



**First Baptist Church of Gray**

**Child Protection**

**Policies and Procedures**

**for**

**Preschool Ministry,**

**Children's Ministry**

**and**

**Student Ministry**

**Updated 7/31/13**



## **General Purpose Statement**

**First Baptist Church of Gray** seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for children who participate in our programs and activities. By implementing the below policies and procedures, our goal is to protect the children of **First Baptist Church** from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also protecting our staff and volunteers from false accusations.

## **Definition**

For purposes of this policy, the terms “child” or “children” include all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years.

## **Training**

**First Baptist Church** will provide training on this child protection policy to all childcare workers and will strive to provide opportunities for additional training classes or events on an annual basis. All workers are strongly encouraged to attend these training events.

## **Selection of Workers**

All employees and all volunteers who desire to work with children participating in our programs and activities will be screened. While the screening process is taking place or in the event of a temporary, intermittent or short term (1 week) service, a potential worker may serve under the direct supervision of another screened worker. (Those currently serving when the policy is adopted will not be subjected to the Personal Interview or Reference Checks.) *After five years, screening will be done again randomly on those already serving.* This screening includes the following:

### **A. 90 Day Rule**

No volunteer will be considered for any position involving contact with minors who is not a member of the church (excluding employees) and been involved with **First Baptist Church** for a minimum of ninety (90) days. This time of interaction between our leadership and the applicant allows for better evaluation of the applicant’s suitability for working with children.

### **B. Written Application to Serve**

All persons seeking to work with children must complete and sign a written application to serve, a form supplied by **First Baptist Church**. The application will request basic information from the applicant including previous experience with children, previous church affiliation, reference and employment information, as well as disclosure of any previous criminal convictions. The application will be confidentially maintained on file at the **First Baptist Church**.

### **C. Personal Interview**

Upon completion of the application, an interview may be scheduled to discuss the applicant’s suitability for the position. The interview will be conducted by a ministry staff person, department director, or member of the Nominating Committee.

#### D. Reference Checks

Before an applicant, who is newly involved with **First Baptist Church** is permitted to work with children, at least two of the applicants' references will be checked.

Documentation of the reference checks will be maintained in confidence in a locked file only accessible by paid staff ministers at **First Baptist Church**.

#### E. Criminal Background Check

A national criminal background check is required for all employees (regardless of position) and for the following categories of volunteers:

- Those who will be involved in our Children's and Student Ministry;
- Those who will be overseeing overnight activities with minors;
- Those counseling minors;
- Those involved in one-on-one mentorship of minors;

In order for **First Baptist Church** to run a background check, applicants will be asked to complete and sign the Consent for Criminal Background Check giving **First Baptist Church** permission to run the background check. If an individual declines to give the relevant information or sign the authorization form, the application to work with children will be rejected.

What constitutes a disqualifying offense that will keep an individual from working with children will be determined by **the Gray Policy Department or Jones County Sheriff's Department and/or First Baptist Church** on a case-by-case basis in light of all the surrounding circumstances. Generally, convictions for an offense involving children and/or for offenses involving violence, dishonesty, illegal substances, indecency and any conduct contrary to our mission will preclude someone from being permitted to work with children. Failure to disclose a criminal conviction on the application to serve will also be a disqualifying event. The background check results are confidential and will be maintained on file at the **First Baptist Church**.

#### Teenage Workers

There may be times when it is necessary or desirable for workers (paid or volunteer) who are under age 18 to assist in caring for children. The following guidelines apply to such workers:

- Teenage workers will be screened as above with the exception of the background check.
- Teenage workers must be under the supervision of a screened adult and must never be left alone with children.

#### Two Adult Rule

It is our *goal* that a minimum of two unrelated adult workers will be in attendance at all times when children are being supervised during our programs and activities. Some classes may have only one adult teacher in attendance during the class session. In these instances there should be no fewer than two children with the adult teacher and doors that do not have windows must be left open. We do not allow minors to be alone with one adult on our premises or in any sponsored activity unless in a counseling situation in which case the door must have a window or be left open and another adult must be in the building.

## **Responding to Allegations of Child Abuse**

For purposes of this policy, “child abuse” is any action (or lack of action) which endangers or harms a child’s physical, psychological or emotional health and development. Child abuse occurs in different ways and includes the following:

- **Physical abuse** – any physical injury to a child which is not accidental, such as beating, shaking, burns, and biting.
- **Emotional abuse** – emotional injury when the child is not nurtured or provided with love and security, such as an environment of constant criticism, belittling and persistent teasing.
- **Sexual abuse** – any sexual activity between a child and an adult or between a child and another child at least four years older than the victim, including activities such as fondling, exhibitionism, intercourse, incest, and pornography.
- **Neglect** – depriving a child of their essential needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter, and medical care.

As childcare workers, we may become aware of or suspect abuse or neglect of the children under our care. In the event that a worker involved in the care of children at **First Baptist Church** becomes aware of suspected abuse or neglect of a child, the staff minister or director responsible for that ministry should be notified immediately for further action including reporting to authorities as may be mandated by state law.

In the event that an incident of abuse or neglect is alleged to have occurred at **First Baptist Church** or during other sponsored programs or activities, the following procedure shall be followed by the ministry staff:

1. The parent or guardian of the child will be notified.
2. The person alleged to be the perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct will immediately be placed on leave from working with children pending an investigation.
3. We will comply with the state’s requirements regarding mandatory reporting of abuse as the law then exists.
4. Our insurance company will be notified, and we will complete an incident report.
5. We will cooperate with any investigation of the incident by state or local authorities. In the event there is no investigation of the incident by state or local authorities, a team comprised of members of **First Baptist Church of Gray** may be formed to review the circumstances of the incident. The team should act only in consultation with our insurance company and/or attorney.
6. Any worker who is found guilty of the alleged abuse or misconduct will be removed from their position with children.
7. **The Pastor or Chairman of Deacons** will be the church’s spokesperson to the media concerning incidents of abuse or neglect, unless he is alleged to be involved. All other workers should refrain from speaking to the media.
8. A pastoral visit will be arranged for those who desire it.

### **Check-in/Check-out Procedure**

For children in the Preschool and Children's Ministry (infants through 6<sup>th</sup> grade), a security check-in/check-out procedure will be followed. Each child will be issued a name badge at the check in station and the accompanying parent/guardian will receive a badge with a matching code that corresponds to the one on the child's badge. Children will only be released to a guardian that is over 16 and who presents the matching badge.

### **Discipline Policy**

It is the policy of **First Baptist Church** not to administer corporal punishment, even if parents have suggested or given permission for it. There should be no spanking, grabbing, hitting, or other physical discipline of children. Workers should consult with the staff minister or director responsible for that ministry if assistance is needed with disciplinary issues.

### **Restroom Guidelines**

Children five years of age and younger should utilize a classroom bathroom, if one is available. If a classroom bathroom is not available, workers should escort a group of children to the hallway bathroom. A worker should never take a child to the bathroom alone. The workers should check the bathroom first to make sure that it is empty and then allow the children inside. The workers should then remain outside the bathroom door and escort the children back to the classroom. If a child is taking longer than seems necessary, a worker should open the bathroom door and call the child's name. If a child requires assistance, a worker should prop open the bathroom door and leave the stall door open while assisting the child.

For the protection of all, workers should *never* be alone with a child in a bathroom with the door closed and never be in a closed bathroom stall with a child. Parents are strongly encouraged to have their children visit the bathroom prior to each class.

### **Medications Policy**

It is the policy of **First Baptist Church** not to administer either prescription or non-prescription medications to children under our care. Medications should be administered by a parent at home. Parents are reminded of our wellness policy below.

Exceptions to the medications policy may be granted to parents of children with potentially life-threatening conditions (such as asthma or severe allergic reactions) or on overnight activities. In such cases both the parents and the volunteer must sign a medication release form explaining the need for and dosage instructions for the medication.

## **Wellness Policy**

It is our desire to provide a healthy and safe environment for all of the children at **First Baptist Church**. Parents are encouraged to be considerate of other children when deciding whether to place a child under our care. In general, children with the following symptoms should NOT be dropped off:

- Fever, diarrhea, or vomiting within the last 48 hours
- Non-clear nasal discharge
- Discharge from eyes
- Eye or skin infections
- Questionable rash/skin infections
- Excessive coughing
- Other symptoms of communicable or infectious disease

Children who are observed by our workers to be ill will be separated from other children and the parent or guardian will be contacted to request that the child be picked up.

If your child has allergies and symptoms that appear as a cold but is not contagious please inform the teacher.

Knowledge by the staff of the HIV virus, AIDS, Hepatitis, or Tuberculosis disease in a child or worker will be kept confidential and the director of that ministry shall act in an advisory manner with respect to on-going care of any child with the HIV virus or AIDS disease to:

- Review the case and the involved classroom
- Make recommendations for additional precautions or staffing requirements

## **Accidental Injuries to Children**

In the event that a child is injured while under our care, the following steps should be followed:

1. For minor injuries, scrapes, and bruises, workers will provide First Aid (Band-Aids, etc.) as appropriate and will notify the child's parent or guardian of the injury at the time the child is picked up from our care.
2. For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple First Aid, the parent and/or guardian will immediately be summoned in addition to the worker's supervisor. If warranted by circumstances, an ambulance will be called.
3. Once the child has received appropriate medical attention, an incident report will be completed. In the case of a minor injury the report should be signed by the ministry director and given to the parent when they pick up their child. In the case of a more serious injury requiring a medical professional the report will be signed by the ministry director and copied. One copy will remain on file at **First Baptist Church** and the other will be given to the parent.



## *Leadership Commitment*

I understand that my role as a leader in the church will give me greater influence with those around me which requires a greater responsibility to live by Biblical standards.

I will be supportive of church leadership and church policy. Any questions or concerns that I have related to leadership or policy issues will be handled in private with the appropriate leaders.

I will faithfully attend church services.

I will maintain a personal, daily Bible study and prayer time.

I will faithfully, cheerfully, and consistently support the ministry of First Baptist Church with my time, talent and treasure.

I will faithfully attend leadership meetings.

If I am unable to fulfill my duties in a given week due to travel, illness, or other reason, I will notify the appropriate person in my ministry in as timely a manner as possible so that my leadership position will not go unfilled during my absence.

I will keep in confidence those things which should not be discussed with others.

I will abstain from questionable lifestyle practices which might harm my Christian witness and testimony.

I will maintain high Christian standards in my conduct, character, and conversation. This means that I will carefully examine my personal habits and activities in order to make sure that my life is consistent with the things that we are teaching. For example, I will be selective as far as dress, music, TV programs, movies, etc., keeping in mind that my position of service requires me to be above reproach and to uphold an outstanding Christian testimony.

# *Statement of Faith*

It is vital for leaders in our church to agree on important matters of faith and doctrine. All leaders are expected to serve and minister in accordance with this Statement of Faith. Please read it carefully.

## **We Believe...**

**I. The Bible is the Word of God** - In accordance with II Timothy 3:16 and II Peter 1:21, the Bible was written by men under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit as a supernatural revelation of God. The Scriptures as originally given are “God-breathed” and contain no mixture of error.

**II. Salvation is by Grace Alone** - In accordance with Ephesians 2:8-9, we are saved by God’s grace at the point of personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Man is sinful and does not have the ability to save himself. Good works do not contribute to salvation. However, in accordance with James 2:14-17, our faith will be evidenced by good works, obedience, and the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).

**III. The Believer is Eternally Secure** - In accordance with John 10:27-29 and Romans 8:38-39, individuals who have been truly saved can never lose their salvation. When saved people sin, their fellowship with God is interrupted, but never broken (I John 1:9). Likewise, those who do not trust Christ in this lifetime will spend eternity in hell (Revelation 21:8).

**IV. In the Priesthood of the Believer** - In accordance with I John 2:1 and Hebrews 4:14-16, Christ Himself is our Advocate and High Priest. We have no need for human intermediaries because the blood of Christ has made each believer a child in God’s own family. Therefore, we have direct access to God in confession, prayer, worship, and through His Word.

**V. Baptism is by Immersion for the Believer** - In accordance with Matthew 28:19-20 and Romans 6:3-5, baptism is done in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is not a means of salvation, but it is the believer’s symbolic identification with the death and resurrection of Christ. True baptism is by immersion as an act of obedience, and it is reserved for persons who personally express faith in Christ as Savior and Lord.

**VI. Church Government is Congregational** - In accordance with Colossians 1:18 and Acts 13 and 15, Christ is the Head of the church. Under His direction, **First Baptist Church of Gray** is Pastor-led, Deacon-served, Committee-functioned, and Congregationally-approved. The congregation, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, is the most basic unit of church government.

# *Application to Serve*



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

The following information will be confidential.

## *General Information*

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

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_ Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Status:

Full time

Homemaker

Retired

Part time

Student

Marital Status:

Married

Divorced

Single

Widowed

## *Personal and Spiritual History*

Write a brief testimony about how you became a Christian.

How long have you attended First Baptist Church? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a member?

Yes

No

List the dates and activities of other ministry experiences at First Baptist or at a previous church and the reasons for ending that ministry.

Date Started	Church Name and Location	Reference at Church	Ministry/Activity	Dated Ended	Reason for ending this ministry

***Lifestyle Questions***

In the last five years, have you ever used illegal drugs or abused prescription drugs?  
If yes, please describe.  Yes  No

Have you ever been arrested, charged or convicted of a felony?  
If yes, please describe.  Yes  No

Have you ever been charged or convicted of child abuse, sexual abuse or domestic violence?  
If yes, please describe.  Yes  No

I would like to talk to a minister regarding one of these, or another policy, please contact me.  
\_\_\_\_\_

***References***

Please provide character references:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship to Applicant \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship to Applicant \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship to Applicant \_\_\_\_\_

By completing this application I agree that I have read and will serve within the parameters of the Child Protection Policies and Procedures, the Leadership Commitment, and the Statement of Faith. I affirm that, to the best of my knowledge, the information on this application is correct and I authorize any reference listed on this application to supply information that may impact my service at First Baptist Church.

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

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

Office Use Only

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Date Applied \_\_\_\_\_ Background Check Completed \_\_\_\_\_

References checked \_\_\_\_\_ Ministry Staff Approval \_\_\_\_\_



