

General Policies & Procedures for Children's Ministry

Our Goal

The primary goal of our classrooms is to create a safe, developmentally appropriate environment where children can hear the spiritual truths of the Gospel found in Scripture, come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ and be disciples of Christ. Secondly, each classroom seeks to assist parents in the role of continued discipleship in the home.

Hours

Workers are expected to arrive in the classrooms at least 15 minutes ahead of program start times. Tardiness on your part adds to the confusion of our transition time. We want our classrooms to be a calm and welcoming place. You can help this effort greatly by being on time or early.

Attendance/Illness

When you are scheduled to serve in a children's program, you are expected to keep your scheduled time. If you are ill, please do not work in the program. If an illness or a personal emergency prevents you from being able to keep your commitment, or if you know in advance that you will be absent during your scheduled commitment, please: 1) contact a trained, screened children's ministry servant to serve in your place; or, if a substitute is not available, 2) contact the Children's Director as soon as possible. A list of trained, screened children's ministry servants and their contact information will be provided for your convenience.

General Guidelines

- Be pleasant to parents when they leave their children. Greet them individually.
- Reassure parents that they will be contacted if there is a problem.
- Show love to each child during the hour.
- Use words of encouragement.
- Focus more on the children in your care than the other adults that are in the room.
- Reference behavioral corrections with Biblical teaching. (e.g. The Bible teaches us not to lie.)
- Try to say something positive about each child when his or her parents arrive. When discussing the child's behavioral problems, speak to the parent as discreetly as possible.

Supplies

Each children's classroom includes a set of basic classroom supplies, such as crayons, markers, scissors, paper, etc. If these supplies need to be replenished, or if further supplies are needed for the lesson, teachers may use resources from the Teacher's Workroom.

In general, when gathering resources from the workroom, remember these guidelines:

- 1) Take only what you will need. For example, take 20 markers for your classroom instead of taking the whole set of 400 markers.
- 2) If you need to take an entire container of some material (i.e. beads, feathers or shells), use it only for the time period you will be teaching, then return it to the workroom immediately afterwards.
- 3) If you run out of some material in your classroom and it is not available in the workroom, you may either write the name of the item you need on the supply request list in the workroom or contact the Children's Ministry Director directly to request your materials.
- 4) When returning items to the workroom, and you do not have time to replace them properly or do not know where the items belong, please place them in the bin labeled, "To be shelved."

If you want to buy a few items for your classroom, you may spend your own money and then submit the receipt to the church for reimbursement (subject to staff approval). Please limit these purchases to under \$20 per class per year, unless you receive prior authorization from a staff member.

Cell Phone Usage

While it is permissible to use cell phones during class time to quickly send and receive urgent text messages, or to help with class activities (such as to set a timer), it is strongly encouraged that all volunteers keep their phone usage to a bare minimum while children are present. During the class hour, the focus of all adult volunteers should be on the children, not on their phones.

Child Abuse Prevention Policies and Procedures

Overview of FBCWA Safety System

Because we desire to protect children involved in our ministry, FBCWA requires all volunteers or staff members working with children (and other vulnerable populations) to complete **FOUR SAFETY STEPS** before ministry work or volunteer placements begin.

STEP ONE: Sexual Abuse Awareness Training

FBCWA policies and procedures require that staff members and volunteers avoid abusive behavior of any kind. Staff members and volunteers are required to report any policy violations to a supervisor or a member of the FBCWA Safety Committee. Staff members and volunteers 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 staff members and volunteers with information necessary to recognize abuser characteristics and grooming behavior, FBCWA requires all staff members and volunteers to complete sexual abuse awareness training. This training will be renewed every three years.

STEP TWO: Screening Process

Adult (18 and older) Volunteers

In order to be eligible to serve as a regular children’s ministry volunteer or camp/mission trip sponsor for children, an individual must

- Be a member and regular attender of FBCWA for at least six months, OR
- Be a member and regular attender of FBCWA for less than six months AND also...
 - o have attended the FBCWA membership class
 - o prior to joining FBCWA, have been a member and regular attender of a like-minded church for at least 6 months with at least one reference from this former church.

Staff members and volunteers working or serving with children are required to complete FBCWA’s Screening Process, which includes:

- an Employment Application (employees only)
- a Safety Application (all volunteers)
- a face-to-face interview (employees, regular volunteers and camp/mission trip sponsors)
- references to be checked (employees, regular volunteers and camp/mission trip sponsors)

Volunteers Under the Age of 18

Before working or serving with children on a regular basis, a youth (under the age of 18) must...

- Be in seventh grade or older
- Be a member and regular attender of FBCWA for at least 6 months or
- Be the dependent of adults who have been members and regular attenders of FBCWA for at least 6 months
- Have a reference from the Student Minister, as one of the three references required. This reference substitutes for the required background check.
- Complete the safety application, provide 2 references other than the Student Minister and complete an interview.
- **Any student under 16 years of age working with children must always be paired with an adult (18 years of age or older) who has completed the screening process.**

STEP THREE: Policies & Procedures

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

STEP FOUR: Criminal Background Check

FBCWA requires that all staff members and volunteers working or volunteering in children's activities undergo a criminal background check every 3 years. Depending upon the ministry position, differing levels or intensity of criminal background check may be required.

FBCWA Abuse Prevention Team

ABUSE PREVENTION TEAM

Recognizing the importance of providing and maintaining a safe environment for children, FBCWA will appoint and maintain an Abuse Prevention Team, which will meet as needed, but at least twice a year.

MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of the Abuse Prevention Team is to enable FBCWA Children's and Student Ministries to carry out appropriate ministry activities while safeguarding program participants against emotional, physical or sexual abuse.

COMPOSITION

The Abuse Prevention Team will be comprised of the following members:

1. Senior Pastor
2. Children's Ministry Director
3. Student Minister
4. Two church members at large selected by pastoral staff

MEETINGS

The team will select a chairperson annually. The chairperson will chair the meeting of the Abuse Prevention Team on a semiannual basis to discuss risk management practices and updates. The Abuse Prevention Team will also meet on an emergency basis upon the recommendation of a member or following the report of any incident or allegation.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Abuse Prevention Team will be charged with the following duties:

1. Applying existing FBCWA policies and procedures related to children's safety and risk management issues.

2. Monitoring all Children's and Student's Ministry programs for ongoing compliance with safety policies.
3. Interviewing volunteers and employees for Children's/Student's Ministry positions.
4. Reporting to the church regarding safety issues as needed.

Children's Ministry Staff Monitoring Plan

Monitoring of staff members and volunteers will include regular (announced and unannounced) visits in each program to provide supervisors the opportunity to observe staff member and volunteer interaction with children.

1. **The Children's Ministry Director** conducts written performance evaluations every year for individuals in paid childcare positions.
2. **The Children's Ministry Director** conducts periodic verbal performance evaluations that address participation in risk management training and adherence to risk management procedures.
3. **The two non-staff members of the Abuse Prevention Team** conduct an unscheduled observation at least once a year for every children's class or program occurring weekly. Only one team member needs to be present at each observation.
4. **The Senior Pastor** meets with the Children's Ministry Director as needed to discuss Children's Ministry, including safety training and procedures. These discussions can take place at weekly staff meetings, if necessary.

Child Protection

FBCWA supports and maintains a **zero-tolerance** policy concerning child abuse and neglect. It is a violation of New Mexico law for any volunteer or staff member to physically, sexually, or emotionally abuse or neglect any child participating in FBCWA programs.

Enforcement of Policies

FBCWA Children's Ministry maintains the highest standards in order to protect both the volunteers and students in our ministry. Anyone working with children or students at FBCWA is subject to the supervision and evaluation of the ministry staff and must follow these guidelines. Staff members and volunteers in supervisory positions must diligently enforce all policies.

FBCWA staff reserves the right to dismiss volunteers who fail to follow the policies and guidelines.

Consequences of Violation

Any person accused of committing any act considered by the church to be harmful to a child will be immediately suspended from participation in ministry to children. This suspension will continue during any investigation by law enforcement, Child Protective agencies or the Church.

Any person found to have violated this policy may be prohibited from *future* participation in all activities and programming involving minors. If the person is an employee, such conduct may result in termination of employment.

Failure to report a policy violation is grounds for termination of an employee. Volunteers who fail to report a policy violation may be restricted from participating in any future activities involving minors at FBCWA.

Staff members and volunteer leaders should discuss immediately with their supervisor any inappropriate action or breaking of this policy and will seek counsel from the church leadership and attorney, if needed.

Reporting Abuse or Suspicions of Abuse

The abuse of children is not only a sin, but it is a serious crime. Reporting suspected child abuse to legal authorities can save a child's life or put an end to ongoing abuse. In contrast, remaining silent perpetuates abuse and emboldens offenders. FBCWA requires that all volunteers, attendees, and staff comply with their mandatory reporting obligations and contact authorities immediately when a child discloses abuse, when they witness child abuse, or when they observe signs of abuse.

When abuse is witnessed, disclosed, or suspected, the following shall take place:

Step 1

When you suspect abuse, witness abuse, or someone discloses abuse, it must be documented on the Suspected Child Abuse Incident Form. A copy of this form may be found at the end of this policy manual, and additional forms are available in the Children's Workroom at First West.

When a child reveals abuse to an adult, the adult should listen carefully and ask open-ended questions. Do not suggest answers (See "Guiding Principles of Victim Advocacy," available at the end of this policy manual). After the conversation, the adult will document the details of the conversation on the Suspected Child Abuse Incident Form. If he or she is uncertain about the details, do not re-interview the child.

If the adult needs assistance completing the report, he/she can consult with either the Lead Pastor or the Children's Ministry Director. You should always err on the side of reporting. This is only a chance to ask for assistance, not a time to "investigate."

The completed Suspected Child Abuse Incident Report Form will be kept digitally (password protected) or in a locked, secure cabinet with access granted only to the Lead Pastor and the Children's Ministry Director.

Step 2

The individual who suspects, witnesses, or receives a disclosure of abuse/neglect will report to New Mexico CYFD (Children Youth and Families Department) Emergency Response Hotline at 1-855-333-SAFE. At this point, if CYFD deems the report 'founded,' it will conduct its own investigation and may request the help of FBCWA.

Before or directly following, an individual making a report needs to make the Lead Pastor, Staff Pastor or the Children's Ministry Director aware when reporting.

It is up to the individual making the report whether they would like the assistance of the Lead Pastor, Staff Pastor or the Children's Ministry Director when filing. Because many adults are unfamiliar with New Mexico reporting requirements and may be fearful of the process, FBCWA utilizes a 'tandem or dual report' model, where permitted. A 'dual report' occurs when an FBCWA supervisor reports the suspicion or allegation *together* with the individual who saw, heard or received information causing him or her to suspect abuse or neglect. THIS PRACTICE IS NOT REQUIRED, OR INTENDED TO INHIBIT ANY STAFF MEMBER OR VOLUNTEER FROM REPORTING TO LAW ENFORCEMENT OR CPS *DIRECTLY*. Instead, it is meant to facilitate reporting, protect children and support individuals who may not feel able or willing to report alone.

If an individual who witnesses, suspects, or hears of abuse is unwilling to make a report, and if church leaders or staff believe there is reasonable suspicion that abuse has occurred, the Lead Pastor, Staff Pastor or Children's Ministry Director will complete the Suspected Child Abuse Incident Report Form and report to CYFD. There is a moral and legal obligation for reporting. It protects children and avoids exposing individuals or the church to legal liability for failing to report.

Step 3

If the alleged abuser is on staff at the church or a volunteer, he/she shall immediately be removed from all ministerial duties until the report is resolved. He/she will be instructed to remain away from the premises during the investigation. He/she will be instructed to have no contact with the victim or witnesses.

Reporting Suspicious or Inappropriate Behaviors

Because sexual abusers ‘groom’ children for abuse, it is possible that a staff member or volunteer may witness behavior intended to groom a child for sexual abuse. Please report ‘grooming’ behavior, policy violations, or any suspicious behaviors to an immediate supervisor, such that the church may take appropriate action to safeguard children in the program.

Building Safety

The Children’s Ministry Director will be responsible for ensuring that the children’s Classrooms are monitored during Sunday or Wednesday classes or programming. This will include unobserved monitoring of staff members, volunteers and children in children’s classrooms.

No child will ever be left unattended in the children’s classrooms or on the children’s playground during children’s ministry programming or classes. Children’s Ministry staff members or volunteers are prohibited from being alone with an individual child in any room or building. In the event a staff member or volunteer finds himself/herself alone with a single child, that staff member or volunteer will take the child to a room or building occupied by others, or to a location easily observed by others. (Example: if a child is the last in a class to be picked up by a parent, move to an adjoining room where other staff members or volunteers are present.)

After every programming event, Children’s Ministry staff members and volunteers must ensure every room and restroom is checked prior to leaving.

On the children’s playground, staff members and volunteers are to circulate, watching children during play periods, giving particular attention to the areas not easily seen from all viewpoints. (Example: under slides, in corners, behind structures). Any two children together in an unseen or less easily viewed area should be redirected to another (more open) area of the playground.

Worker to Child Ratios

FBCWA is committed to providing adequate supervision in all Children’s Ministries programs. Accordingly, the following worker to child **minimum ratios** will be observed:

Program	Workers	Children
Nursery	2	8
Preschool, 2 and 3 years old	2	12
Preschool, 4 and 5 years old	2	18
Elementary	2	20
VBS	2	20

If a worker is ‘out of ratio’ it is his or her responsibility to immediately notify the program supervisor or the Children’s Ministry Director. Supervisors will make diligent efforts to find

substitute workers to immediately bring worker to children ratios into compliance with Church policy.

Volunteers' Children in Age-Appropriate Classrooms

An FBCWA employee or volunteer may bring their own children and/or other child guests into Children's Ministry classrooms or settings with them if the children are the appropriate age for that classroom setting. For example, 1st and 2nd grade Sunday School teachers may bring their own child or a child guest into the classroom with them if the child is a first or second grader, but not if the child is a fifth or sixth grader. The exception to this guideline is for teenage children who are screened and trained Children's Ministry volunteers.

Discipline

It is our policy that staff members and volunteers are prohibited from using physical discipline in any manner for behavioral management of children. **No form of physical discipline is acceptable.** This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, biting or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviors by children. Children are to be disciplined using time-outs and other non-physical methods of behavior management. In employing this procedure, staff members and volunteers should observe the following guidelines:

- 1) Verbally redirect the child first. With younger children some physical redirection may be necessary (for example, removing a toy from the hands of a child that is hitting another, tapping a child lightly on the shoulder to get their attention).
- 2) If the behavior does not cease, remove or direct the child away from the group to a corner of the room where the group is meeting (avoid being alone with the child).
- 3) Provide the child with a simple, understandable reason for the time-out, and provide the child with clear explanation of your expectations. ("Jamie, you didn't stop hitting Chris when I asked you to, so you need to sit quietly in the blue chair for three minutes.") In addition, be verbally reassuring, as being removed from the group will likely upset the child. Do not physically hold a child in time-out.
- 4) Provide the child with a chair to sit in or a "spot" to sit on (using a pillow, blanket, carpet square, etc.) until their time-out is complete.
- 5) Follow the rule of thumb that a time-out is ineffective if it lasts longer than one minute for every year of the child's life (3 years old, 3 minutes).
- 6) Monitor the child through the entire time-out without giving your undivided attention. For longer time-outs give intermittent praise to reassure the child and keep them on task. ("Jamie, you're doing a great job of sitting quietly – just 2 more minutes.")

- 7) Praise the child once he or she has completed the time-out and tell them that their reward is being able to rejoin the group. Remind them that repeating their initial behavior will result in further time-out. Follow this with praise.

Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported immediately to parents and the Children's Ministry Director.

NEVER...

- Never yell at a child.
- Never grab a child.
- Never threaten a child. Always follow through with your word.
- Never hit a child.
- Never confront a parent in front of others.
- Never openly humiliate a child in front of the class.

Bullying

Verbal, physical or emotional bullying is not acceptable in First West ministry programs. At the first sign of bullying in any form, act decisively, and inform your ministry supervisor. There is no "harmless put-down" where bullying is concerned.

1. First Offense: Issue a warning to the child and a general reminder to the group that this kind of interaction is wrong. Try not to embarrass or chastise.

2. Second Offense: Pull the offending child(ren) from the group (in a seen or supervised location) and discuss the inappropriate interaction or behavior. Set clear parameters and behavioral goals. Let the child know that the next step is communication with a pastor or the Children's Ministry Director and the child's parents. Notify an immediate supervisor of ANY signs of bullying or verbal abuse.

Privately, but with another adult present, confirm that a child who was the target of the bullying behaviors is not in danger of continued harassment and is physically and emotionally stable. **DO NOT SINGLE A CHILD OUT IN FRONT OF THE GROUP ... be discreet.**

3. Third Offense: Send the child to a pastor or ministry supervisor for a phone call (or communication onsite) with his or her parent(s) and possible removal from the activity or event.

Bathroom Supervision and Assistance Guidelines

Nursery children

Because nursery children may require complete assistance with their bathroom activities, all staff members and volunteers will observe the following policies:

Diapering

- 1) Only female nursery workers or the child's parent or legal guardian will undertake the diapering of children of either sex.
- 2) Changing of diapers should be done in plain sight of other nursery workers.
- 3) Children will never be left unattended on changing tables.
- 4) Any special instructions given by parents who leave their children in the nursery will be recorded on the registration cards ("Seth Adams has a medicine in the bag for rash.")
- 5) Children should be re-diapered and re-clothed immediately upon the completion of changing their soiled diaper.
- 6) Children should be changed on changing stations only.

Toilet training

- 1) No child will be forced to toilet train.
- 2) Only female nursery workers or the child's parent or legal guardian will participate in toilet training efforts with children of either sex.
- 3) When children are taken into preschool bathrooms, the door will be left partially open.
- 4) Young children who are toilet training will never be left unattended in preschool bathrooms.
- 5) Parents should be consulted on each child's progress in the toilet training process before leaving the child with volunteers or staff members. Any special instructions given by parents who leave their children in the nursery will be recorded on the registration card ("Georgia can use the toilet, but she needs to be reminded – ask her if she needs to go.").
- 6) Children should be verbally assisted where possible. If physical assistance is necessary, another staff member or volunteer should be present, when possible.
- 7) "Accidents" should be handled by reassuring the child and completing the changing of diapers or underwear and clothing. Extra clothing and diapers are available in the children's area, if the parent has not furnished a clothing change.

School age children

School age children may be accompanied to the restroom for supervision and assistance when needed. Children should receive the minimum amount of assistance needed based upon their individual capabilities. Staff members and volunteers should never take a lone child to the restroom.

If a staff member or volunteer must go into the restroom to check on an individual child, he or she should seek out another worker to accompany him/her. If another worker is not available to accompany, he/she should go to the exterior bathroom door, knock, and ask if the child needs

assistance. If the child requires assistance, the worker should leave the exterior bathroom door open when entering the bathroom area and try to verbally assist the child in completing their activities, while the child remains behind the door of the bathroom stall. Any assistance with the straightening or fastening of garments should be done in the presence of another staff member or volunteer.

Special needs

Parents will offer instruction to staff members or volunteers to change the diapers of special needs individuals. After the age of 4, parents or legal guardians will change all special needs individuals.

Intoxicants

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drug while in any church facility, while traveling with children, or while working with or supervising children during any FBCWA program or activity.

Medication

A staff member or volunteer may not administer medication to any child while serving in Children's Ministry.

Nudity

Staff members and volunteers serving in Children's Ministry should never be nude in the presence of children in their care. In the event there is a situation that may call for or contemplate the possibility of nudity (i.e. changing clothes during a pool party, weekend or overnight retreat, etc.), the staff member or volunteer leading the event will submit a plan to the Children's Ministry Director concerning arrangements for showering or changing clothes.

One-to-one interactions with children

Staff members and volunteers should never conduct one-to-one, unobserved meetings or interaction with children while participating in Children's Ministry activities or programs. Another trained, screened adult should always be present.

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 be transported directly to their destination. Unauthorized stops to a non-public place should be avoided. Staff members and volunteers should avoid transportation circumstances that leave only one child in transport.
2. Staff members and volunteers should avoid physical contact with children while in vehicles.
3. No cell phones may be utilized by the driver while driving children to a church event, unless in an emergency.

Parental Contact

Parents who leave a child in the care of FBCWA staff members and volunteers during church services or activities will be contacted if a child becomes ill, injured, or has a severe disciplinary problem while participating in Children's Ministry programs. If a child experiences minor injuries during church activities or services, staff or volunteers will verbally report injuries to parents when they arrive to pick up their child.

Parental Involvement

Parents have an open invitation to observe all programs and activities in which their child is involved. However, parents who desire to participate in or have continuous, ongoing contact with their child's program will be required to complete the Church's volunteer application and screening process.

Personal social media

As a ministry leader, maintain a high moral standard in your social media presence. Inappropriate social media content may be a basis for suspension from participation in student ministry at FBCWA. Please be cautious about the content of the posts on your personal social media. Please ensure that photos or videos posted on social media reflect FBCWA ministry guidelines related to alcohol, tobacco and modesty (dress, posture and content).

Physical Contact

FBCWA is committed to protecting children in its care. To this end, FBCWA has implemented a 'physical contact policy' that promotes a positive, nurturing environment while protecting children. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by those working in Children's Ministry programs:

1. Hugging, pats on the back, holding young children (0-5 years) on laps, holding young children (0-7 years) by the hand and other forms of appropriate physical affection between staff members or volunteers and children are important for children's development, and are generally suitable in the church setting.
2. Kissing, tickling, inappropriate touching, and inappropriate displays of affection are forbidden. Any inappropriate physical contact, touching or displays of affection should be immediately reported to an immediate supervisor, the Children's Ministry Director or the Senior Pastor.
3. Physical contact should be for the benefit of the child, and never be based upon the emotional needs of a staff member or volunteer.
4. Physical contact and affection should be given only in observable places or when in the presence of other children or Children's Ministry staff members and volunteers. It is much less likely that touch will be inappropriate or misinterpreted when physical contact is open to observation.
5. Physical contact in any form should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing. The personal behavior of staff members or volunteers in Children's Ministry must foster trust at all times. Personal conduct must be above reproach.
6. Do not force physical contact, touch or affection on a reluctant child. A child's preference not to be touched must be respected.
7. Staff members and volunteers are responsible for protecting children under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by others.
8. Any suspected abuse must be reported immediately. (See "Reporting Abuse or Suspicions of Abuse").

Sexually Oriented Conversations

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from engaging in any sexually oriented conversations with children and 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.

Sexually Oriented Materials

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from possessing (or transmitting to a child) any sexually oriented materials (magazines, cards, images, videos, films, etc.) on church property or in the presence of children in their care.

Tobacco Use

FBCWA requires staff members and volunteers to abstain from the use or possession of tobacco products in church facilities, while in the presence of children or their parents, or during FBCWA activities or programs. FBCWA is a tobacco-free facility.

Verbal Interactions

Verbal interactions between staff members or volunteers and children should be positive and uplifting. Staff members and volunteers should strive to keep verbal interactions encouraging, constructive, and mindful of their mission of aiding parents in the spiritual growth and development of children.

To this end, staff members and volunteers should not talk to children in a way that is or could be construed by a reasonable observer as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. In addition, staff members and volunteers are expected to refrain from swearing in the presence of children.

Release of Children

At any time that a child has been entrusted to Children's Ministry staff members or volunteers, the Church incurs responsibility for the safety and welfare of the child. Staff members and volunteers must act to ensure the appropriate supervision and safety of children in their charge.

Children's Ministry staff members or volunteers are responsible for releasing children in their care only to parents, legal guardians, or other persons designated by parents or legal guardians at the close of services or activities.

It is presumed a person who drops off a child has authority to pick up that child.

In the event that staff members or volunteers are uncertain of the propriety of releasing a child, they should immediately locate or contact their immediate supervisor or the Children's Ministry Director before releasing the child.

For children in Kindergarten or younger, please use the following procedure when parents drop off their children:

1. The teacher at the door will gather the child's belongings and hang them up.
2. If they are a first-time visitor, please double check with parents if the child has any medical issues or allergies. All parents or guardians will need to have a security card with them to pick up their child (these cards are obtained from the classroom teachers).

3. If necessary, the parent will take a pager. This pager number should be written down with the child's name.
4. Try to discourage parents from lingering in the classroom. If they want to help and take their child to the bathroom or hang up their belongings that is fine. Lingering in the classroom may cause stress to their child and/or other children. However, our classrooms have an open-door policy, meaning parents are welcome at any time.
5. If a child is upset about staying in the classroom, encourage the parents to say a quick and firm goodbye and then leave. Instruct the parent to take a pager. Explaining that if the child does not stop crying in 15 minutes they will be paged (or texted, if applicable).
6. At pick up, the parent should bring back the security card and pager if applicable.
7. A child should only be released to a parent- unless specified otherwise-- during pick up.

For students in grades 1-4, parents or a designated person must pick up students. Students in grades 5 and above may be released from the classroom when the program is over.

Supervision

Staff members and volunteers in Children's Ministry are expected to provide adequate supervision for children in their care while working in church programs.

Classroom Windows

When any class is in session and the door is shut, the window on the door must remain uncovered so that the class can be observed from the outside. The only time the window may be covered is in case of a security threat within the church (see Safety and Security Procedures).

Security Policies & Procedures

Classroom Security

- After all children have entered the classroom (usually by 15 to 20 minutes after program start times), all classroom doors should be shut. Latecomers can knock and be allowed entrance. Closed/locked doors are our 1st line of defense! This ensures safety and security of children from strangers wandering the halls.
- Children's classroom areas are patrolled regularly.
- In summertime – on-duty person regularly checks on children in outside play area.

Fire Evacuation

All classes should exit according to the evacuation routes diagram and assemble on the **west side of the dumpster** (see FBCWA evacuation routes diagram). Evacuation routes and directions for exiting the building are noted on that diagram.

NOTE: the church's dumpster is at the far NW corner of the paved parking lot, enclosed by a chain-link/block wall. The dumpster itself is inside the block wall enclosure and NOT readily seen. (See attached pictures).

Ensure that all persons/children are out of the parking lot to allow fire personnel and first responders to enter the parking lot unhindered.

Take roll and/or a head count to ensure no one has been left inside. (If time permits, the Safety & Security team will sweep the building to ensure everyone is out.)

Bomb Threat Evacuation

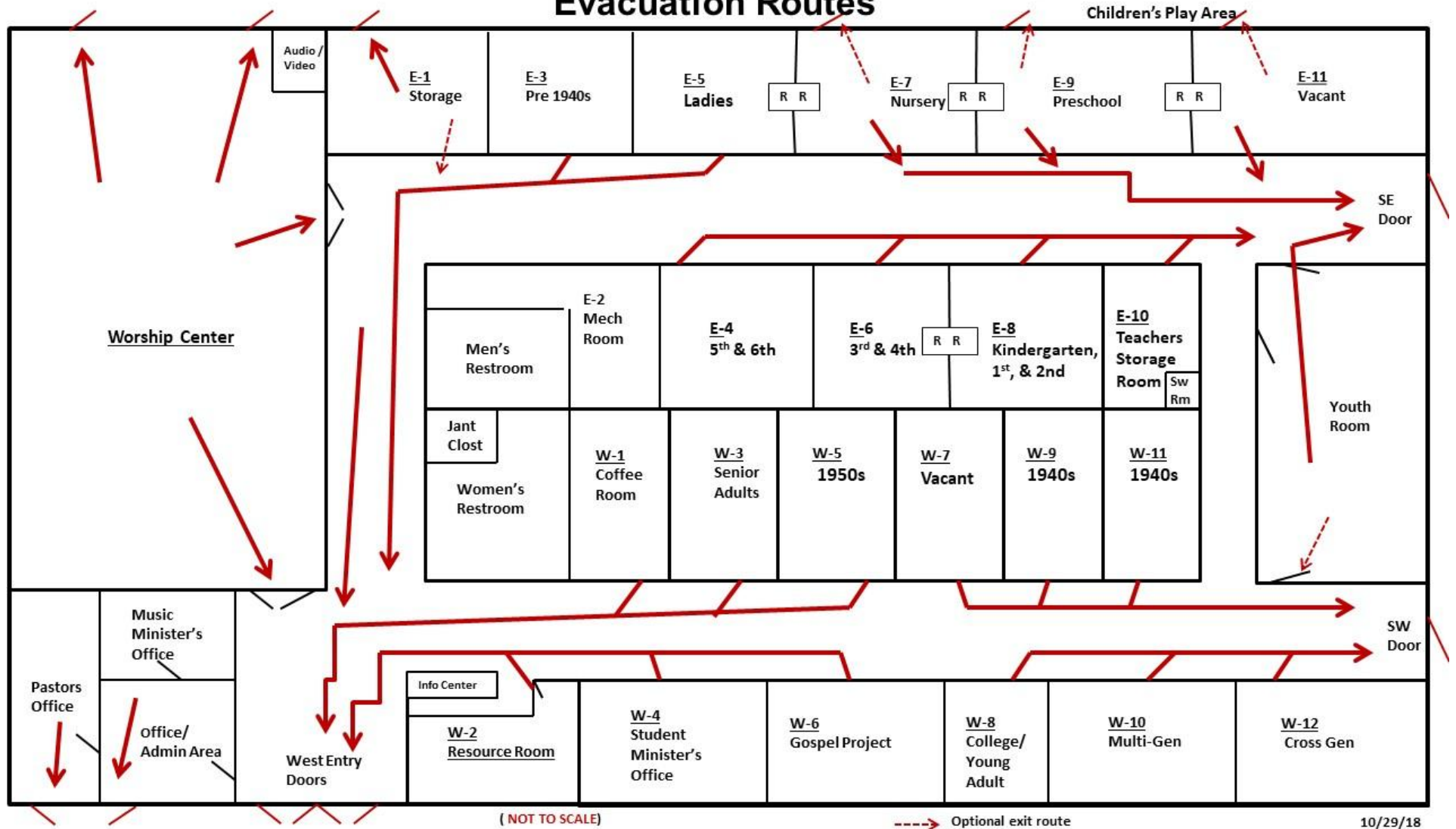
Cell phones should not be used when a bomb threat is received!
(A bomb may rely on a cell phone signal to activate.)

Reporting the receipt of a bomb threat to 911 should be done via a landline phone in the office or at the Information Center desk, not via a cell phone.

All classes should assemble west of the dumpster, but further north on the sidewalk so that they are situated **BEHIND** the **BLOCK WALL** parallel to the sidewalk. The block wall will serve as a barrier from flying shrapnel in the event of an explosion.

Take roll and/or head count to ensure no one has been left inside.

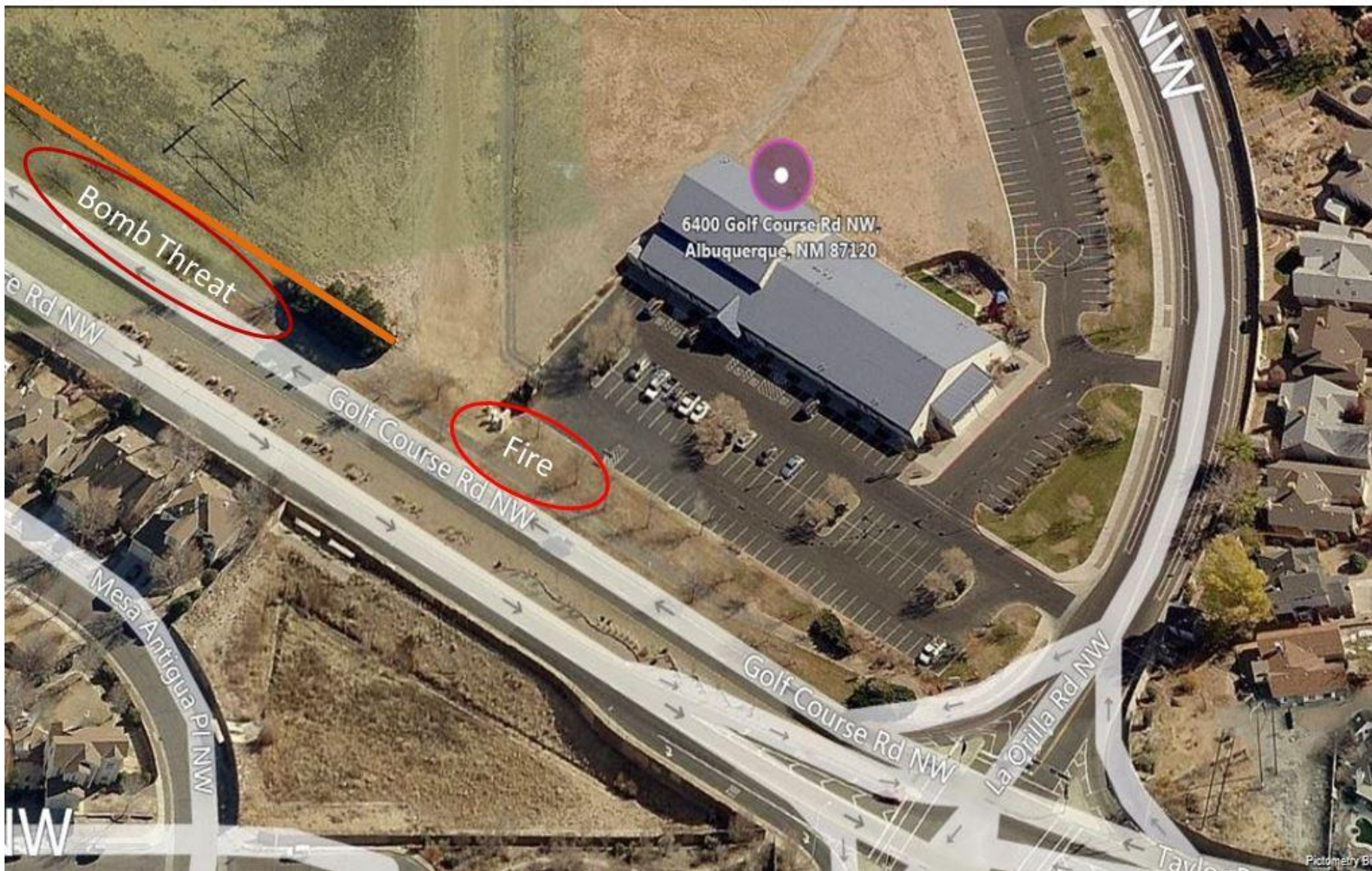
Evacuation Routes



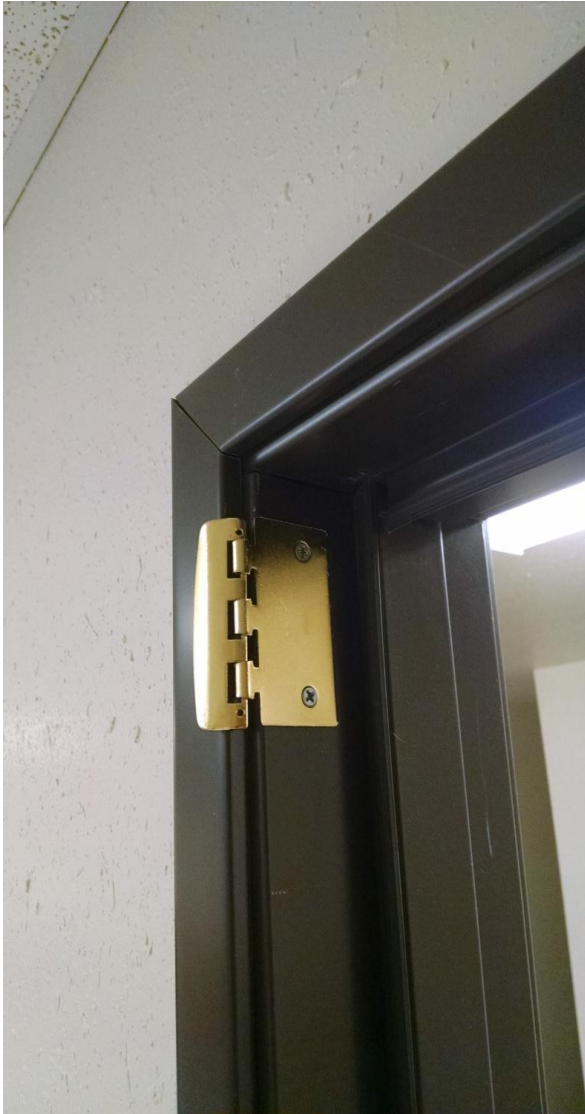
Dumpster & Wall Assembly Areas



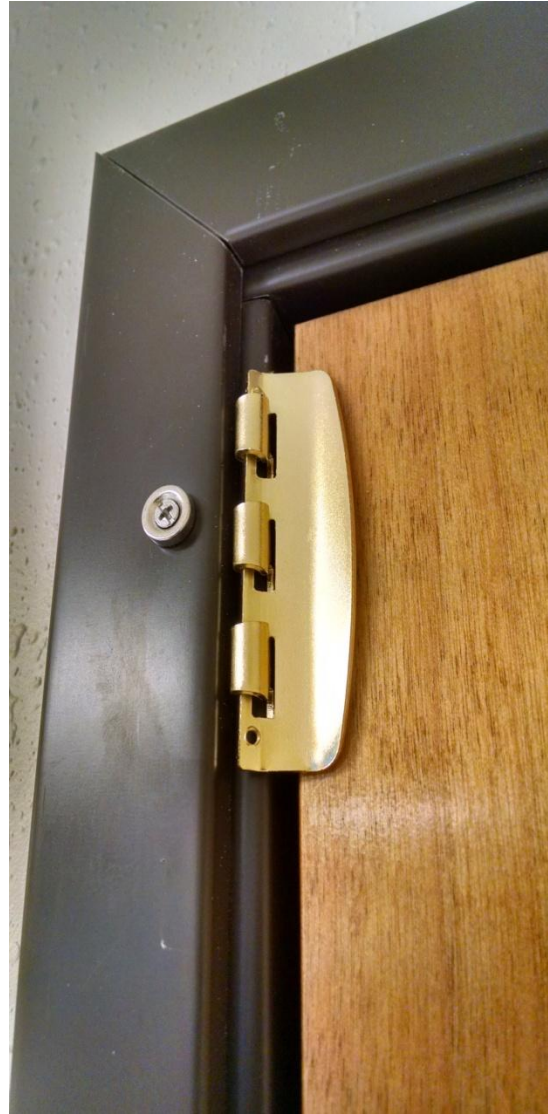
Emergency Evacuation Assembly Areas



Proper use of brass hinge locking devices



**Unlocked (hinge folded back)
door)**



**Locked (hinge folded over
door)**

Lockdown Procedure

What constitutes a “lockdown”?

When there is a threat, real or perceived, to: the FBCWA congregation as a whole, a specific church class, group or individual; or when a lockdown situation is warranted.

There are basically two threats that would dictate a lockdown at FBCWA:

- **External Threat** – the threat occurs outside our building. The goal of this procedure is to prevent the threat from entering the FBCWA building. Essentially a “shelter-in-place” situation.
- **Internal Threat** – the threat or danger is inside our building. The goal of this procedure is to keep everyone safe until the threat is completely removed from the FBCWA building.

External threats that might cause a FBCWA lockdown:

- Hazardous material spill nearby
- Riot in the vicinity
- Police activity close by
- Or, as requested by the Police or Fire Department

A lockdown in this scenario would cause the following actions at FBCWA –

- Call **242-COPS** (242-2677) or **911**, depending on the situation.
- FBCWA staff or security personnel would announce the lockdown and reason, if known.
- Secure all exterior doors. Engage all door closure mechanisms (activate switches for magnetic locks on main west entrance doors and the SE exterior door)
- Sunday School teachers bring children inside the building; secure the exterior doors to the playground.
- Account for all persons in the class or group, away from windows until the lockdown has been lifted.
- Remain quiet and calm for the duration
- An **ALL CLEAR** will be announced; staff and security team will decide if activities should resume.

Internal threats that would cause a FBCWA lockdown:

- Missing child or under age person
- Domestic dispute within the building
- Hostage situation
- Active shooter

A lockdown in this scenario would cause the following actions at FBCWA –

- Call **911** Give as much information as possible.
- If time and the situation permits, a loud announcement should be made that a lockdown is underway.
- If possible, close/secure all exterior doors. Activate all door closure mechanisms (activate switches for magnetic locks on west parking lot doors and the SE exterior door)
- Clear halls, bathrooms and any open area or room that cannot be secured.
- Lock all classroom doors immediately. Cover the small glass windows in the door with black poster paper next to the window. Engage the brass hinge locking mechanism at the top of the door frame. If a door cannot be locked, attempt to quickly block the door with heavy items.
- Secure the outside doors to the play area and the shared restrooms between the pre-school classrooms.
- Account for every person in the room.
- Keep all persons inside the classroom – no one should leave during a lockdown.
- Remain quiet, still, calm and alert.
- Remain indoors, in classrooms or office areas until an **ALL CLEAR** is announced by either law enforcement, a FBCWA staff person or a FBCWA security person. **DO NOT** open the door and/or exit the room until the **ALL CLEAR** notice is given.

In the event of a hostage situation or active shooter, also do the following:

- Call **911** Give as much information as possible: church's location, description of shooter, how many shooters, etc. Listen for instructions. Stay on the phone with police dispatcher, if possible.
- Quickly turn off all lights and close the blinds or curtains.
- Instruct persons to stay low to the floor and away from the windows and doors.
- Silence all televisions, audio players, cell phones and other electronic devices.
- Remain quiet, still, calm and alert.
- Remain indoors, in classrooms or office areas until an **ALL CLEAR** is given by law enforcement. **DO NOT** open the door and/or exit the room until the **ALL CLEAR** notice is given.
- Law enforcement and/or first responders will give specific instructions when to exit and what to do upon exiting– **FOLLOW THEIR INSTRUCTIONS!**

After a lockdown is lifted by law enforcement, children can then be re-united with the responsible parent/person.

Supplement 1: Suspected Child Abuse Incident Report Form

This form is from *Essentials: Sexual Abuse Prevention and Response*, Abuse Reform Implementation Task Force, pp. 71-73.

Suspected Child Abuse Incident Report Form

This form must be used to record details of a child abuse incident or allegation. The information recorded here will be referenced for a mandatory report to Child Protective Services and local law enforcement. The victim's information on this form must be kept confidential, with the exception of legal authorities.

Date of incident: _____ / _____ / _____

Child's name: _____

Parent/Guardian's name(s): _____

Person making report: _____

Role/relationship to the child: _____

TYPE OF INCIDENT (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)

- ☐ Suspicion or allegation of abuse or neglect of the child based on visible observations
- ☐ Suspicion or allegation of abuse or neglect of the child as told by the child
- ☐ Suspicion of potential harm to the child

ALLEGED PERPETRATOR(S) DETAILS (IF KNOWN)

Name: _____

Connection with the child: _____

Any other relevant factors: _____

Were there any other witnesses to the incident? YES or NO

If "yes," provide their details below.

Full name: _____

Involvement as witness: _____

Contact phone number: _____

DETAILS OF INCIDENT

(Describe the incident, including alleged behavior of the perpetrator(s), sighted injury, or other indicators of abuse, as well as the conversation with the child. Be as thorough as you can.)

INCIDENT RESPONSE

Please check which of the following have been informed of this incident, and note the date.

EXTERNAL

☐ Police

Department: _____ Date: ____/____/____

☐ Child Protective Services

County: _____ Date: ____/____/____

Name of dispatcher: _____ Case #: _____

☐ Other (please specify):

_____ Date: ____/____/____

INTERNAL

☐ Children's Ministry Director: _____ Date: ____/____/____

☐ Senior Pastor: _____ Date: ____/____/____

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF FORM COMPLETION

I have completed this form to the best of my knowledge and ability.

Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE SENIOR PASTOR OR HEAD DEACON

Date Pastor/Children's Ministry Director was notified: _____ / _____ / _____

Date Deacons were notified: _____ / _____ / _____

Date report was shared with insurance company: _____ / _____ / _____

Date Pastor attempted to contact family: _____ / _____ / _____

Date Pastor met with family: _____ / _____ / _____

Outcome from meeting with family:

Supplement 2: Guiding Principles of Victim Advocacy

This form is from *Essentials: Sexual Abuse Prevention and Response*, Abuse Reform Implementation Task Force, pp. 74-75.

Guiding Principles of Victim Advocacy

Often, abuse victims will talk to church leaders first because of a preexisting relationship of trust. We want to be good stewards of that trust. As pastors preach about holiness, sin, justice, and perfect love, we recognize that a pastor's response to abuse is highly likely to become intertwined with a victim's understanding of the gospel. To foster continued trust and honor the victim's courage to come forward, we must handle disclosures of abuse with great care. It is vital to believe the victim.

*Until there is evidence to the contrary, we take the posture
of 1 Corinthians 13:7—"Love believes all things."*

Begin with the Five Guiding Principles of Victim Advocacy¹

- 1. SAFETY FIRST:** Attending to the victim's immediate safety is the priority.
- 2. "DO NO HARM":** Ensure that no additional harm comes to the victim; this occurs when we do not believe the victim or imply that the victim is to blame.
- 3. EMPOWER:** Abuse is about denying a victim power and control. Allow the victim to reclaim control over his or her own decisions, opinions, actions, goals, and future.
- 4. TRAUMA-INFORMED:** Sexual assault and domestic violence are complex traumatic events. Focus on "What has happened to this person?" not "What is wrong with this person?"
- 5. CONFIDENTIALITY:** Confidentiality is critically linked to safety and justice for the victim.

The "Dos and Don'ts" of Victim Advocacy²

The following "Dos and Don'ts" are not an exhaustive list, but they are a great place to start.

WHAT TO DO

- Listen with compassion, and talk very little.
- Make sure the victim feels heard, believed, and safe.
- Take notes, including as much detail as the victim feels comfortable sharing.
- Explore needed resources, and refer them to experts.
- Plan a time to reconnect.

1. Adapted from the "Crisis Line Handbook" provided by the Centers for Disease Control Prevention of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 10- 22

2. Adapted from *Becoming a Church that Cares Well for the Abused*, "Lesson 3: Ministry Responsibilities."

WHAT NOT TO DO

- Do NOT investigate the validity of the claims. Allow experts to determine legitimacy.
- Do NOT engage the abuser. This can be very dangerous for the victim.
- Do NOT make any decisions for the victim.
- Do NOT point out sin or blame the victim in any way.
- Do NOT reframe the situation into “what God is doing.”
- Do NOT question children or lead them during a disclosure in any way.

Policies and Procedures

Statement of Acknowledgment and Agreement

I have received and read a copy of FBCWA's Children's Ministry 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 FBCWA.

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

I also acknowledge that I have reviewed and agree to fulfill the duties listed in the Manual. While, ideally, I will serve in this ministry for the agreed term, I understand that I may choose to end this relationship at any time. If possible, I will provide two weeks' notice to Children's Ministry Director.

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

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 FBCWA policies and procedures manual.

Staff Member or Volunteer's name (please print)

Staff Member or Volunteer's signature

Date: _____

[This page is to be signed, detached and delivered to the Children's Ministry Director.]