



# First Baptist Church – Waldoboro, ME

"FINDING HOPE AND LIFE IN JESUS"

## CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION POLICY

Please read the following policy regarding identification and reporting of child abuse.. By signing this policy you signify you have **READ, UNDERSTAND** and **ACCEPT** the responsibilities that accompany it.

Excerpt from Child Abuse Prevention Policy, revised July 18, 2007:

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

B. Education - All those involved in regular ministry to children or youth will be education **prior to** their involvement in the following areas:

1. Definition of child abuse (see DHS publication *Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect*, available from pastoral staff or the church office) [And located within each nursery.]
2. Church's policy on child abuse (The document you're reading [and signing].)
3. Identification of child abuse (see DHS publication *Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect*, available from pastoral staff or the church office) [And located within each nursery.]
4. 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. The ministry head will make a decision as to whether, when, and how to make a report.
- C. All reports will be made to either the Waldoboro Police Dept. (832-4500) or DHS Central Intake (800-452-1999). When a report is made, it shall be communicated to the church office that a report was made, and a Child Abuse Report Form shall be filled out and given to a church staff member (pastor or elder) within 24 hours of the report being made.
- D. The only time a report should be made 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 can not be immediately contacted. **The health and well-being of the child should be the deciding factor in this situation.**

### IV. Supervision children and youth ministries

- A. All children's ministry activities must have at least 2 adults (at least one must be 21 or older) scheduled to be in attendance.
- B. No adult worker should be alone with a child unsupervised, except in a public place, and with the express permission of the child's parents.
- C. The doors to rooms in which children's or youth ministry is happening shall be left open if they do not have a window in them.
- D. No one with a past history of perpetrating or committing child abuse shall be allowed to have contact with children through the ministries of FBC.

- E. Those with past history of committing child abuse will be monitored closely so that they will not have interaction with children.
- F. 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.
- G. Supervisory personnel, pastors, deacons, and/or ushers will make unscheduled, random visits to classrooms and other areas where children and youth ministry take place.
- H. 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.
- I. 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.
- J. Physical contact that can cause harm is prohibited.
- K. Speech that is foul, harassing, abusive, or otherwise unbiblical is prohibited.
- L. 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.
- M. 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.
  - 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.

**V. Guidelines for contact with children and youth**

- 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 into 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. 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.

Approved: 6/8/11

I understand, and agree to abide by, the above policy:

Signed by:

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Volunteer

\_\_\_\_\_

Date