

# **Child Safety Practices and Policies**



**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH**

*Amarillo*

## Child Safety Practices and Policies

Updated 4/27/23

Thank you for your interest in serving through First Baptist Church! As we work to carry out the Great Commission, First Baptist Church engages in the following procedures to ensure the safety of our children:

### **Volunteers**

1. Local, state and national background checks are completed on all volunteers and paid employees who work with preschoolers, children, and/or students. Renewals are done every 5 years.
2. Volunteer workers must be members of First Baptist Church for six months before being eligible to serve in Preschool, Children's and/or Student ministries. Exceptions may be made only after reference checks are completed.
3. New volunteers must complete an application and give three references. Staff will contact given references before volunteer is approved.
4. When enlisted, employees and volunteers will begin a six-month probation period, and will be observed by staff and other volunteer leaders.
5. First Baptist Church will present ministry volunteers for church approval at regular business meetings (quarterly or annually).
6. We will make available a formal written child protection policy and packet of materials to employees and volunteers. Packets will contain:
  - a. Child Safety Application (including three references, areas of strength, ministry desires, understanding of six-month probation, etc.)
  - b. A QR code/url link to a copy of child protection policies
  - c. Details on recognizing symptoms of sexual or physical abuse, and how to report suspected abuse
  - d. Background consent form (if 18 or older)
  - e. Appendix glossary giving Texas Family Code definitions of abuse, neglect, and sexual abuse
7. Each age-group ministry will collect their respective employee and volunteer applications, training signature forms, and any other correspondence that becomes a part of the child protection process. A master file will be kept in the Education Ministry office.
8. Periodic training will be provided for volunteers:
  - a. An overview of our child safety policies
  - b. Recognizing symptoms of sexual or physical abuse
  - c. Reporting suspected abuse

### **Classrooms**

1. Two workers are scheduled for each room for all Preschool, Children's and Student Ministry activities and events.
2. Through-campus traffic access during major Children's and Preschool activities will be limited.
3. All preschoolers are required to wear a security tag; parents must use our security authorization system to pick up children.
4. Preschoolers are registered at each classroom door for all activities and events.
5. Children grades 1-3 must be picked up from church classrooms only by a parent or designated older sibling (16 years or older).
6. Fire drills are conducted periodically for the safety and well-being of our children and staff.
7. Parents should not drop off children in rooms or hallways where workers are not present.

## **General Ministry**

1. A safety team is on-site for many major church activities.
2. A screening/interview process is conducted by a safety team member and staff with any known sex/criminal offenders. Limited access to certain areas of the church building will be set if permission is given to attend.

## **Transportation**

1. Our insurance company screens van/bus driver's records on a regular basis.
  - a. A copy of a valid driver's license must be provided to the business office prior to van/bus use.
2. Regarding church transportation: two adults riding in each van is desired. If two adults are not available, drivers will try to ensure that the first and last riders are multiples, not single persons. Drivers should contact parents and receive permission if transporting only one passenger under the age of 18 years.
3. We encourage volunteer drivers to accompany riders to their Sunday School rooms, pick them up from Sunday School rooms, and sit with them during worship services.
4. For trips away from the FBC building involving adults and persons under 18 years of age:
  - a. All room assignments are same-gender, with the exception of a family-only room.
  - b. An adult will not share a bed with any person under 18 years of age, unless it is a family member of the same gender.
  - c. One adult and one person under the age of 18 will not share a room. There must be at least three persons in each room.
  - d. If possible, adults will lodge in an adjoining room next to persons under the age of 18 years.

## **Response to Allegations of Abuse**

All allegations of child abuse are taken seriously and acted upon immediately:

1. Document everything that is observed and reported.
2. All paid and volunteer workers should immediately report concerns/suspicious to the appropriate supervisor.
3. If appropriate, notify the proper authorities.
4. All situations are handled discreetly with due respect for privacy and confidentiality.

## Appendix Glossary

Abuse – From Section 34.012 of the Texas Family Code:

1. The following acts or omissions by a person responsible for a child's care, custody, or welfare:
  - a. Mental or emotional injury to a child that results in an observable and material impairment in the child's growth development, or psychological functioning.
  - b. Causing or permitting the child to be in a situation in which the child sustains a mental or emotional injury that results in an observable and material impairment in the child's growth, development, or psychological functioning.
  - c. Physical injury that results in substantial harm to the child, or the genuine threat of substantial harm from physical injury to the child, including an injury that is at variance with the history or explanation given and excluding an accident or reasonable discipline by a parent, guardian, or managing or possessory conservator, that does not expose the child to substantial risk of harm.

Neglect – as reflected in Section 34.012 of the Texas Family Code:

1. Leaving a child in a situation where the child would be exposed to a substantial risk of harm without arranging for necessary care for the child.
2. The following acts or omissions by a person responsible for a child's care, custody, or welfare:
  - a. Placing the child in or failing to remove the child from a situation that a reasonable person would realize requires judgement or actions beyond the child's level of maturity, physical condition, or mental abilities and that results in bodily injury or a substantial risk of immediate harm to the child;
  - b. Failing to seek, obtain, or follow through with medical care for the child, with the failure resulting in or presenting a substantial risk of death, disfigurement, or bodily injury or an observable and material impairment to the child's growth, development, or functioning; or
  - c. Failing to provide the child with food, clothing, or shelter necessary to sustain the child's life or health.

Sexual Abuse – From Section 34.012 of the Texas Family Code:

1. Sexual contact, sexual intercourse, or sexual conduct, as defined by Section 43.01, Penal Code; sexual penetration with a foreign object; incest; sexual assault; or sodomy inflicted on, shown to, or intentionally practiced in the child's presence if the child is present only to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of any person.
2. Failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual contact, sexual intercourse, or sexual conduct, as defined by Section 43.01, Penal Code.
3. Compelling or encouraging a child to engage in sexual conduct as defined by Section 43.01, Penal Code.
4. Causing, permitting, encouraging, engaging in, or allowing the photographing, filming, or depicting of the child if the person knew or should have known that the resulting photograph, film, or depiction of the child is obscene (as define by the Penal Code) or pornographic.