

# First Baptist Church of Friendsville: Child Protection Policy

## General

### I. Goal

It shall be the goal of the First Baptist Church of Friendsville to provide a safe environment for the physical and emotional well-being of all children participating in church activities, including participants in any daily or temporary childcare programs. To follow all state laws in regard to the protection of children from registered sexual offenders, parental abuse, and from abuse outside the child's family. The church's goal is to inform workers and enforce policies to ensure that all children are safe and well protected while attending scheduled activities of the church.

Future revisions to this policy may be made with the authorization of both the Pastor and the Personnel Team.

### II. Definition of "children"

The term "child" or "children" shall include all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years.

## Selection and Screening Process

### III. Pre-employment procedures for paid and volunteer workers

It is the goal of the First Baptist Church of Friendsville (herein referred to as "church") to adequately screen the applications of persons desiring to work with children participating in all church programs, including participants in any daily or temporary childcare programs.

#### IV. Volunteers must be members of the church

All volunteers who work with children must first be members of the First Baptist Church of Friendsville. Under certain circumstances, The Pastor or the Personnel Team may authorize an exception to this rule for a specific planned event.

#### V. Classification of workers

In order to screen workers appropriately for their responsibilities, a ministerial staff person responsible will categorize workers into two categories: primary and secondary. These terms refer to the relative levels of responsibility and risk, not to the ages of the children being served.

**Primary volunteer workers** - Includes all paid staff members plus those volunteers in roles with greater responsibility or risk and should meet the primary screening standards. Must be at least eighteen (18) years of age.

**Secondary volunteer workers** – Persons who occasionally interact with children and/or do so in less risky circumstances. i.e.: Sunday School teachers and volunteers who see children only in a group setting, on church premises, or who interact with children in the presence of an approved primary worker. This category may also include parents of participants who help supervise activities. All volunteer workers under the age of eighteen (18) will be considered secondary workers.

#### VI. Minimum age

All primary volunteer workers must be 18 years of age or older. Younger persons may assist adults, but may not take the place of adult workers. The church may employ responsible teens (under

the age of 18) only in positions with and under the direct supervision of an approved adult worker.

## VII. Six-month rule

No volunteer will be allowed to work with children in any capacity until they have been an active and participating member of the church for a minimum of six (6) months. The applicant must have been a regular attendee and involved in church activities for that period of time. This time of interaction between our leadership and the applicant allows for better evaluation and suitability of the applicant for working with children.

The six-month rule may be waived with the authorization of the Personnel Team, as in the case of a new staff member. If waived, program ministers must take additional steps to screen the applicant.

## VIII. Volunteer applications

Volunteer applicants must complete and sign an **Application For Volunteer Workers Who Will Work With Children** form.

Applications will be submitted to the church office. A ministerial staff person will be responsible for the interview process and reference checks. If an applicant needs additional confidentiality they may choose to submit their application to a ministerial staff person or directly to the pastor.

The church will keep confidential all information received in the application selection process. Such information will be stored with access afforded only to appropriate church staff on a need-to-know basis.

If the church learns of false, misleading or amended information on an application that could cause potential danger to children or liability to the church, that person will be no longer allowed to serve.

## IX. References

A ministerial staff person must check and document at least three (3) references for each primary worker applicant and must conduct a reasonable inquiry into the character of secondary worker applicants. References may be checked by phone, mail, or in person.

Whenever possible, the three references should include:

- A person who has known the applicant for an extended period;

- A former supervisor; and

- A member of the applicant's immediate family.

Information gained in these checks should be noted directly on the application.

## X. Survivors of child abuse

Survivors of childhood sexual or physical abuse need the love and acceptance of the church family. Their experience with abuse and their recovery process may be pertinent to their work with children. Survivors of abuse may, if they choose, request confidential counseling either from the pastor or from a professional counselor. It will not necessarily disqualify them from service. The desire of the church is to assist and care for survivors of abuse as well as fulfill our obligation to protect the children left in our care.

## XI. Confidential Interviews

All applicants desiring to work with children must be interviewed for suitability for the work they desire to do. A ministerial staff person will conduct the interview. A team of interviewers may be used, under the supervision of the ministerial staff person. Church policy concerning prevention and response to child abuse and neglect must be discussed during the interview.

## XII. Criminal background check

A criminal background check and child abuse registry check shall be required for all children's worker positions, both employee and volunteer workers. No one who has been convicted of a crime involving misconduct with children will be allowed to work with or supervise children. Completing the **Application for Volunteer Workers Who Will Work With Children** form, authorizes the church to conduct these checks. Background checks will be kept confidential in a locked file with access afforded only to appropriate church staff on a need-to-know basis.

The designated church representative will conduct criminal background checks notifying the appropriate minister if a negative report is received.

## XIII. Vehicle Safety

Persons who drive First Baptist Church of Friendsville owned or privately-owned vehicles for conducting church business or transporting children on a regular basis must maintain a current valid Tennessee driver's license, provide proof of insurance in such amounts as may be required by state law.

## XIV. First aid training

It will be the goal of the church that most paid employees who work with children will maintain current certification in basic first aid and basic CPR (or the equivalent) as required by applicable licensing requirements or other local regulations. The church will pay the cost of this training. Volunteer workers are encouraged to get training if they frequently accompany children on activities such as recreational activities, camps, retreats, mission trips, or any other activity with an element of risk.

## XV. Acknowledgement of church policies

All applicants must acknowledge in writing that they understand the church's policies pertaining to the protection of children and that they agree to abide by them. This requirement will be met by having applicants sign an **Acknowledgement of Receipt** form.

## Supervisory Requirements

It is the policy of the church to provide adequate supervisory control of persons working with children participating in all church programs, including daily or temporary childcare programs of

the church. The following regulations shall be applicable to all primary and secondary workers having contact with children participating in all church programs:

## XVI. Safety of Children

It is the responsibility of all persons having contact with children participating in church programs to promote the emotional and

physical safety of the participants giving regard to all factors and circumstances known to them. If in their opinion, an unsafe condition exists; such persons shall immediately take appropriate precautions under the circumstances to protect all children. Nothing contained in any other church policy, procedure or instruction shall be construed to relieve persons having contact with children from this responsibility.

## XVII. Preschool identification system

To reduce the possibility of kidnapping, the church will have in place an identification system so that the adults who drop off a small child are the same adults who pick the child up. The ministry leader in charge shall maintain the system to identify persons authorized to pick up and take responsibility for preschool children leaving a church activity. The identification system will not be necessary for children above the grade of kindergarten unless a parent specifically requests in writing.

## XVIII. Two-adult rule

It shall be the goal of the First Baptist Church of Friendsville that a minimum of two workers will be in attendance at all times when more than two (2) children are being supervised during a church activity. At least one of these must be a primary worker.

Some Sunday School classes or other regularly scheduled classes may have only one adult in attendance as the teacher while the class is in session. In these instances, at least one door to the classroom will remain open (in the case of the split nursery doors, the top half will remain open). At no time should an adult ever be in an enclosed room, with the door shut, or area alone with a child.

## XIX. Observation of Children

Church activities for children should be scheduled in areas visible from adjoining areas. Such visibility will be maintained by leaving curtains and blinds open and, wherever possible, by leaving a door to the room open. Reasonable exceptions to this rule may be made by the minister in charge where seclusion is necessary for rest provided two workers are present in the room at all times.

At no time will an adult meet alone with a child in any room where the door is closed or in an area where they cannot be seen.

## XX. Ratio of workers to children

It is required that a reasonable ratio of adults to children is maintained at all times involving the supervision of children. A ministerial staff member shall be responsible for setting and maintaining a reasonable ratio of workers to children giving due regard to all factors present, including the number and age of the participants, the nature of the activities, and the location where the activities are taking place.

## XXI. Ministerial and staff oversight

A ministerial staff member shall coordinate with the respective ministry coordinators to ensure ongoing supervision of all workers. This should include regular unannounced visits into classes and other program sites.

## XXII. Awareness of church policy

A minister responsible shall periodically review the definition of child abuse and neglect as defined by law and the church's policy



concerning these crimes. These reviews can be conducted either with the workers individually or in groups, at least once a year and following each change in or addition to such policies. Each worker shall acknowledge receipt of a written copy of the policy prior to the time they commence working with children and after each change to such policy. Each worker shall acknowledge participating in the periodic review of the church's policies and procedures. The signed acknowledgements shall be retained in a file.

### XXIII. Children's pickup

Children who are six years old or older are not permitted to leave the area of the church activity at the conclusion of the scheduled activity unless otherwise instructed by the parent, guardian, or ministerial staff. If the parent or guardian does not pick up a child younger than six on time, the child will be kept by their teachers in the children's area where safe supervision can be continued until the parent or guardian is located. A child of twelve (12) years or younger shall not be taken from or allowed to leave church property, either unattended or in a group without specific parental permission.

### XXIV. Release of claims

Prior to any activity away from the church, a **Release of Claims** form will be necessary to be signed by the child's parent or legal guardian. Without the form signed and in the possession of the church, the child will not be allowed to participate in the away activity.

## **Reporting and Responding to Alleged Child Abuse or Neglect**

### XXV. Reporting Policy

It is the policy of the First Baptist Church or Friendsville to follow the laws of the State of Tennessee in regard to child abuse and neglect and to report any incident of child abuse or neglect toward any child in the church or participating in any church program or activity.

If there is any suspicion of child abuse or neglect:

- Notify ministerial staff immediately.
- Ministerial staff will commence an investigation immediately.
- The accused person shall be suspended from the performance of duties involving children until the investigation has been completed.
- Cooperate fully with law enforcement officials.
- The pastor or his agent will inform the victim's parent or legal guardian of the steps that are being taken, and continue to keep them advised of the status of the investigation.
- In an instance where child abuse or neglect is confirmed, the church will immediately dismiss the worker from their position. Termination will be considered appropriate to the circumstances. The child's parent(s) or legal guardian shall be asked what action they would like to take in the matter and fully address their requests within the bounds of legal and prudent response.
- In instances where evidence is inconclusive, the church should take legal action with the advise of legal counsel in consultation with law enforcement officials depending on the strength of the evidence available and after consideration for the victim and the victim's parent(s) or legal guardian's requests.

- The pastor, in consultation with legal counsel, will determine the amount of information he believes is appropriate to relate to the congregation. Usually commenting in detail on an ongoing investigation is not wise.

## XXVI. Reporting obligation

By Tennessee law, anyone who has reasonable cause to believe that a child is being physically abused, sexually abused, neglected, or is dependent is required to report this information. If you suspect abuse, you should call your local Department of Children Service.

Church leadership should also be informed immediately of any suspected child abuse.

## XXVII. Reports required

Any worker of the church who has cause to believe that a child's physical or emotional health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect shall report that belief according to the following procedure:

- a. The worker shall report such belief to the pastor, a member of the church staff and/or church leadership.
- b. The pastor or staff member will immediately report to one of the following: the local Department of Children Services, and/or the Blount County Sheriff's Office.
- c. The pastor or his agent will notify the parents or legal guardian of the child (unless the parent or legal guardian is the person responsible for the abuse or neglect).
- d. The pastor, or his agent, in consultation with the Personnel Team will notify the appropriate legal counsel.

- e e.The pastor, or his agent, will notify the church's insurance agent that an abuse report has been filed with the appropriate local or state agency.

## XXVIII. Incident report

The person making a report should identify:

- a a.The name and address of the child.
- b b.The name and address of the person responsible for the care, custody, or welfare of the child.
- c c.Any other pertinent information concerning the alleged or suspected abuse or neglect.

## XXIX. Confidentiality

All reports of child abuse or neglect shall be held in absolute confidence. No person shall communicate any information concerning the alleged event to any person except as necessary to cooperate with any official investigation. Any breach of this confidentiality by an employee of the church shall be cause for immediate dismissal. The pastor, in consultation with the official conducting the investigation may authorize limited additional disclosure if necessary to protect other children from harm in the near future, particularly where the person responsible for the abuse cannot be identified, but in no case shall the identity of the victim or the accused person be disclosed except as required by law.

## XXX. Investigation of alleged abuse or neglect

No person shall attempt to conduct a detailed investigation either through examination or interrogation of the child, the accused person, or a witness. It is acceptable to obtain a reasonable

amount of information to have cause to believe a child has been abused or neglected. Interviews shall be conducted only by authorized officials of the agency to whom the suspected crime has been reported or, when appropriate, by legal counsel or persons representing the church in an official capacity. All employees and volunteers of the church shall cooperate with the official investigation as requested.

### XXXI. Suspension of church related duties

A person accused of child abuse or neglect will be suspended from all church related duties involving children. This would include all childcare, teaching, transportation, or sponsorship duties. The Personnel Team is not authorized to conduct an investigation of the incident but is allowed to monitor any such investigation and receive information concerning the incident as may be necessary to determine issues concerning continuation of employment and compensation. The person accused should be suspended on 'paid leave' until the investigation is completed. This removal from duty should occur in such a way that an innocent person is not immediately deemed guilty. There are false claims made each year. If the allegation is determined to be unsubstantiated, the employee can be returned to their prior position.

### XXXII. Preservation of records

Copies of all documents relating to an event of abuse or neglect, including a list of all persons known to be present or in the vicinity shall be transferred to the pastor or his agent. They shall be retained until advised that all criminal and civil investigations and actions have been completed.

### XXXIII. Ministerial care

The ministerial staff shall encourage and assist the child and the parents or legal guardian in securing appropriate counseling, care, and support. In the event the abuse or neglect involves a member or employee of the church, the ministerial staff shall encourage and assist the individual in securing the appropriate counseling and support.

### XXXIV. Liaison with the community

The pastor, or his appointed agent, will serve as the church's sole access to the media. The church should emphasize to the public its position on child abuse, its concern for the victim, and the extensive steps being taken to address the safety of all children.

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Acknowledgement of Receipt of the

the First Baptist Church of Friendsville's  
Child Protection Policy

I have been given a copy of both the First Baptist Church of Friendsville's Child Protection Policy.

I have read and understand the document. I understand that my services as an employee of The First

Baptist Church of Friendsville or as a volunteer worker who works with children at The First Baptist Church

of Friendsville is contingent on my strict adherence to these policies.

NAME (please print):

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature:

\_\_\_\_\_

Witness:

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## Release of Claims Form

NAME OF PARENT OR GUARDIAN (please print):

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ADDRESS:

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CHILD'S NAME:

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ACTIVITY:

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DATE(S) OF ACTIVITY:

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I hereby affirm that my child shall be participating in the above named activity and certify that I am aware of the inherent dangers associated with participation in the Activity and with the fact that participating in the Activity may take place outside of, or off of, church premises. I understand and agree that neither the First Baptist Church of Friendsville, nor its trustees, representatives, instructors or agents may be held liable in any way for any occurrence in connection with my child's participating in the Activity which may result in injury, harm or other damages to me or my family. As a part of the consideration for being allowed to enroll and participate in the Activity, I hereby personally assume all risks in connection with my child's participation in the Activity. I further release the First Baptist Church of Friendsville, its trustees, instructors, agents and representatives for any

injury or damage which may befall my child while my child is enrolled in or participating in the Activity. I further agree to save and hold harmless the First Baptist Church of Friendsville, it's trustees, instructors, agents and representatives from any claim by me or my family, estate, heirs or assigns arising out of my child's enrollment and participation in the Activity. I also authorize the First Baptist Church of Friendsville to render or obtain such emergency medical care or treatment as may be necessary should any injury, harm or accident occur to my child while participating in the Activity. I further state that I am of lawful age and legally competent to sign this affirmation and release; that I understand the terms herein are contractual and not a mere recital; and that I signed this document of my own free act and volition. I further state and acknowledge that I have fully informed myself of the contents of this affirmation and release by reading it before I have signed it. I have executed this affirmation and release on the \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_\_\_.

Signature

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### Application for Volunteer Workers Who Will Work With Children

This application is to be completed by all applicants for positions involving the supervising or custody of children. It will assist the church in providing a safe and secure environment for all preschoolers, children and youth.

The term "child" or "children" includes all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Business  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Driver's License # \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security # \_\_\_\_\_

Position applying

for: \_\_\_\_\_

Date you would be available \_\_\_\_\_ Days of the week available \_\_\_\_\_

When did you make your profession of faith in Christ? When baptized? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a member of this church? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Please list the names and locations of other churches that you have attended regularly within the last 10 years.

Please list the names of three other members of the church who know you:

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

List the names and addresses and phone numbers of three personal references

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

Because we care for our children and desires to protect them, we ask you to please answer the following questions. We understand they are personal and we will protect your privacy. Have you ever been known by another name?

Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_. If yes, please explain:

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During your lifetime, have you ever been arrested for molesting or abusing a child, accused of physical assault or a sexual offense of any nature?

Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_. If yes, please explain:

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Have you ever been prosecuted for child abuse or molestation?

Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_. If yes, please explain:

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### Applicant Statement

I hereby certify that I have read and completed the above application. My answers are true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

I give permission for the church to maintain my photograph on file and to conduct a criminal-court background check on me now and at regular intervals. If allowed to work with children I agree to be bound by the bylaws and policies of the First Baptist Church of Friendsville.

I hereby authorize all persons, schools, organizations and law enforcement agencies to supply

The First Baptist Church of Friendsville with any information concerning my character or background in

Connection with working with children and I hereby release them from liability or damages which may

Occur as a result of their response to this request.

I authorize the First Baptist Church of Friendsville to supply my service record, in whole or part, to any prospective or future organization or agency with a legal and proper interest in them. I understand that if allowed to serve, that any misrepresentation made by me in this application shall be considered sufficient cause for my dismissal without advance notice. I have been appraised of and support the church's position regarding the problem of child abuse and neglect.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

-  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_