



Child Abuse Prevention Policy

We at First Baptist Church (hereafter referred to simply as FBC) believe that children are a precious gift of the Lord (Psalm 127:3, Mark 10:13-16). Our church is committed to nurturing and training children in the Christian faith (Ephesians 6:4). We desire to create an environment where those who work with children, both paid and volunteer, are committed, capable, and qualified for this task. We want to prevent anyone from causing even one of the children under our care and tutelage to stumble (Matt. 18:6), and we do so with the recognition that we are responsible to the Lord for the children He has entrusted to our care (Matt. 25:40). We are therefore establishing this policy for the purpose of providing a safe environment for children and teens to learn about Jesus and grow in their faith.

I. Procedure for Getting Involved in Ministry to Children or Youth

- A. Six Month Rule – No person will be considered for any volunteer position involving contact with minors until he/she has been involved with FBC for a minimum of six (6) months. This time of interaction between our leadership and the applicant allows for better evaluation and suitability of the applicant for working with children under the age of 18.
- B. Application – Everyone desiring to be involved in a ministry which has contact with children or teens will fill out a Volunteer Ministry Application and return it to the church office. All pastors and elders will also complete this application form. A church staff member (pastor or elder) will review this application.
- C. Criminal background check – A criminal background check will be conducted at this point to get further details.
- D. Checking of references – If it is deemed necessary or advisable (judgment call of the staff member reviewing the application), those people provided on the application may be contacted to provide a reference. If necessary, an interview with the applicant will be conducted by a pastor and at least one elder, to determine the suitability for ministry to children or teens and a final decision will then be made.
- E. Parents or FBC members may be used as substitutes in a “last minute” situation only, never on a schedule.
- F. All confidential information obtained during the screening process, including the application itself, will be seen only by the church staff (pastors and elders) and ministry heads, and will be kept in a locked file cabinet located in the church office. Social Security numbers will be shredded once background check is completed. Background rechecks and the signing of our church’s Child Abuse Prevention Policy will be done every three (3) years. **REMEMBER both SS # and Drivers License # is needed.**

II. Other procedure for getting involved in ministry to children or youth

All those involved in regular ministry to children or youth will be made aware of, **prior to** their involvement, the following areas:

1. Definition of child abuse and neglect (see appendix of this document)
2. Church's policy on child abuse (The document you're reading).
3. Reporting child abuse (see next section of this document).

III. Reporting Child Abuse

- A. As a matter of habit, only church staff (pastors or elders) or ministry heads will report suspected child abuse to DHS or law enforcement.
- B. Anyone who suspects child abuse should **immediately** contact the ministry head or supervisor, and see that pertinent details are gathered in a timely manner (Child Abuse Incident Report Form). The ministry head will make a decision as to whether, when, and how to make an official report.
- C. All official reports made will be made to either the Waldoboro Police Dept. (832-4500) or DHS Central Intake (800-452-1999) (if emergency call 911). When an incident report is made, it shall be communicated to the church office that a report was made and the Child Abuse Incident Report Form will be filed, in the church office, for future reference. A Child Abuse Incident Report Form shall be filled out within 24 hours of the report being made.
- D. The only time a report should be made to the authorities, by anyone other than a church staff member, is if a child is in immediate danger of further abuse or injury, and a ministry head cannot be immediately contacted. (call 911) **The health and well-being of the child should be the deciding factor in this situation.**

IV. Guidelines for Both Children and Youth Ministry

- A. All interactions between children / youth and adult workers must be visible to others in a location which is interruptible at all times avoiding isolated environments.
- B. No adult worker should be alone with a child /youth unsupervised except in a public place. All one-on-one interactions between child / youth and adult worker must be done in a public setting. If private conversation is required, it may occur out of earshot of others, but not in a location out of sight.
- C. No one with a past history of perpetrating or committing child abuse shall be allowed to have contact with children / youth through the ministries of FBC.
- D. Those with past history of committing child abuse will be monitored closely so that they will not have interaction with children / youth.
- E. Those who have been victims of child abuse can be involved, but they must have received counseling prior to their involvement. A reference from their counselor is required.
- F. Supervisory personnel, pastors, deacons, and/or ushers will make unscheduled, random visits to classrooms and other areas where children and youth ministry take place.

V. Supervision of Children's Ministries

- A. It is our goal that a minimum of two (2) adults will be in attendance at all times when children are being supervised during our programs and activities, - both of whom have completed the procedures outlined in I. and II. above. However, one (1) adult (age 21 and older) and (1) teen helper (age 13 and older) may be allowed when needed. This includes childcare or supervision involving any church ministry, on campus or off.
- B. Adults are not permitted to take children of the opposite sex to the restroom. The following bathroom procedures should be followed:
 - 1. Provide as much privacy for the child as possible.
 - 2. Only enter the stall when absolutely necessary, keeping the stall door ajar.
- C. Speech that is foul, harassing, abusive, or otherwise unbiblical is prohibited.
- D. No adult worker should be alone with a child unsupervised, except in a public place.
- E. Only screened ministry workers, helpers under the age of 18, and parents will be allowed in Sunday School classrooms, nurseries, and other rooms where children or youth ministry is taking place.
- F. Nursery Guidelines and Precautions:
 - 1. Only parents and guardians or siblings 12 or older will be permitted to pick up children from nursery, and when doing so, the pager for the child being picked up must be given "in exchange" for the child and the bracelet procedure must be followed (see bracelet Procedure for both nursery policy).
 - 2. Parents are asked to check on their children by using the window in the front foyer, rather than opening the door, so as to both limit the amount of noise entering the auditorium, as well as limit the number of people entering and leaving the nursery.
 - 3. Parents should not bring their child into the nursery with any of the following: Fever or any flu-like symptoms, persistent or productive cough, diarrhea or vomiting, head lice, conjunctivitis (or pink eye), strep throat, or contagious disease (chicken pox, etc). Children receiving antibiotics for strep throat or any other contagious disease **MUST** have been on antibiotics for a full 48 hours before attending nursery. It is understandable that some children may have allergies or that dry air may cause a few sniffles, but noses with green mucus will not be allowed in the nursery.

VI. Guidelines for Contact with Children in Children's Ministries

- A. Express love and caring in appropriate ways:
 - 1. Bending down to the child's level and speaking kindly and listening to the child kindly.
 - 2. Taking a child's hand and leading him in an activity.
 - 3. Putting an arm around the shoulders of a child who needs comforting or quieting.
 - 4. Taking both of the child's hands as you say "You did such a good job!", "I'm so glad to see you", etc.

5. Patting a child on the head, hand, shoulder, or back to affirm the child.
 6. Holding the child by the shoulders or hands to keep his attention while you redirect the child's behavior.
 7. Gently holding a child's chin to help him focus on what you are telling the child.
 8. Holding a preschool child who may be crying.
- B. Use discretion when having any kind of physical contact with a child. Having another adult present is preferred, as are "side hugs" and contact in public, rather than in private, even where hugs are concerned.
- C. Physical contact that can cause harm is prohibited.
- D. Avoid the following:
1. Kissing a child or having them kiss you.
 2. Touching a child anywhere that would be covered by a bathing suit.
 3. Carrying non-nursery age children or having them sit in your lap.

VII. Guidelines for Youth Advisor Supervision of Youth

Youth defined:

Any child in school age from 6th grade through 12th grade up through age 18.

Youth Advisor defined:

Any pastor or volunteer adult over the age of 18 graduated from high school.

- A. Youth ministry activities, either on campus or off campus, must have two adult Youth Advisors in attendance unless individual counseling requires one-on-one interaction.
- B. Any youth ministry activity, either on campus or off campus, must have at least one adult Youth Advisor of the same gender as the youth in attendance unless the youth of the opposite gender is the child of the Youth Advisor.
- C. If the use of an office/room is needed for private one-on-one conversation between youth and adult Youth Advisor or pastor, the room must have a window with shades open to public view and/or an unblocked window in door with door left open.
- D. The nature of working with youth at times lends itself to physical contact between youth and adult Youth Advisors such as, but not limited to: holding hands for prayer, sports, activity games and the like, touches that are reassuring or comforting, etc. Although physical contact occurs, all inappropriate, uncomfortable, or hurtful physical contact is prohibited. In the event that a youth initiates inappropriate, uncomfortable, or hurtful physical contact, it is acceptable and encouraged to inform the youth that such contact is inappropriate.
- E. Anyone who recognizes, suspects, or observes inappropriate or hurtful conduct of a youth, whether it may be an adult towards a youth or youth towards an adult, should immediately contact the ministry head or supervisor, and take appropriate steps to gather pertinent details in a timely manner.

VIII. Guidelines concerning medications

It is our policy to not administer either prescription or non-prescription medications to the children under our care. Medications should be administered by a parent at home. Exceptions to the medication policy may be granted to parents of children with potentially life-threatening conditions (such as asthma or severe allergic reactions). Parents of such children should address their situation with the Pastor of Youth to develop a plan of action.

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APPENDIX

Maine

Definitions of Child Abuse and Neglect

Current Through March 2019

Physical Abuse

Citation: Ann. Stat. Tit. 22, § 4002

'Abuse or neglect' means a threat to a child's health or welfare by physical, mental, or emotional injury or impairment; sexual abuse or exploitation; deprivation of essential needs; lack of protection; or failure to ensure compliance with school attendance requirements under title 20-A, § 3272(2)(B), or § 5051-A(1)(C), by a person responsible for the child.

'Jeopardy to health or welfare' or 'jeopardy' means serious abuse or neglect, as evidenced by serious harm or threat of serious harm.

'Serious harm' means serious injury. 'Serious injury' means serious physical injury or impairment.

Neglect

Citation: Ann. Stat. Tit. 22, § 4002

'Abuse or neglect' means a threat to a child's health or welfare by deprivation of essential needs or lack of protection by a person responsible for the child.

'Jeopardy to health or welfare' or 'jeopardy' means serious abuse or neglect as evidenced by the following:

- Deprivation of adequate food, clothing, shelter, supervision, care, or education when the child is at least age 7 and has not completed grade 6
- Deprivation of necessary health care when the deprivation places the child in danger of serious harm
- Abandonment of the child or absence of any person responsible for the child that creates a threat of serious harm
- The end of voluntary placement, when the imminent return of the child to his or her custodian causes a threat of serious harm

Sexual Abuse/Exploitation

Citation: Ann. Stat. Tit. 22, § 4002

'Abuse or neglect' means a threat to a child's health or welfare by sexual abuse or exploitation, including under title 17-A, §§ 282 (sexual exploitation of minor), 852 (aggravated sex trafficking), 853 (sex trafficking), and 855 (patronizing prostitution of a minor), by a person responsible for the child.

'Serious harm' includes sexual abuse or exploitation.

Emotional Abuse

Citation: Ann. Stat. Tit. 22, § 4002

The term 'abuse or neglect' includes a threat to a child's health or welfare by mental or emotional injury or impairment by a person responsible for the child.

'Serious harm' includes serious mental or emotional injury or impairment that now or in the future is likely to be evidenced by serious mental, behavioral, or personality disorder, including severe anxiety, depression, withdrawal, untoward aggressive behavior, seriously delayed development, or similar serious dysfunctional behavior.

Abandonment

Citation: Ann. Stat. Tit. 22, § 4002

'Abandonment' means any conduct on the part of the parent that shows an intent to forgo parental duties or relinquish parental claims. The intent may be evidenced by:

- Failure to communicate meaningfully or to maintain regular visitation with the child for a period of at least 6 months
- Failure to participate in any plan or program designed to reunite the parent with the child
- Deserting the child without affording means of identifying the child and his or her parent or custodian
- Failure to respond to notice of child protective proceedings
- Any other conduct indicating an intent to forgo parental duties or relinquish parental claims

'Jeopardy to health or welfare' or 'jeopardy' includes abandonment of the child or absence of any person responsible for the child that creates a threat of serious harm.

Standards for Reporting

Citation: Ann. Stat. Tit. 22, § 4011-A

A report is required when a mandatory reporter knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been or is likely to be abused or neglected.

Persons Responsible for the Child

Citation: Ann. Stat. Tit. 22, § 4002

The term 'parent' means a natural or adoptive parent, unless parental rights have been terminated.

A 'person responsible for the child' means a person with responsibility for a child's health or welfare, whether in the child's home or another home or facility that, as part of its function, provides for the care of the child. This includes the child's custodian.

Exceptions

Citation: Ann. Stat. Tit. 22, § 4010

A child shall not be considered to be abused or neglected, in jeopardy of health or welfare, or in danger of serious harm solely because treatment is by spiritual means by an accredited practitioner of a recognized religious organization.

SIGN & RETURN THIS PAGE ONLY.

KEEP ALL OTHER PAGES FOR YOUR REFERENCE.

I understand, and agree to abide by, the Child Abuse Prevention Policy:

Name (printed) _____

Signature: _____

Date: ____/____/____

OFFICE ONLY

Received on ____/____/____

By: _____