenting all procedures observed in handling the allegation.
- E. Immediately notify the pastor. He will also notify the parents if it is not known that they have previous knowledge of the allegations.
- F. The pastor shall notify the church's insurance company. As appropriate, the pastor shall immediately notify the church's insurance carrier of the possibility of a claim. If the abuse allegation does not implicate the church itself, a church staff member, or church volunteer, this step may be omitted.
- G. The pastor will notify Michigan DHHS when they have reasonable cause to suspect child abuse.
- H. If accused is assigned duties within the life of the church, that persons must be temporarily relieved of his/her duties until the official investigation is concluded.
- I. The pastor should extend whatever care and resources necessary. In providing care to the principles (alleged victim and the accused) and their families, the pastor or church leader should under no circumstances be drawn into a discussion of the truth or falsity of the allegation which could compromise an official investigation. Do not assign blame or take any steps that involve establishing or negating the allegation. Do not counsel or interview either the accused or alleged victim.
- J. It is appropriate to show care and comfort for the alleged victim. This should be the pastoral objective from the moment the allegation is received or otherwise made known
- K. Observe confidentiality for both the alleged victim and the accused.
- L. Do not confront/interview the accused until such time that the proper authorities have been notified and the interview process has begun. Then the pastors acts as a secondary support, not an arbiter of the situation.
- M. Do not prejudge the situation, but take the allegations seriously and reach out to the alleged victim and his or her family, showing care and support to help prevent further hurt. Extend whatever pastoral resources are needed. Remember that the care and safety of the alleged victim is the first priority.

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- N. Treat the accused with dignity and support. If the accused is a caregiver, that person should be relieved temporarily of his or her duties until the investigation is complete.
- O. If the media or other parties contact a church official about a pending allegation of child abuse, they should be referred to the pastor. Only the pastor or his designee should make comments about the allegations. The pastor will use the text of preferred public statement to answer the press and convey news to the congregation. The prepared statement shall be made only after consultation with the church's attorney and will include the steps the church has taken to protect children, such as the development and implementation of this manual, and the care and concern the church has for all parties involved. The privacy and confidentiality of all involved shall continue to be of primary concern.

VIII. Illness & Incident Policies & Procedures

These recommendations were taken from the Report of the Committee on Control of Infectious Diseases of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

- A. For the protection of all children, any child who appears ill cannot be accepted into children's ministries.

Signs of illness:

- Fever of 101° within the previous 24 hours.
 - Vomiting and/or diarrhea-symptom free for 24 hours.
 - Any symptoms of the usual childhood diseases.
 - Common cold symptoms (i.e., nasal discharge that is not clear and severe coughing).
 - Sore throat.
 - Unexplained rash.
 - Any skin infection, pink eye and other eye infections.
- B. Children who become ill while being cared for during a church service or church activity will be isolated, and the parents will be contacted to pick up the child immediately.
 - C. Teachers and children's workers will not give medication to children.
 - D. Any injury for which treatment is given (band-aid, cold pack, etc.) must be reported to the ministry leader who will fill out an incident report, have a parent/guardian sign a copy of the report, and submit the report to the ministry director. The ministry director will (if necessary) give the information to the church's insurance company, and then permanently file the report. Incident/accident forms are in the appendix of this manual.

IX. Church Sponsored Activity

A. What is an activity?

An activity is any event where children are involved that is not in a regular venue or classroom setting. This includes but is not limited to parties, special trips, concerts, concert practices, camping trips, hiking trips, fishing trips, other outdoor events and ministry events. Such events will be hereafter referred to as activities. All activities are subject to the ratio requirements. There must be an adult leader/chaperone for every 6 children or students for any activity.

Remember: You must always have at least two adults for an activity as per the “Two-Adult Policy” (see section V. C. of this Manual).

B. How do I plan an activity? How do I get an activity approved?

Step 1: Establish a purpose for your activity. What do you hope to accomplish by hosting this activity? How does this activity add to or accomplish the purpose and objectives of your ministry? Include a schedule of the activity.

Step 2: Prepare an activity release form. An activity release form is the form that you will hand out to the parents/guardians. An activity release form must include the following:

1. *What you will be doing on the activity?* This includes a detailed list of what will be happening on the activity.
2. *Where will this activity take place?* List also how you plan to get there (mode of transportation, driver, etc.)
3. *A place for parent/guardian signature.* This is where the parent/guardian will give their permission for their child to participate in said activity

Step 3: If leadership approval is needed, submit in writing to the children’s ministry director or education committee your written purpose statement for the activity, your written cost analysis, and your activity release form. The director/committee will respond to your request and approve or deny your request.

Step 4: Advertise and invite children to your activity. Give the parent or guardian the activity release form and the authorization for treatment form for their review. The authorization for treatment form is a form that will give First Baptist Church permission to allow medical treatment for a child in the event of a medical emergency.

Step 5: Collect all required signed forms prior to the activity. No child will be allowed to participate in an activity without both the activity release form and the

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authorization for treatment form signed by a parent or guardian. You must keep both of these forms **with** you on your activity.

Step 6: After your activity, please turn in all forms to the appropriate ministry director who will keep these forms on file. In the case of a medical incident (cuts, sprained ankles, falls etc.) during your activity please, fill out an incident report (available in the appendix of this manual) and turn it in with the other required forms.

X. Appendix

Liability Release Form

Authorization for Treatment

Children's Ministry Policies and Procedures Compliance Form

Sample Activity Planning Form

Sample Activity Release Form

Incident/Accident Report

Sample Application Form