



# First Baptist Church Children & Student Safety Policies

Dear Children's Volunteer or Staff Member,

Welcome to First Baptist Church!

At First Baptist Church, we take our responsibility to care for children very seriously. These guidelines are intended to facilitate a safe and nurturing environment in which children can grow in relationship with Jesus Christ.

The pages of this handbook provide a general overview of procedures and guidelines for volunteers and staff members. Our policies are intended to create a safe environment for children, protecting children, you, and the mission of First Baptist Church. The following procedures have been adopted and will be diligently enforced.

After you have carefully read this policy manual in full, please sign and return the agreement form located on the last page.

Sincerely,



# **First Baptist Church**

## **Policies & Procedures for**

### **Children's Ministry**

#### Contents:

- Overview of Safety System  
3
- Child Safety Policy  
4
- Reporting Abuse or Suspicions of Abuse  
5
- Safety Committee  
6
- Children's Ministry Staff Monitoring Plan  
7
- Building Safety  
8
- Worker to Child Ratio  
8
- Discipline  
9
- Bathroom Supervision and Nursery Guidelines  
10
- Intoxicants  
11
- Medication  
11
- Nudity  
11
- One-to-One Interaction with Children  
12
- Transportation  
12
- Parental Contact  
12
- Parental Involvement  
12
- Physical Contact  
13

- Sexually Oriented Conversations  
13
- Sexually Oriented Materials  
13
- Sleeping Arrangements  
14
- Tobacco Use  
14
- Verbal Interactions  
15
- Release of Children  
15
- Check-In System  
16
- Statement of Acknowledgement and Agreement  
17

## **Overview of First Baptist Church Safety System**

Because we desire to protect children involved in our ministry, First Baptist Church requires all staff members and volunteers working with children or students to complete **THREE SAFETY STEPS** before ministry work or volunteer placements begin.

### **STEP ONE: Screening Process/Criminal Background Check:**

Staff members and volunteers working or serving with children or students are required to complete First Baptist Church's Screening Process, which includes:

- Criminal Background Check First Baptist Church requires that all staff members and volunteers working or volunteering in children's or students' activities undergo a criminal background check. Depending upon the ministry position, differing levels or intensity of criminal background check may be required.
- an Employment Application (employees only);
- a Volunteer Information Form (employees and volunteers);
- a face-to-face interview (employees and volunteers); and
- references to be checked (employees and volunteers)

**Any information indicating a candidate poses a threat to others with history of physical or sexual abuse directed against another person will result in the immediate removal of the individual from consideration for ministry in the children or students' areas. Any willful falsifying of information for application purposes will result in the immediate removal of the candidate from consideration, as well.**

### **Procedure for Failure of Background Check**

- Send the candidate a letter stating that:
  1. Their background check contained data that if true may prevent the church from allowing them to volunteer.
  2. Contains the name, address, and telephone number of the company that provided the background check,
  3. Informs the candidate that while the company provided the background check, they have no knowledge as to why the church may not be able to allow them to volunteer,
  4. Provides a copy of the background check report,
  5. Includes a Statement of Rights compliant with the Fair Credit Reporting Act and implementing regulations, and
  6. Gives the candidate 10 days to contest or explain the information in the background check.
- If the candidate contests any information in the report, the company that provided the background check has 30 days to investigate the data. If they cannot verify the data within 30 days, they must remove it from the report.
- If the candidate does not contest the information in the report, admits the truth of it, or if the company verifies the data, send the candidate another letter stating that:

1. Their background check contained data that prevents the church from allowing them to volunteer,
2. Contains the name, address, and telephone number of the company that provided the background check,
3. Informs the candidate that while the company provided the background check, they have no knowledge as to why the church is denying the candidate the ability to volunteer,
4. Provides a copy of the background check report, and
5. Includes a Statement of Rights compliant with the Fair Credit Reporting Act and implementing regulations.

## **STEP TWO: 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 THREE: Sexual Abuse Awareness Training**

First Baptist Church 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 First Baptist Church 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, First Baptist Church requires all staff members and volunteers to complete sexual abuse awareness training. This training will be renewed every two years.

**\*A volunteer must attend First Baptist Church for six months, become a member and have completed the above safety steps before being eligible to serve in a leader position providing ministry services to children or students. A person must have completed a background check, abuse awareness training and have a completed volunteer information form before becoming a helper or volunteer or serving in any role other than a leader position.**

## **Child Safety Policy**

### **ABUSE TOLERANCE**

First Baptist Church has a **zero tolerance for abuse** in ministry programs and ministry activities. It is the responsibility of every staff member and volunteer at First Baptist Church to act in the best interest of all children in every program.

In the event a staff member or volunteer observes any inappropriate behaviors (i.e. policy violations, neglectful supervision, poor role-modeling, etc.) or suspected abuse or neglect (physical, emotional, or sexual) it is that individual’s responsibility to immediately report their observations to an immediate supervisor, the Children’s Ministry Director, Student Pastor or the Senior Pastor.

## **REPORTING SUSPICIOUS OR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS**

First Baptist Church is committed to providing a safe, secure environment for children and their families. To this end, any report of inappropriate behaviors or suspicions of abuse or neglect will be taken seriously and will be reported, in accordance with this policy and state law, to Child Protective Services, or another appropriate agency.

Because sexual abusers ‘groom’ children for abuse, it is possible a staff member or volunteer may witness behavior intended to ‘groom’ a child for sexual abuse. Staff members and volunteers are asked to report ‘grooming’ behavior, policy violations, or any suspicious behaviors to an immediate supervisor, the Children’s Ministry Director, Student Pastor or the Senior Pastor.

## **ENFORCEMENT OF POLICIES**

First Baptist Church staff members and volunteers who supervise other staff members or volunteers are charged with the diligent enforcement of all Church policies. Violations of these policies are grounds for immediate dismissal, disciplinary action, or reassignment from Children’s/Student’s Ministry positions for both volunteers and staff members. Final decisions related to policy violations will be the responsibility of the Senior Pastor and Personnel Committee.

## **Reporting Abuse or Suspicions of Abuse**

### **REPORTING VIOLATION OF POLICY**

All questions or concerns related to inappropriate, suspicious, or suspected grooming behavior should be directed to an immediate supervisor in the ministry area, the Children’s Minister, or the Senior Pastor.

### **CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATION**

Any person accused of committing a prohibited act or any act considered by the church to be harmful to a child will be immediately suspended from participation in Children’s/Student Ministry. This suspension will continue during any investigation by law enforcement or Child Protective agencies.

Any person found to have violated this policy may be prohibited from future participation as a staff member or volunteer in all activities and programming involving children or students at First Baptist Church. If the person is an employee, such conduct may also result in termination of employment from First Baptist Church.

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 participation in any future activities involving children or students at First Baptist Church.

### **REPORTING SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES**

Any person who works or volunteers with any other person under the age of eighteen (18) years of age that has a reasonable suspicion that a person in their care has been subjected to physical or sexual abuse, abandonment, or other mistreatment must notify the Student Pastor or Children’s Ministry Director and report the incident to the Arkansas Child Abuse Hotline at (800)482-5964 or TDD at (800)843-5349. The Student Pastor or Children’s Ministry

Director will assist the reporting person in filling out an incident form. The Student Pastor or Children's Ministry Director will notify the Senior Pastor, and the Senior Pastor will inform the church's attorney for further advice and assistance. *Failure to report suspected child abuse may be a criminal offense.* Any person who works or volunteers with any other person under the age of eighteen (18) years of age must undergo mandated reporter and child abuse prevention training every two years.

Interviewing or interrogating a child is a very complex process that requires special training. As such, under no circumstances will any person who works or volunteers with any person under the age of eighteen (18) years of age who suspects that person has been subjected to physical or sexual abuse, abandonment, or other mistreatment interrogate, interview, or otherwise question the child.

## **RESPONSE TO REPORT OF ABUSE**

First Baptist Church Leadership will take appropriate action on behalf of the church when a report of abuse occurs. All ministry leaders, employees, and volunteers will cooperate fully with any law enforcement or governmental agency that may be investigating allegations of injury, abuse, or molestation in connection with the activities of First Baptist Church. Legal counsel will be contacted for advice and guidance within 24 hours of the notice of possible abuse or molestation in connection to our church. Decisions concerning the church's response to the allegations will be made by the Senior Pastor, staff, and ministry leaders in accordance with such legal advice.

## **First Baptist Church Safety Committee**

### **SAFETY COMMITTEE**

Recognizing the importance of providing and maintaining a safe environment for children, First Baptist Church will appoint and maintain a Safety Committee on each campus, which will meet twice per year.

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

The purpose of the Safety Committee is to enable First Baptist Church Children's and Student Ministries to carry out appropriate ministry activities while safeguarding program participants against emotional, physical or sexual abuse.

### **COMPOSITION**

The Safety Committee on each campus will be comprised of the following members:

1. Senior Pastor
2. Children's Director,
3. Student Minister, and
4. One person from Church Safety Team, One person from Youth Leadership Team and One person from Children's Committee.



## **MEETINGS**

The Senior Pastor will chair the meeting of the Safety Committee to discuss risk management practices and updates. The Safety Committee will also meet on an emergency basis upon the recommendation of a member or following the report of any incident or allegation.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Safety Committee will be charged with the following duties:

1. Applying existing First Baptist Church policies and procedures related to children's safety and risk management issues.
2. Monitoring all Children's/Student Ministry programs for ongoing compliance with safety policies.
3. Making recommendations to the First Baptist Church regarding safety issues.

## **Children's Ministry/Student 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. **Children's Ministry Director/Student Pastor** conducts an unscheduled observation at least once each week for programs that occur weekly.
2. **Personnel Committee** conducts written and verbal evaluations for individuals in paid staff positions in accordance to First Baptist Church Personnel Manual.
3. **Children's Ministry Director/Student Pastor** are responsible to make sure all staff and volunteers participate in abuse awareness training and adherence to risk management procedures.
4. **Senior Pastor** conducts an unscheduled observation of a Children's Ministry/Student Ministry programs at least once each quarter.
5. **The Senior Pastor** meets with the Children's Ministry Director/Student Pastor at least once monthly during weekly staff meeting to discuss Children's/Student Ministry, including safety training and procedures.

## **BUILDING SAFETY**

The Children's Minister/Student Pastor will be responsible for ensuring that the Children's Area is monitored during Sunday classes or programming. This will include unobserved monitoring of staff members, volunteers and children in children's classrooms.

No child/student will ever be left unsupervised in the building 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/student, that staff member or volunteer will take the child/student to a room or building occupied by others, or to a location easily observed by others. (Example: if a child/student 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.) (Example: If a student desires additional conversation or counsel with a staff member or volunteer after regular programming has concluded, move to an adjoining room where other staff members or volunteers are present, or into a public space.)

After every programming event, 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/STUDENT RATIOS**

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

<b>Program</b>	<b>Workers</b>	<b>Children</b>
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

**Accordingly, the following ratios will be observed for Student Ministry activities and programs:**

For groups up to and including 29 students, there will be at least 2 staff members or volunteers supervising. For groups larger than 30 students, there will be at least 3 staff members or volunteers supervising.

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/Student Pastor. Supervisors will make diligent efforts to find substitute workers to immediately bring worker to children ratios into compliance with Church policy.

## **DISCIPLINE CHILDREN'S MINISTRY**

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 before physically intervening. With younger children some physical redirection may be necessary (for example, removing a toy from the hands of a child that is hitting another).
- 2) If the behavior does not cease, remove or direct the child away from the group for a brief separation from where the group is meeting (avoid being alone with the child).
- 3) Provide the child with a simple, understandable reason for the brief separation, 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 the brief separation.
- 4) Follow the rule of thumb that a brief separation is ineffective if it lasts longer than one minute for every year of the child's life (3 years old, 3 minutes).
- 5) Monitor the child through the entire separation without giving your undivided attention. Assure the child once he or she has completed the separation and tell them that they may rejoin the group. Remind them that repeating their initial behavior will result in further separation or contact with parents.

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

## **DISCIPLINE STUDENT MINISTRY**

It is the policy of First Baptist Church that staff members and volunteers are prohibited from using physical discipline in any way for behavior management of children or students. **No form of physical discipline is acceptable.** This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force as retaliation or correction or inappropriate behaviors by students. If a student is unruly or fails to comply with verbal warnings or instructions from staff/volunteers, the student's parent will be contacted to pick up the student. In the event of a fight or physical altercation, staff members will verbally redirect students involved and will try to avoid physical intervention. Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported immediately to parents and the Student Pastor.

## **BATHROOM SUPERVISION AND NURSERY GUIDELINES**

### **Nursery Children**

Because nursery children may require complete assistance with their bathroom activities, all staff members and volunteers (must be 14 years of age or older) 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. (18 years of age or older)
- 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 leaving children in 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.
- 7) Volunteers will check the child's diaper periodically and change if needed before parents are due to pick up their child.

#### **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. (18 years of age or older)
- 3) When children are taken into bathrooms the door will be left partially open.
- 4) Young children will never be left unattended in 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 leaving 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.
- 8) After the age of 4, parents or legal guardians will change all accidents for their children.

### **Nursery Volunteers**

- 1) At least 2 adults (18 years of age or older) must be in the room during a nursery session. They must have completed the volunteer process (passed a background check, sexual abuse awareness training, and completed the application process). Students 14 years of age or older may serve as a helper. Students will not be allowed to change diapers or toilet train. Only adults 18 years of age and older.
- 2) Workers must arrive 15 before a scheduled activity and keep watch over those in their care until all are picked up by authorized persons.
- 3) An attendant will check the child in and will give the parent two tags: one for the child, and one for the parent (see check in procedures in Child Safety policy). The attendant will make sure the tag is secured to the child's back. The parent can hand their child to the nursery volunteers. If the child appears hesitant to go to the nursery

volunteer and needs to be reassured, please let the parent do so. If the child cries take them in to find a toy. Normally the crying will stop. If not and crying goes on longer than 20 minutes, please text the parent. The number will be found on the child's tag on their back.

4) When the parent gives the volunteer a child's diaper bag, cup, or other belongings please use labels provided. This way during shift changes other volunteers can find child's belongings.

5) Please see child safety policy about diapering and toilet training procedures. The volunteer must wear gloves (these are provided on the changing station when changing a child.) This is for the child's and volunteer's safety. Please change gloves each time you change a child. Then wash hands when finished with all diaper changes. Each child's diaper or pull-up shall be checked periodically, and child should have a clean diaper or pull-up when leaving the nurse.

### **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 get 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 students, or while working with or supervising children/students during any First Baptist Church program or activity.

### **MEDICATION**

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

## **ONE-TO-ONE INTERACTIONS WITH STUDENTS**

First Baptist Church recognizes that meeting the emotional needs of students may occasionally require staff member and volunteers to minister to them on an individual basis. Staff Members and volunteers should observe the following guidelines when interacting with students.

### **Individual Meetings**

Staff members and volunteers should conduct one-to-one meetings with an individual student at a time when others are present and where interactions can be easily observed, unless prior approval is obtained from the Student Minister.

Before a one-to-one meeting will occur, the student staff member must obtain permission from the parents of the student and inform another staff member of the meeting prior to the meeting taking place.

## **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. 2 Adult Rule Applies – there should always be an additional adult in the vehicle.
2. Children/student should be transported directly to their destination. Unauthorized stops to a non-public place should be avoided.
3. Staff members and volunteers should avoid physical contact with children while in vehicles.
4. No cell phones may be utilized by the driver.
5. No drivers under age 25 may drive Church-owned or rented vehicles.

## **PARENTAL CONTACT**

Parents who leave a child in the care of First Baptist Church 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.

## **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

Parents have an open invitation to observe all programs and activities in which their child/student 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.

## **PHYSICAL CONTACT**

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

1. Hugging, pats on the back and other forms of appropriate physical affection between staff members or volunteers and children/students are important for children's/student's development and are generally suitable in the church setting.
2. Inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection are forbidden.
3. Physical contact should be for the benefit of the child/student, 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/students or Children's/Student 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/Student Ministry must always foster trust. Personal conduct must be above reproach.
6. Do not force physical contact, touch or affection on a reluctant child/student. A child's/student preference not to be touched must be respected.
7. Staff members and volunteers are responsible for protecting children/students under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by others.
8. Any inappropriate behavior or suspected abuse will be reported. (See Page 6)

### **SEXUALLY ORIENTED CONVERSATIONS**

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from engaging in any inappropriate sexually oriented conversations with children/students and are not permitted to discuss any inappropriate or explicit information about their own personal relationships, dating or sexual activities with any child/student in the program. If any group seeks to teach a lesson that contains any sexually oriented conversations, parental permission must first be obtained.

### **SEXUALLY ORIENTED MATERIALS**

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

### **SLEEPING ARRANGEMENTS**

It is anticipated that certain Children's/Student Ministry activities may occasionally require that overnight sleeping arrangements be made for students and staff members and

volunteers (i.e. camp, lock-ins, mission trips, ski trips, etc.). In the event an activity requires sleeping arrangements, staff members and volunteers will strictly observe the following rules:

1. The 2-adult rule must be followed; a single child/student should not be alone with a staff member or volunteer.
2. All adult leaders must have previously completed the Church's screening and training process.
3. Overnight sleeping arrangements must be submitted in writing to and approved by the Children/Student Minister prior to the activity.
4. As long as any students are awake, one trip leader must be awake and monitoring students to ensure safe behavior.
5. Leaders should check with parents and use good judgment regarding PG or PG-13 movies. No R-rated movies are permitted.
6. Appropriately modest sleeping attire must be worn; both tops and bottoms.
7. In the event of a sleepover on campus that involves both boys and girls, boys and girls must sleep in separate rooms, properly supervised by leaders of the same gender.
8. Staff members and volunteers will monitor sleeping students by periodically conducting visual bed checks to ensure that sleeping students remain in designated sleeping places. During bed checks, staff members and volunteers should never physically touch a child/student.
9. Whenever possible, at least one staff member or volunteer will sleep in the same room (but not same bed) as students, or in an adjoining room with the door between the rooms kept open.
10. In the event that overnight arrangements do not include standard beds, each staff member, volunteer, and student will use single sleeping bags or blankets. In these instances, a "one-person-to-one bag or blanket" rule will be observed.

### **TOBACCO USE**

First Baptist Church requires staff members and volunteers to abstain from the use or possession of tobacco, vaping products in or on church property, while in the presence of children/students or their parents, or during First Baptist Church activities or programs. First Baptist Church property is tobacco free for staff and volunteers.

### **VERBAL INTERACTIONS**

Verbal interactions between staff members or volunteers and children/students 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/students.

To this end, staff members and volunteers should not talk to children/students 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/students.

### **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/student, they should immediately locate or contact their immediate supervisor or the Children's/Student Minister before releasing the child.

## **Policies and Procedures**

## Check-In System

At First Baptist Pea Ridge we want a safe experience for parents and children. We have a check in and check out procedure that we follow to ensure that children are given back to parents after nursery, Sunday morning, and Wednesday night activities. There will be a check in attendant to help parents check in their child. **If a child is attending Children's Church, Sunday School, or Wednesday night activities they must be checked into Planning Center.**

### Check in:

1. **For members and regular attenders**, an attendant will check the child into "Planning Center Check- Ins." The parent and child will receive a tag from the attendant. The child's tag will have their name, code, instructions for volunteers, allergies, parents name, and cell phone number. The attendant will make sure the child's tag is secured to the child's back before they leave the check in area. The parent will receive one pick-up tag with a code. If the parent has multiple children, their code will be the same for each child in the household.

2. For a **first-time visitor**, a check in attendant will give parents a visitor card to fill out. **Make sure the parents write names, address, cell phone numbers, approved people for child's pick up, and names and birthdates of all children in their household. (The cell phone number is especially important to ensure we can text the parent if there is a problem.)** The attendant will print a "temporary one-time guest" tag for the parent and child. The child's visitor tag will have their name, code, instructions for volunteers, allergies, parents name, and cell phone number. The attendant will make sure the tag is secured to the child's back before they leave the check in area. The parents will receive one tag with pick up code. If the parent has multiple children, their code will be the same for each child in the household. **After the 3<sup>rd</sup> visit the Children's Director will put the family in the system as a regular attender household.**

### Check-out:

When a parent comes to pick up their child, they will give their tag to the volunteer. The volunteer will call the child's name and make sure the codes match the volunteer will remove the tag before letting the child leave the room. By removing the tag, this is how we know the child is checked out and is no longer in the volunteer's care. The tags will be placed on a sheet of paper side by side. If the parent has more than one child, the parent will give the last volunteer the tag, as the parent will need it to pick up other children. If a different parent, family member, or friend comes to pick up the child, they must have the tag or a screenshot of the tag that shows the code. If they do not the volunteer cannot release them. The Children's Director will then call the parent to authorize pick up. Please do not send children out to find parents. If the parent is teaching a class and the other children in the group are gone, the volunteer may walk them down to the parent's room.

**We ask that PARENTS only pick up their child. Please do not send siblings under 18 years of age to pick up your child.**

## **Policies and Procedures**

### **Statement of Acknowledgment and Agreement**

I have received and read a copy of First Baptist Church'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 First Baptist Church.

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 First Baptist Church.

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 my supervisor.

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 First Baptist Church 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 First Baptist Church policies and procedures manual.

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Staff Member or Volunteer's name (please print)

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Staff Member or Volunteer's signature

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

[This page is to remain attached to First Baptist Church Children's Ministry Policies.]

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