

PROTECTING

FCBC KIDS AND TEENS

(and those who serve them)

Policies and Procedures



FIRST COAST BAPTIST CHURCH

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Child/Youth Protection Policies and Procedures

First Coast Baptist Church (FCBC) values children and teens and seeks to provide a loving, safe environment in which each student can thrive as he/she is ministered to and disciplined. For that environment to flourish, structure is necessary to provide objective guidelines. There are three main considerations: the safety of each child/youth entrusted to our ministries, protection of volunteers against any allegation, and the legal protection of the church. It is the desire of the church to raise the awareness level and increase understanding of the issues surrounding safety of the children and young people in all areas (not just sexual abuse), but is not intended to cause undue suspicion.

In order to accomplish the goal of providing a loving and safe environment for the children and youth of First Coast Baptist Church, all persons ministering in any children's and/or youth ministry must be informed about the policies and procedures on which this safe environment is built.

SCOPE OF THIS POLICY

The policies and procedures set forth below apply to all people who give supervision or have custody of minors (anyone under the age of 18) in First Coast Baptist Church facilities or church sponsored activities.

DEFINITIONS

- ⇒ Child/student...Any person who has not reached his/her 18th birthday or the age of majority as defined by state law, or is classified as a minor.
- ⇒ Adult...Any person who has reached his/her 18th birthday or as defined by state law.
- ⇒ DCFS...The Department of Children and Family Services, which is a state agency with local offices in each county.
- ⇒ Employee...Any person hired according to the personnel policies of FCBC and receiving compensation from FCBC is considered an employee. This includes both part-time and full-time personnel.
- ⇒ Non-member Contracted...Individuals who are contracted by FCBC to lead in retreats or other church sponsored functions, and, that may potentially have direct involvement with minors.
- ⇒ Volunteer Leadership:
 - Primary volunteer:** Any unpaid person engaged in or involved in activities and entrusted with the care and supervision of minors or a person who directly oversees and/or exerts control or oversight over minors. This person must be at least eighteen (18) years of age. For example, primary volunteers would include Sunday School teachers, Awana Leaders and children's/youth choir leaders, etc.

Secondary volunteer: Persons who occasionally interact with children and/or do so in less risky circumstances. This category may include Summer Program workers who only interact with children in a large group setting and guardians of participants who help supervise activities. Generally, secondary volunteers would be present with children only if primary workers are serving in a supervisory role.

Minor volunteer: All volunteer workers under the age of eighteen (18). Minors may assist adults, but may not take the place of adult workers.

⇒ **Two Adult Rule...** It is the goal of First Coast Baptist Church that a minimum of two workers will be in attendance at all times when children/youth are being supervised during a church activity regardless of the number of participants, location or activity. At least one of these must be a primary worker. These two adults cannot be related to one another. Some older children/youth Bible Study groups may have only one adult in attendance as the teacher while the class is in session. In these instances, doors to the classrooms must remain open and a hall monitor in place. At no time should an adult ever be in a room or an enclosed area alone with a child.

SELECTION AND SCREENING PROCESS

Employee and Volunteer Selection Process

Employee

- ◆ All church employees, whether or not they work with directly with children, will be required to complete a confidential application form, be interviewed by an appropriate church staff person, have references checked and give written permission for a criminal records check.
- ◆ All records, forms and reports regarding employees remain confidential with limited access by the Pastor and appropriate staff only.

Primary Volunteer

- ◆ All primary volunteers will be interviewed by an appropriate staff person and must give written permission for a criminal records background check.
- ◆ In addition to the above requirement, a primary volunteer must be a member attendee of FCBC for at least six (6) months. Exception - a primary volunteer who does not meet these membership requirements may serve only upon the recommendation of the Pastor and Children's Minister.
- ◆ All records, forms and reports regarding volunteers will remain confidential with limited access by the Pastor and appropriate age-group minister.

Secondary Volunteer

- ◆ Secondary volunteers will not be required to have background checks, but there must be at least two workers (one of whom has been approved with a background check) with any group of children at all times.

Minor Volunteer

- ◆ If a minor desires to be a volunteer working with other minors, his or her parent or guardian must sign the Minor's Disclosure Form in the appropriate place indicating that the parent or guardian knows no reason why the minor should not be allowed to work directly or indirectly with the other minors. Minor volunteers

will only work under the director supervision of a staff person or a primary volunteer, in a position appointed by the children's minister.

ADDITIONAL CONSENT

Approved primary volunteers and employees will be required to sign additional consents for background checks as needed and will have to consent to background checks as needed.

ANNUAL REVIEW

An annual child protection policy review will be held for all employees and volunteers. Anyone unable to attend the review, or is recruited for service between review sessions, will be given a written manual including training information and the review of Child Protection Policy.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF CHURCH POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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

NOTE: All primary volunteers must be 18 years of age or older. Minor volunteers must be 12 years of age or older.

VEHICLE SAFETY SCREENING

Persons who drive First Coast Baptist Church owned or privately-owned vehicles for conducting church business or transporting children on a regular basis must maintain a current valid driver's license, provide proof of insurance and comply with all other church transportation policies. They are required to be at least 25 years of age or older. All drivers must consent to a Department of Motor Vehicle's Background Check.

GENERAL GUIDELINES AND INFORMATION

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, the worker should immediately take appropriate precautions based on the circumstances to protect all children. Nothing contained in any other church policy, procedure or instruction will be construed to relieve the worker having contact with the children/teens from this responsibility.

Students who participate in FCBC ministries must be supervised at all times. A minimum of two fully screened and authorized adults must be present to provide supervision for the duration of all activities or events. At no time may minor volunteers serve independently of adult staff members or volunteers.

“Adequate adult supervision” may vary depending on the size of the group and the activity. For example an outdoor event with 200 tweeners (aged 9-12) may be well supervised by 8-10 adults; however a group the same size of preschool aged children would require 20 or more adult supervisors.

Generally speaking, more supervision is always better. (Teacher to student ratios should remain small for maximum learning.) In all cases, the two person rule is the minimum standard, regardless how many children are present. Beyond that, the following ratios define “adequate” adult supervision:

Birth to 2.5 years	3 children to 1 adult
Preschool (2.5 to 5 years)	6 children to 1 adult
Elementary (5 to 9 years)	10 children to 1 adult
Tweeners (9 to 12 years)	15 children to 1 adult
Youth (12 and older)	25 youth to 1 adult

Note: The adult-to-child ratio should be adjusted in relation to the hazard level and isolation of the activity.

IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM

FCBC has in place an identification system that allows leadership to make sure that the adult who drops off a child is the same adult who picks the child up. All children, kindergarten and below, are required to check in at The Checkpoint.

OBSERVATION OF CHILDREN/TEENS

Church activities for children/youth should be scheduled in areas visible from adjoining areas. Such visibility will be maintained by leaving curtains and blinds open and, whenever possible, by leaving the door to the room open.

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.

CHILDREN/YOUTH PICKUP (following Sunday AM Community Groups)

Teens, grades six (6) through twelve (12), are permitted to leave the area of the church activity at the conclusion of Community without further supervision of the workers unless otherwise instructed by the parent or guardian. All other ages will be kept by their teachers in the children’s area where safe supervision can be continued until the parent or guardian picks them up. (Exception: Children in grade five (5) are permitted to leave their Sunday School class unless otherwise noted by their parent or guardian.)

RELEASE OF CLAIMS

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

INTERACTIONS OUTSIDE OF SCHEDULED MINISTRY ACTIVITIES

As to church sponsored events, FCBC believes it is acceptable for staff members/volunteers and children to meet outside of regularly scheduled program activities only when it is of clear benefit to the student. Receive prior written approval from the parents/guardians of the student and by the supervising pastor, and arrange for the interactions to take place in a public setting.

INAPPROPRIATE OR EXPLICIT MATERIALS

Under no circumstances should students who are entrusted to the care of FCBC be exposed to pornographic or other explicit material of any sort by staff members or volunteers of the church. If a student openly tries to display inappropriate material on any device in his/her possession, the student should be brought to the appropriate ministerial staff member (s). The parents will be contacted immediately.

FIELD TRIPS, SPECIAL EVENTS, AND TRANSPORTATION OF CHILDREN

Properly plan and supervise all church sponsored special events and field trips to ensure both success and safety. When planning a field trip or special event, pre-assess the potential for mishaps to occur and devise appropriate interventions. A PARENTAL CONSENT FORM must be completed for each student.

KEEPING UP WITH THE STUDENTS

Prior to and immediately following movement from one location to another (e.g., room to room when a hallway or outside area is traversed; travel by automobile, bus, train or other mode of transportation) take a headcount to ensure that all students participating in an activity are accounted for. If a student is missing, notify the director of the activity and commence an immediate search of the area. Assign at least two staff members/volunteers to remain with the assembled students. If the missing student is not found directly, the children's minister will immediately contact security and/or law enforcement for assistance in locating the missing student. The children's minister will contact the ministerial staff and the student's parent or guardian.

DIAPER CHANGING/RESTROOM PROCEDURES

- ☐ Two workers must be present when taking a child to the restroom.
- ☐ When assisting a child in the restroom, a female worker is required.
- ☐ Never enter a stall with a child.
- ☐ Always leave doors open so the worker can be observed.
- ☐ Female workers are required to change a child's diaper or pull-up.

MANAGING OVERNIGHT STAYS

There are occasions when overnight stays are appropriate. Take special precautions to ensure that all participants are protected from abuse or allegation of abuse.

FIRST AID TRAINING

It is the goal of the church that a high ratio of children/youth workers maintains current certification in basic first aid and basic CPR (or the equivalent) as required by applicable licensing requirements or other local regulations. A list of all trained personnel that are members of First Coast Baptist Church is kept at the Welcome Center and The Checkpoint.

INTERACTIONS BETWEEN LEADERS AND STUDENTS

VERBAL INTERACTIONS

Staff members/volunteers are to speak with utmost respect toward students at all times.

Under no circumstances may staff members/volunteers discuss topics of an inappropriate sexual nature in the presence of students.

NOTE: Proper voice tone and volume should be used at all times. Unless the safety of a child/teen is in question, the raising of the voice or “YELLING” is not permitted for any reason. This includes trying to regain control of a group.

Prior to any formal presentation with students regarding topics of a sexual nature including encouragement to practice abstinence, both the outline and key points of the presentation and the context of the presentation must be given in writing and approved by the ministerial staff. Prior notice of such discussion will be given to parents/guardians of all potentially involved children.

APPROPRIATE VERBAL INTERACTIONS

- Positively reinforcing children
- Telling clean, positive, light hearted jokes
- Encouraging children
- Praising children

INAPPROPRIATE VERBAL INTERACTIONS

- Calling children derogatory names
- Sharing secrets with children
- Cursing
- Telling offensive, vulgar, or sexually oriented jokes
- Complimenting a child on his or her physique or body development
- Shaming
- Belittling
- Making derogatory remarks, including but not limited to derogatory remarks about the child, the child’s family or ethnic background
- Using harsh language that may frighten, threaten, or humiliate children

PHYSICAL INTERACTIONS

A child’s healthy development is greatly dependent upon physical touch and expressions of affection. In appropriate circumstances, FCBC values healthy, affirming touch. Physical contact must be strictly related to the needs of the student, not the needs of the staff member/volunteer. Ensure that all contact takes place in public areas or in areas that permit monitoring by other adults.

Touch must be age-appropriate and should generally be initiated by the child rather than the worker. Students have the right to decide how much physical contact they have with others, except in rare circumstances when they need medical attention or to provide for the safety of the child or others. FCBC recognizes there are occasions when touch is necessary, occasions such as changing diapers and assisting with bathroom visits of young children.

All workers should hold each other accountable. If it looks like a behavior could be mis-interpreted, please address the issue with the appropriate ministerial staff member.

APPROPRIATE PHYSICAL INTERACTIONS

- ◆ Touch on the back, arm, or shoulder
- ◆ Side hugs
- ◆ Shoulder to shoulder, “temple” or “A-frame” hugs
- ◆ Handshakes
- ◆ High fives – fist bumps
- ◆ Touching hand, face, shoulder, arm
- ◆ Arm around shoulders
- ◆ Holding hands (with young children)
- ◆ Holding infants
- ◆ Sitting beside a child
- ◆ Sitting with a small child on adult’s legs

INAPPROPRIATE PHYSICAL INTERACTIONS

- ◆ Any form of affection that is unwanted by the child or the staff member/volunteer
- ◆ Any physical activity that is, or could be perceived by another to be, sexually stimulating to the adult or the child
- ◆ Full frontal hugs except when holding infants
- ◆ Kissing
- ◆ Touching private areas
- ◆ Showing affection in isolated locations such as closets, remote hallways, staff-only areas, or other private rooms
- ◆ Wrestling with children
- ◆ Piggyback rides
- ◆ Allowing a child to cling to the leg of a staff member/volunteer
- ◆ Holding a child on a staff member/volunteer’s lap so the child is in a straddled position
- ◆ Any type of a massage

MONITORING OF PEER INTERACTIONS

Staff members/volunteers are to encourage students to interact respectfully with each other at all times. Staff members/volunteers should immediately intervene in and bring to an end any inappropriate interaction such as hazing, bullying, harassing, ridiculing or humiliating, intimidating, name-calling, and sexual innuendoes.

CORRECTIVE MEASURES

It is important that ministry leaders/directors, staff members and volunteers make sure that each child clearly understands behavior expectations. It is essential that ministry leaders/directors ensure that each staff member and volunteer understands appropriate and inappropriate corrective measures.

Correction is not punishment. Rather it is an opportunity to teach a child a better way to behave while stopping inappropriate behavior. Discipline and correction should always be handled lovingly and firmly. The person administering discipline or correction should communicate clearly to the student that it is the action that is unacceptable, not the student. It is appropriate to intervene to protect a student from harm or risk of harm. It is never appropriate to use corporal punishment; nor is it appropriate to shake a student, make degrading remarks, or threaten to use corporal punishment with a student. Please separate the student that incurred the refraction from the rest of the student body before addressing any issues.

The staff member/volunteer must remain calm at all times when correcting a child.

When correction is necessary, the following guidelines apply.

APPROPRIATE CORRECTION OPTIONS

- ⇒ Assigning a period of time away from the other children. If the offense is repeated, place the child away from the group in a way that avoids public humiliation for approximately one minute per year of age, not to exceed five minutes.
- ⇒ Calling for assistance in the case of persistent misbehavior, e.g., the ministry director, counselors, and/or pastors.
- ⇒ Intervention to protect a child from harm or risk of being harmed.

INAPPROPRIATE CORRECTION OPTIONS

- ⇒ Using condemning language or tone
- ⇒ Using demeaning descriptive words.
- ⇒ Employing corporal punishment: includes shaking, hitting, spanking, slapping, shoving
- ⇒ Threatening to use corporal punishment
- ⇒ Engaging in name calling, shaming, degrading or derogatory remarks, ostracism
- ⇒ Pulling, pinching, hair- and/or ear pulling
- ⇒ Withholding food/water, or medical care
- ⇒ Using mechanical or unnecessary physical restraints
- ⇒ Isolating a child in a small, confined, and/or dark place
- ⇒ Imposing physical exercise as a punishment
- ⇒ Yelling

REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO ALLEGED CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT

REPORTING POLICY

Any incident of child abuse or neglect toward any child/youth in the church should be reported immediately to a member of the ministerial staff. Do not treat any suspicion as frivolous.

REPORTING OBLIGATION

Anyone who has reasonable cause to believe that a child is being physically abused, sexually abused, or neglected is required to report this information. If a worker suspects abuse, immediately inform the church ministerial leadership. The person making the report should identify the name of the child and any other pertinent information concerning the alleged or suspected abuse or neglect. (Reporting abuse can precipitate severe consequences to a family, so it should never be done casually or thoughtlessly, and certainly not for malicious purposes. At the same time, failing to report abuse can have severe consequences to a child at risk.)

CONFIDENTIALITY

All reports of child abuse or neglect will be held in the absolute confidence. No person will communicate any information concerning the alleged event to any person except as necessary to cooperate with any official investigation. The Senior 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 will the identify of the victim or the accused person be disclosed except as required by law.

INVESTIGATION OF ALLEGED ABUSE OR NEGLECT

No person will 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 will 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 workers of the church will be requested to cooperate with the official investigation.

MINISTERIAL CARE

The ministerial staff will encourage and assist the child and the parents in securing appropriate counseling, care and support. The staff will not deny, minimize, or blame any individual involved in allegations. All persons will act towards the child, the parents and the accused in accordance with the principles of God's Word at all times.

LIAISON WITH THE COMMUNITY

The Senior Pastor, or his appointed agent, will serve as the church's sole access to the media.

MAJOR SIGNS OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT

The following are the major signs of physical and sexual abuse, emotional damage, and neglect. The presence of one of these signs, or even several in combination, may not indicate that abuse has occurred. They may indicate a recent accident, or the presence of a medical condition, emotional illness, or other problem. If a number of these signs occur together or if they reoccur frequently, child abuse or neglect might be the cause.

SIGNS OF NEGLECT

- Poor hygiene, bad odor
- Inappropriate dress for weather
- Left alone, unsupervised for long periods
- Failure to thrive, malnutrition
- Untreated medical condition
- Constant hunger, begging or stealing food
- Extreme willingness to please

SIGNS OF PHYSICAL ABUSE

- Bruises; welts on face, neck, chest, back
- Injuries in the shape of object (belt, cord)
- Unexplained burns on palms, soles of feet, back
- Fractures that are inconsistent with the account of how an injury occurred
- Untreated medical condition
- Extremes in behavior: very aggressive to withdrawn and shy
- Fear of going home
- Fear of parents and/or other adults

SIGNS OF EMOTIONAL DAMAGE

- Low self-esteem
- Self-denigration
- Severe depression
- Aggression
- Withdrawal
- Severe anxiety
- Failure to learn

SIGNS OF SEXUAL ABUSE

- Pain, swelling, or itching in genital area
- Bruises, bleeding, discharge in genital area
- Difficulty walking or sitting, frequent urination, pain
- Stained or bloody underclothing
- Refusal to take part in gym or other exercises.
- Poor peer relationships
- Inappropriate interest in sex
- Aggressive behavior

ACCIDENTS AND ACCIDENT REPORTING

It is the goal of FCBC to prevent/minimize on-campus or off-campus accidents by providing safe, secure environments for our students and by ensuring that adequate supervision is in place for all ministry related classes or activities.

In the event a child or youth *is* injured...

- ⇒ Call 911 if the injury is life threatening. Immediately notify the person (s) directly responsible for the ministry/activity, who will then contact someone on the pastoral staff.
- ⇒ The leader/volunteer who observed the accident should contact the person (s) directly responsible for the ministry/activity. Together, they will assess the injury and decide on a course of action which could include but is not limited to the following:
 - ◆ For minor injuries, scrapes, and bruises, leaders will provide First Aid (Band-Aids, etc.) as appropriate. Parents and caregivers should be involved in a course of action for anything other than minor injuries.
 - ◆ Leaders could enlist the help of on-campus medical personnel. (A medical personnel list is available at both the Welcome Center and The Checkpoint.
- ⇒ An accident report **MUST BE COMPLETED** by the leaders/directors/ministers as soon as possible.
- ⇒ The Children's Minister (or another member of the FCBC pastoral team) should be called to sign off on the report after which they will notify the parents or caregivers.