

**FBC CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**  
First Baptist Church  
Dover, DE

**I. GOAL**

It shall be the goal of the First Baptist Church, Dover (herein referred to as “FBC” or “church”), to provide a safe environment for the physical and emotional well-being of all children participating in church activities, including participants in any daily or temporary childcare programs. The church’s goal is to inform workers and enforce policies to ensure that all children are safe and well protected while attending scheduled activities.

**II. DEFINITION OF “CHILDREN”**

The term “child”, “children”, or “youth” shall include all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years.

**III. MANDATORY BACKGROUND SCREENING**

It is the policy of the church to conduct background screening of (1) all employees of FBC, and (2) all volunteers working with children and youth in all church programs. This screening will include the national criminal database and the national sex offender registry. All FBC employees must comply with background screening prior to employment. No volunteers may work with children and youth until background screening is complete.

**IV. MINIMUM AGE**

All volunteers working with children and youth must be 18 years of age or older. Younger persons may assist adults, but may not take the place of adult workers. The church may include responsible teens (under the age of 18) only in positions with and under the direct supervision of an approved adult worker.

**V. VOLUNTEER APPLICATIONS**

Volunteers working with children and youth must complete and sign a *Background Check Authorization* form.

Completed *Authorization* forms will be submitted in a sealed envelope to the “Safe Church” Committee. If an applicant needs additional confidentiality they may choose to submit their *Authorization* form to the Pastor.

The *Background Check Authorization* form will be given to the designated church representative who will conduct the background screening process. An applicant may also choose to be present when the background screening process is performed so that they may be the ones who enter needed information. In all cases, a signed *Authorization* form is required.

**VI. BACKGROUND SCREENING**

A background check including the national criminal database and national sex offender registry shall be required of (1) all employees of FBC, and (2) all volunteers working with children and youth in all church programs. Completing the *Background Check Authorization* form authorizes the church to conduct these checks.

The designated church representative will conduct the background screening process, notifying the Pastor if a negative report is received. *Background Check Authorization* forms and reports will be kept confidential in a secure file with access afforded only to appropriate church Staff or leaders on a need-to-know basis.

No one who has been convicted of a crime involving misconduct with children will be allowed to work with children and youth.

**VII. CHILD SAFETY TRAINING**

All volunteers with children and youth will be required to satisfactorily complete a CHILD SAFETY TRAINING course, as designated or approved by the church. A certificate of satisfactory completion will be required and kept on file by the church. CHILD SAFETY TRAINING must be completed within 3 months following background screening.

## **VIII. IDENTIFICATION BADGES**

All church employees and volunteers are required to wear an FBC photo-identification name badge whenever they are supervising children. These ID badges will be provided by the church when certification (background screening and child safety training) is complete. ID badges are to remain at the church.

## **IX. 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, such persons shall immediately take appropriate precautions to protect all children. Nothing contained in any other church policy, procedure, or instruction shall be construed to relieve persons having contact with children from this responsibility.

## **X. TWO-ADULT RULE**

It is the goal of FBC to maintain a minimum of two workers be in attendance at all times when children are being supervised during a church activity, regardless of the number of participants, location or activity. At least one of these must be an adult. At no time should a single adult ever be in a room or an enclosed area alone with a child.

## **XI. VEHICLE SAFETY**

Persons who drive FBC-owned or privately-owned vehicles for conducting church business or transporting children must maintain a current valid driver's license, provide proof of insurance in such amounts as may be required by the church, and comply with all other church transportation policies.

## **XII. POLICY AWARENESS**

All employees and volunteers working with children and youth will be given a copy of the FBC CHILD PROTECTION POLICY. They must sign the *Acknowledgment of Receipt*, indicating they have received and read this policy before they can begin working with children. The signed *Acknowledgment* form shall be retained in the personnel file of the worker.

## **XIII. REQUIREMENT OF REPORTING ALLEGED CHILD ABUSE**

By Delaware law, anyone who has reasonable cause to believe that a child is being physically abused, sexually abused, neglected or is dependent is required to report this information. ALL REPORTS of child abuse and neglect in the State of Delaware should be made to the toll free, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, Child Abuse and Neglect Report Line number at 1-800-292-9582.

Church leadership should also be informed immediately of any suspected child abuse.

## **XIV. RESPONDING TO ALLEGED CHILD ABUSE**

Any worker of the church who has cause to believe that a child's physical or emotional health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect shall be responsible to report that belief according to the following procedure:

- a. ALL REPORTS of child abuse and neglect in the State of Delaware should be made to the toll free, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, Child Abuse and Neglect Report Line number at 1-800-292-9582.
- b. The worker shall report such belief to the Pastor, a member of the church Staff, and/or church leadership.
- c. The Pastor, or their appointed agent, will notify the parents of the child (unless the parent is the person responsible for the abuse or neglect).
- d. The Pastor, or their appointed agent, in consultation with the chairperson of the Staff Relations Committee and/or the chairman of the Deacons will notify the appropriate legal counsel.
- e. The Pastor, or their appointed agent, will notify the church's insurance agent that an abuse report has been filed with the appropriate local or state agency.

## **XV. CONFIDENTIALITY**

All reports of child abuse or neglect shall be held in absolute confidence. No person shall communicate any information concerning the alleged event to any person except as necessary to cooperate with any official investigation. Any breach of this confidentiality by an employee of the church shall be cause for immediate dismissal. The 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 shall the identity of the victim or the accused person be disclosed except as required by law.

## **XVI. INVESTIGATION OF ALLEGED ABUSE OR NEGLECT**

No person shall 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. All employees and volunteers of the church shall cooperate with the official investigation as requested.

## **XVII. SUSPENSION OF CHURCH RELATED DUTIES**

A person accused of child abuse or neglect will be suspended from all church related duties involving children. This would include all childcare, teaching, transportation, or watchcare duties. This suspension from duty should occur in such a way that an innocent person is not immediately deemed guilty. If the allegation is determined to be unsubstantiated, the worker can be returned to their prior position.

## **XVIII. PRESERVATION OF RECORDS**

Copies of all documents relating to an event of abuse or neglect, including a list of all persons known to be present or in the vicinity shall be transferred to the Pastor or their appointed agent. They will review them to determine if the documents are complete in accordance with church policy.

## **XIX. MINISTERIAL CARE**

In cases of abuse or neglect, the ministerial Staff shall encourage and assist the child and the parents in securing appropriate counseling, care and support. In the event that the abuse or neglect involves a member or employee of the church, the Staff shall encourage and assist the individual in securing appropriate Pastoral care and support, including third party counseling, being mindful of the potential for a conflict of interest. All persons shall act towards the child, the parents, and the accused in accordance with the principles of Christianity at all times.

## **XX. LIAISON WITH THE COMMUNITY**

The Pastor, or their appointed agent, will serve as the church's sole access to the media. The church should emphasize to the public its position on child abuse, its concern for the victim, and the extensive steps being taken to address the safety of all children.