

# ***Child Protection Policy***

***First Baptist Church of Plano***

***1300 East 15<sup>th</sup> Street  
Plano, Texas 75074***

***972-424-8551***

***[www.fbcplano.org](http://www.fbcplano.org)***

## **Child Protection Policy of First Baptist Church of Plano**

The goal of First Baptist Church of Plano is to provide a safe and secure environment for the physical and emotional well being of all children participating in church programs. The church will enforce its policies to ensure that all children are safe and well protected while attending scheduled activities. The church will screen all applicants desiring to work with children in any church programs.

Policy includes the following sections:

- 1... Texas Child Protection Definitions and Laws
- 2... Selection and Screening Process
- 3... Maintaining a Safe Environment
- 4... Supervisory Requirements
- 5... Reporting and Responding to alleged Child Abuse or Neglect
- 6... Application to work with children at First Baptist Church of Plano

### **1... Texas Child Protection Definitions and Laws**

#### **Child abuse or neglect as defined by the Texas Family Code:**

... **Child abuse** is defined as acts or omissions which cause or permit:

- ... mental or emotional injury to a child.
- ... physical injury or threat of physical injury to a child.
- ... failure to make reasonable efforts to prevent action by another person that results in physical injury to a child.
- ... sexual contact with a child.
- ... failure to make reasonable efforts to prevent sexual contact with or in the presence of a child.

... **Neglect** includes:

- ... leaving a child in a situation where he/she would be exposed to a risk of harm.
- ... requiring the child to use judgment or take actions beyond his/her level of maturity, physical condition or mental abilities.
- ... failure to obtain medical care for a child.
- ... failure to provide a child with food, clothing or shelter necessary to sustain life or health.

#### **Sexual misconduct**

Sexual misconduct with a child includes crimes such as indecent exposure, indecency with a child and sexual molestation. It also includes conduct that may not violate a penal statute but is sexually oriented, as in sexual harassment and sexual suggestion. If this conduct is committed by workers in the church, either employed or volunteer, claims can be made against both the church and the individual.

#### **Every Person's Duty to report**

The Texas Family Code **requires** that any person who learns of, or believes that a child's health or welfare has been adversely affected by abuse or neglect **must report that belief immediately**. Call the **Abuse Hotline** at **1-800-252-5400** or, in the event of imminent danger to the child, call **911**. Reports can also be made on line at **www.txabusehotline.org**; however, a telephone call is the best method. Ask the person you talk to for a **Case Number**.

Following this, notify the Pastor or a member of the church staff as quickly as possible. They will ask you to put your report and the Abuse Hotline case number in writing for the church's records.

**Do not treat a suspicion as frivolous.**

## **Liability for failure to report**

A person failing to report child abuse commits a Class B misdemeanor punishable by fines of up to \$1000 and/or confinement for up to 180 days. A person who is the victim of child abuse and his or her family may bring a civil claim against the church, or the person who failed to report the crime, as required by law.

## **Immunity**

A person making a report, or assisting in the investigation of a report of child abuse, is immune from both civil and criminal liability that might be incurred. This means that a person who reports child abuse and is later sued can defend themselves on the basis that their actions were protected by this immunity statute and the reporter will not be liable for damages relating to the reporting.

## **Clergy privilege**

Communications between a member of the clergy and an individual seeking counsel for the purpose of spiritual advice is considered privileged. There is an exception which provides that privilege disappears when the clergy member learns of child abuse or neglect. In this instance the clergy member is required by law to report the information to authorities.

## **Definition of "child"**

By law the term "child" includes anyone under the age of eighteen (18) years.

## **2... Selection and Screening Process**

The term 'Workers' addresses both paid church employees and any one who volunteers to work with children in a church activity.

### **Volunteers who work with children must be Members of First Baptist Church of Plano**

Both volunteer and church employees who work with children must be members of First Baptist Church of Plano. An exception can be made for a specific planned event but must be approved in writing by the appropriate age group minister in consultation with the Pastor. Employees of the Weekday School are not required to be members of the church.

### **Six-month rule**

Volunteer workers are not allowed to work with children until they have been an active and participating member of the church for a minimum of six months. They must be both a regular attendee and involved in church activities during that period.

### **Classification of workers**

There are two categories of workers referencing their levels of responsibility and risk.

**Primary workers:** Include all church employees and those volunteers who are in roles with greater responsibility or risk. All Primary workers must be at least eighteen (18) years of age.

**Secondary workers:** Persons who interact with children as Sunday School teachers, volunteers who see children only in group settings on church premises, and those who interact with children in the presence of a primary worker. This category may also include parents who help supervise activities. All workers under the age of eighteen (18) are classified as secondary workers.

## **Confidential interviews**

Applicants desiring to work with children will first be interviewed by the appropriate age group staff member. The Child Protection Policy must be fully reviewed during the interview. The staff member then completes the Staff Recommendation portion on the second page of the application submitting it to the church administrator to be approved and filed in the applicant's personnel file.

## **Application to work with children**

All applicants must complete an 'Application to Work With Children'. If the applicant is under the age of eighteen (18), a parent must give written permission for them to work with our children.

Applications must be submitted to the church office accompanied by a photocopy of a valid pictured identification that includes date of birth (ie: Texas drivers license).

The church will keep all application information confidential. If the church learns of incorrect or misleading information on an application that might cause potential danger to children, that worker will be relieved of any duties with children.

## **Criminal background check**

Completing the 'Application to Work With Children' authorizes the church to conduct criminal background checks and sexual abuse registry checks required for both employee and volunteer positions. No one will be allowed to work with our children who has been convicted of any crime involving misconduct with a child.

Background checks are kept confidential. The church administrator will supervise the criminal background checking process, notifying the appropriate staff member of the results.

# **3... Maintaining a Safe Environment**

## **Identification of workers**

People working with children must be photographed with copies of those photographs kept in their personnel file.

## **Pictured name badges**

People working with children are required to wear a current pictured name badge at all times when they are supervising children. Badges are provided by the church.

## **Two-worker rule**

**At no time can a children's worker be in a room ... or an enclosed area alone with a child.**

There must be at least two approved workers in attendance any time children are participating in a church activity. At least one of these must be a primary worker. These two workers cannot be related to one another in any way. (ie: spouse, mother, father, sister, brother)

Youth Sunday School classes may have one adult worker in attendance as the teacher while the class is in session. In these instances, doors to the classrooms **must** remain open.

## **Vehicle safety**

Persons who drive vehicles while conducting church business or transporting children must maintain a valid Texas drivers license, provide proof of insurance in such amounts as may be required by the church and comply with all church transportation policies.

### **First aid training**

The church's goal is that paid employees who work with children maintain current certification in basic first aid and basic CPR as required by applicable licensing requirements or regulations. The church will provide the cost of this training.

Volunteer workers are encouraged to complete training if they frequently accompany children on activities such as camps, retreats, mission trips or other recreational activities that includes risk.

## **4... Supervisory Requirements**

### **for all people working with children at First Baptist Church of Plano, Texas**

The church will provide adequate supervisory control of people working with children who are participating in church programs, including daily childcare programs.

### **Safety of children**

All children's workers share the responsibility to promote the emotional and physical safety of the participants. If an unsafe condition exists, they should immediately take precautions to protect the children. Nothing contained in any other church procedure relieves children's workers from this responsibility.

### **Preschool identification system**

The church maintains a child identification system to be sure that the adults who drop off a small child are the same adults who pick the child up. The staff person in charge of the area will supervise the system to identify persons authorized to pick up and take responsibility for preschool children leaving a church activity.

### **Observation of children**

Church activities for children will be scheduled in areas visible from adjoining areas. Visibility should be maintained by leaving blinds open and, wherever possible, the door to the room left open. Exceptions may be made by when noise reduction is necessary for children's naps. Two approved workers must remain in the room at all times.

Windows are installed in the doors of all rooms typically occupied by children and into the doors of all offices in the church.

***At no time can a children's worker meet alone with a child in any room where the door is closed ... or in an area where they cannot be seen.***

### **Awareness of church policy**

Periodically, the church will review the Child Protection Policy with all approved workers. This may be done individually or in groups.

Each worker must complete a new 'Application to Work with Children' and criminal background checks will be repeated. Completed applications will be retained in the church's personnel files.

### **Children's pickup**

If a child younger than six (6) is not picked up by their parent or guardian on time, they will be kept by their teachers in the children's area until the parent or guardian is located.

Children six years old and older are not permitted to leave the area of a completed church activity without supervision unless otherwise requested by the parent or guardian.

Children under the age of thirteen (13) are not allowed to leave church property without parental permission, either unattended or in a group.

## Release of claims

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

## 5... Reporting and Responding to alleged Child Abuse or Neglect

### Reporting policy

The church will report any incident of child abuse or neglect involving a child. Do not treat a suspicion as frivolous. Notify a church staff member right away if you think something is wrong.

When the Pastor has been notified of an accusation, he will determine that the proper law enforcement agency has been notified. Law enforcement agents will conduct the investigation. The church will cooperate fully with law enforcement.

The accused person will be relieved of all duties involving children at the church immediately until the law enforcement investigation has been completed. If the accused person is an employee they will be suspended until the investigation is completed.

Removal from duty should occur in such a way that an innocent person is not presumed guilty. Removal from duty serves to protect the worker from further allegations. If the allegation is unsubstantiated by a law enforcement agency, the employee can be returned to their prior position.

If abuse is confirmed by law enforcement the church will dismiss the person from their position.

The Pastor will keep the victim's family informed of the reporting steps that have been taken. Law enforcement authorities are responsible for further updates to the family as the church is not allowed to comment on an ongoing criminal investigation.

### Reporting obligation

The Texas Family Code **requires** that any person who learns of, or believes that a child's health or welfare has been adversely affected by abuse or neglect **must report that belief immediately**. Call the **Abuse Hotline** at **1-800-252-5400** or, in the event of imminent danger to the child, call **911**. Reports can also be made on line at **www.txabusehotline.org** however a telephone call is the best method. Ask the person you talk to for a **Case Number**.

Following this, notify the Pastor or a member of the church staff as quickly as possible. They will ask you to put your report and the Abuse Hotline Case Number in writing for the church's records.

All reports of child abuse are held in confidence. No one may communicate information concerning the event except as necessary to cooperate with the official investigation. The Pastor may authorize limited disclosure if essential to protect other children from harm. Copies of all documents relating to an event of abuse, including a list of witnesses, will be kept by the Pastor or his agent. Only the Pastor or his agent is authorized to serve as spokesman for the church.

### Ministerial care

Members of the ministerial staff are available to provide pastoral support and to assist parents and children in obtaining appropriate professional counseling and support.

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## Application to work with children at First Baptist Church of Plano

Please complete and return to the church staff member in whose area you intend to work.

Application is required for all people working with children at the church or during any church sponsored program. The term "child" will include any person under the age of eighteen (18) years.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
please print                      last                      first                      middle                      maiden name

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

Daytime phone \_\_\_\_\_ Evening phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

|  |            |       |
|--|------------|-------|
| If applicant is under eighteen (18) parental permission is required to work with children at the church: |            |       |
| _____  | _____      | _____ |
| parent's signature   | print name | date  |

Have you made a personal profession of faith in Jesus Christ ?                      Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

When and where were you baptized ? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you currently a member of First Baptist Church of Plano ?                      Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Have you ever been known by another name? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ If yes, please explain:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever been arrested for a physical or sexual offense of any nature?                      Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Have you ever been prosecuted for child abuse or molestation?                      Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Are you willing to be photographed for the church personnel records?                      Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Will you agree to wear a name badge whenever you are working with children?                      Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Please list the names & locations of churches you've attended in the last five years  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please list the names of members of First Baptist Church who know you well

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Area of the church in which you intend to work \_\_\_\_\_

### **Applicant's Statement**

I have received a copy of the Texas child protection laws and the Child Protection Policy of First Baptist Church of Plano. I have read and understand this information. I understand my services as an employee or a volunteer working with children at the church is dependent on my adherence to these policies.

I have read and completed the application personally. My answers are true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I give permission for the church to maintain my photograph on file and to conduct appropriate criminal and court background checks on me now and at regular intervals. If allowed to work with children I agree to be bound by the bylaws and policies of First Baptist Church.

I hereby authorize First Baptist Church to request and receive any and all background information about or concerning me, including but not limited to my Criminal History, Social Security Number Trace including a consumer report under the Fair Credit Reporting Act, 15 U.S.C. 1681, Driving Record, Employment History, Military Background, Civil Listings, Educational Background, Professional License from any individual, Partnership, Law Enforcement Agency, and other entities including Present and Past Employers. I hereby release the church from liability or damages which may occur as a result of responses to this request.

I authorize the church to supply my records to any organization having a legal right to them. I understand that if allowed to serve, any misrepresentation made by me in this application shall be considered sufficient cause for my removal without advance notice. I support the church's position regarding child abuse and neglect.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Include a photocopy of a valid Texas drivers license or other pictured identification with this application.**

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please do not write below this line

### **Staff Recommendation:**

*I have completed an interview and a full review of the Child Protection Policy with this person and recommend them to work with children in the following areas:*

\_\_\_\_\_

area

staff member

date

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### **Church Approval to work with children:**

*Criminal background check completed* \_\_\_\_\_

*Sexual database investigation complete* \_\_\_\_\_

*Approved to work with children by* \_\_\_\_\_ *date* \_\_\_\_\_