

First Baptist Church (FBC) of Medford, WI
Policy Name: Child Protection Policy

Date Adopted: Mar. 2005

Date Revised: Aug. 2023

This policy will highlight the procedures and commitments FBC will make to reduce the risk of child abuse and molestation within the ministries and facilities of FBC. We seek to uphold the example of Jesus Christ with regard to the care and nurture of children. Children are a gift from God (Ps. 127:3). All people are created after God's image (Gen. 1:27) and Jesus displayed a sincere love and acceptance of children in the scriptures (Mark 10:14). God's word instructs his people to faithfully teach and disciple children (Ps. 78:5-8; Deut. 6:7) and this can only be done in a safe space. Consequently, it's incumbent upon us to work diligently to provide a safe space for children within the ministry programs and facilities of FBC. This policy shall be applied to all of the ministries of FBC to children (0-18); but additional steps can be implemented by specific ministries that contribute to the safety and care of children in those specific areas.

This policy will be structured under the following four (4) sections:

- Screening: The effort made by FBC to examine and test volunteers to ensure that children's workers will protect and serve children and not hurt or victimize them.
- Training: The effort to educate and instruct children's workers about 1) what constitutes as child abuse and signs to look for, 2) the procedures of FBC ministries to children and 3) reporting steps when abuse is suspected.
- Protocol: The measures taken within ministry areas to create safe ministry environments and procedures.
- Reporting: The appropriate steps for children's workers to report suspicions of child abuse and the proper response of FBC leaders to accusations of abuse.

Definitions:

- A "regular attender" is a person who attends on average 3 church ministry activities per month at FBC.
- An "adolescent" is defined in this policy as an individual 13-17 years of age and all 18 year-olds still in high school.

Screening

The following requirements and steps will be enacted to prevent a child perpetrator from working with children in our children's ministry program areas.

- No individuals who have pleaded guilty or who have been convicted of crimes against children will be approved to work with children at FBC. Nor will individuals who have been perpetrators be eligible to work with children.
- Workers must be regular attenders of FBC Sunday services and/or ministries for 6 months prior to working in our children's ministries. Workers or interns from approved parachurch

ministries are not subject to the 6-month requirement as long as the partnering organization or school has a screening process that FBC deems adequate.

- Workers must complete an application to work with children. See Appendix A for the approved application.
- A criminal background check will be administered to determine criminal history (necessary information for this can be found on the application).
- If deemed necessary, the applicant's references will be contacted to receive feedback on the character and history of the applicant.
- In the case of an adolescent applying to work in the children's ministry areas, the adolescent's parents will complete the form on their behalf and will vouch for the history and character of their adolescent and will assume responsibility for his or her conduct.
- A criminal background check shall be administered for all paid staff of FBC.

Training

Initial and ongoing training is important in helping children's ministry volunteers know the safety procedures of FBC, signs and symptoms of abuse and the proper steps to report suspicions of abuse. The following points shall be administered to adequately train volunteers.

- After properly screened and approved, volunteers must go through the training material prior to working with children.
- Volunteers shall review the training material every two years to be reminded of FBC's procedures and signs and symptoms of abuse.
- The precise vehicle of training and its specific content will be left to the discretion of the Pastors and Elder Board of FBC.

Protocol

Listed now are the procedural steps volunteers and the community of FBC shall take to create a safe ministry space for children.

- Building
 - Doors to ministry areas will have windows and those windows are to remain uncovered.
 - Non-ministry rooms (i.e. closets, maintenance areas) shall remain locked during ministry hours. Volunteers are to never escort or allow a child to enter a non-ministry room.
 - Restroom urinals and toilets will be separated by appropriate dividers or stalls.
- Supervision
 - Ministry directors are to coordinate programs to avoid one (1) volunteer working alone with children in a room as much as possible. Consequently, we will work to provide two (2) volunteers per ministry space to the best of our ability.
 - An adolescent may serve as a volunteer, but must be working as a support person with an adult volunteer.

- Transportation
 - Ministry staff and volunteers should not be alone in a car with a child unless permission is granted by the parent/guardian. In such cases the following protocol shall be followed.
 - Permission is required for each instance of transportation.
 - A log shall be made of the event. The log should include the date, time of departure, time of arrival, parent who approved of the transportation, method approval was given.
 - The log of the event shall be submitted to the Lead Pastor and be stored for future reference if needed.
 - Drivers must have a valid driver's license and automobile insurance must be up to date for each car used.
 - The number of persons per vehicle should not exceed the number of seat belts.
 - Teenage drivers will not be allowed to drive on church-sponsored activities. Teenagers carpooling to and from activities together is at the discretion of each parent.
 - Drivers are prohibited from texting on their cell phone and should defer cell phone usage to a passenger when possible.
- Bathroom Supervision
 - If a child needs assistance going to or using the bathroom facilities, 2 adults shall be present. 1 propping the door open and 1 in the bathroom providing assistance if necessary.
- Hotel/Traveling protocol for youth trips
 - Adult chaperones shall not sleep in the same bed as students, but instead shall sleep in an individual cot or in the bed by themselves.
 - Adult chaperones shall not change to be nude in the presence of students, but should change clothing in a separate space like in a bathroom.
 - When the youth group is hosted in a private home, all the students must sleep in rooms with the presence of an FBC approved chaperone or in an adjacent, adjoining room with the door open (boys and girls must sleep in separate spaces).
 - Adult hosts who are not approved through the FBC child protection protocol may not sleep in the rooms with FBC children.
 - FBC leaders are to ensure the feasibility of these steps; when they cannot, different sleeping arrangements shall be made.

Reporting

In order to maintain a safe environment for our children, FBC staff members and volunteers are responsible to report any questionable circumstances, observations, acts, omissions or situations that are in violation of these policies. All questions or concerns related to inappropriate and suspicious behavior should be directed to an immediate supervisor in the ministry area or a member of the pastoral staff.

Any person accused of committing a prohibited act or any act considered by the church to be harmful to a child will be immediately suspended from participation in children's ministries while an investigation is performed including the participation of law enforcement in the case of a criminal complaint. If the accusations prove false, the volunteer will be reinstated. If the accusations prove true, the individual will not be able to work in children's ministries in the future.

Failure to report a prohibited act is a violation of this policy and is grounds for termination of employment of paid staff. Volunteers who fail to report a prohibited act may be restricted from participation in any activities involving children, students or vulnerable populations at FBC.

If allegations of child abuse are witnessed, the procedures of reporting are as follows:

1. Once abuse is suspected, the matter must be reported to either the ministry director of that area or a member of the pastoral staff. Staff members or ministry directors are then to report to the Lead Pastor.
2. If the Lead Pastor is not present, the suspicion of abuse should reach an associate pastor or ministry personnel who must contact the Elder Board immediately. At that time, the board shall appoint a person to substitute in for the Lead Pastor's role in these reporting procedures.
3. The Lead Pastor will be responsible to contact the following groups within 24 hours.
 - a. The family involved to inform them of the observations and to extend care to the family.
 - b. The accused to inform them of the report against them and to extend appropriate counsel and care.
 - c. The Elder Board of FBC to ensure proper accountability and action concerning the accusation.
 - d. Appropriate law enforcement agencies to ensure a proper investigation in the case of a criminal complaint. In this situation, FBC will cooperate fully with a criminal investigation.
4. If a paid staff person is suspected of child abuse, he or she will be suspended with pay during the investigative period.
5. If a volunteer staff person is suspected of child abuse, he or she will be suspended from their position during the investigative period.
6. If abuse is proven true, the church shall seek to uphold biblical principles for restitution of a brother or sister as outlined in the church constitution.

The Elder Board of FBC is responsible for ensuring a proper internal investigation to determine what needs to be done for the individuals involved, the program area of the violation, changes to this policy and communicating well to the body of FBC.

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Policy name: Child Protection Policy

Addendum: **Parental Permission Form**

Date Adopted: Mar. 2005

Date Revised: August 2023

For minors to work in the children's ministry areas and programs of FBC, a parent (substitute "guardian" throughout this document if applicable) must give approval for his minor to serve and must supervise or participate in his minor's training as described below.

Screening

By signing the parental form, you are saying that 1) you believe your child will be able to participate and contribute to a safe ministry environment to children and 2) you are permitting your child to serve.

How might you assess if your child will be able to participate and contribute to a safe ministry environment? Consider the following statements.

- My child regularly respects and follows adult supervision.
- My child demonstrates a patient, caring and encouraging attitude towards children rather than an impatient, aggressive or demeaning one.
- My child demonstrates a desire for sexual purity by avoiding regular pornographic viewing.
- My child has not been found hurting other children.
- When feeling safe, I believe my child will report concerns to me or a trusted adult.

Answering these questions affirmatively demonstrates that your child will most likely serve other children well and is committed to being a safe, welcoming and helpful person in FBC ministries.

Training

- *These are the training requirements for children 14 and older.*

1. Complete the required training process.
2. Read through the revised Child Protection Policy (CPP) and agree to comply to the stated protocol.
3. Review the Training, Protocol, and Reporting components in the revised CPP with a parent where the parent is satisfied their child understands the policy requirements.

- *These are the training requirements for children 13 and younger.*

1. Complete the required training process with a parent OR have the material explained to them by the parent who has completed the training process themselves. **NOTE:** FBC is entrusting parents to explain to the child what they believe their child should know from the training.
2. Read through the revised CPP with a parent and agree to comply to the stated protocol.

First Baptist Church Parental Permission Form for CPP

I, _____, believe my child, _____,
1) will participate and contribute to a safe ministry environment to children within the FBC children's ministries and 2) am permitting my child to serve.

For children 14 and older

- My child, the applicant, has completed the training process.
- I have discussed the training material, Protocol, and Reporting procedures with my child and am satisfied that he/she understands the information and appreciates the importance of providing a safe ministry environment to children. By signing, you are agreeing to comply with policy requirements.

Parent/Guardian Signature _____
Date

Child Signature _____
Date

For children 13 and younger

- I have completed the training process with / for (circle one) my child, the applicant, and have discussed with him/her the important information to know.
- I have discussed the training material, Protocol, and Reporting procedures with my child and am satisfied that he/she understands the information and appreciates the importance of providing a safe ministry environment to children. By signing, you are agreeing to comply with policy requirements.

Parent/Guardian Signature _____
Date

Child Signature _____
Date

First Baptist Church (FBC)
Child Protection Policy (CPP) Agreement Form

I have read the CPP (updated Aug 2023) and understand the policies and protocol for volunteer workers in the children's ministry areas of FBC. I will follow the stated protocol to the best of my abilities and will follow the reporting procedures if I suspect any type of abuse within the FBC ministries or with any of the children I work with.

Print Name

Signature

Date