



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF MANCHESTER  
240 HILLSTOWN ROAD  
MANCHESTER, CT 06040  
860-649-7509

Dear Volunteer or Staff Member:

Welcome to the First Baptist Church of Manchester's ("FBCM") Children/Youth Programs!

At FBCM, we take our responsibility to care for children very serious. These Child Protection Policies are intended to facilitate a safe and nurturing environment.

The pages of this handbook provide a general overview of procedures and guidelines for FBCM's volunteers and staff members. The attached policies are intended to create a safe environment for our children, workers, volunteers and the mission of FBCM's children's programs. The following procedures have been adopted and will be strictly enforced.

After you have carefully read the attached Child Protection Policy, please sign and return the agreement form located on the last page.

Sincerely,

FBCM Childrens Ministry



## Child Protection Policy for First Baptist Church of Manchester, CT

### Introduction

The Bible teaches us that God loves and values children. When his disciples tried to send the children away, Jesus welcomed them, and loved them.

*People were bringing little children to Jesus to have Him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, He was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." And He took the children in His arms, put his hands on them and blessed them."*

~Mark 10:13-16

It is First Baptist Church of Manchester's (hereinafter "FBCM") desire to bring children to Jesus. We desire to do all that we can to create and maintain a safe and welcoming atmosphere in which to teach our children God's love and care for them. Our goal is to model Christ-likeness to our children. Because we recognize that we are a reflection of God's love to those in our care, we take seriously our responsibility to them. These guidelines are set forth to provide a safe and nurturing environment in which we can bring our children closer to the Savior. We view ourselves as partners with parents, seeking to provide the highest quality care and instruction in our children's ministries. All of our guidelines are designed to protect and promote growth for each child and adult involved. Everyone who teaches, helps, or cares for children involved in our ministries must follow the Child Protection Policy as stated below. This Policy supports FBCM's mission through the extension of love and caring for our children, youth, and adult volunteers and workers.

### General Purpose Statement

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

- a. It is important for the church to have set policies governing acceptable practices, for the purpose of avoiding sexual or other abuse.
- b. It is also important to have policies in place to help protect volunteers and workers against false allegations.
- c. Sexual abuse has wide-reaching, long-term devastating effects on children, families, churches, and communities.

These ramifications can be:

- i. Emotional, spiritual, and physical damage to a child and family
- ii. Loss of faith
- iii. Financial Devastation to a church
- iv. Loss of church membership

### Definitions

For purposes of this policy, the terms "child" or "children" include all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years. The term "volunteer" includes all unpaid persons who work with children involved with the FBCM youth ministries. The term "worker" includes all paid persons who work with children involved with the FBCM youth ministries.

## **Selection of Workers**

All persons who desire to work with the children participating in our programs and activities will be screened. This screening includes the following:

a) **Six Month Rule**

No person will be considered for any volunteer position involving contact with minors until she/he has been involved with FBCM for a minimum of six (6) months of regular attendance and joins FBCM as a member. This time of interaction between our leadership and the applicant allows for better evaluation and suitability of the applicant for working with children.

We strive to maintain this policy in our children's and youth programming, but recognize that in the youth department we occasionally have volunteers that are experts in their field or are from partnering churches that assist as mentors and/or chaperones for events. Such individuals must meet the requirements of FBCM Child Protection Policy regarding background check and under direct supervision of a FBCM volunteer and/or worker.

b) **Written Application**

All persons seeking to work with children must complete and sign a written application in a form to be supplied by FBCM. The application will request basic information from the applicant and will inquire into previous experience with children, previous church affiliation, reference, as well as disclosure of any previous criminal convictions. The application form will be maintained in confidence on file at FBCM. This was added to the process in April, 2024, and members that were already approved have been grandfathered in.

c) **Personal Interview**

Upon completion of the application, a face-to-face interview may be scheduled with the applicant to discuss his/her suitability for the position.

d) **Reference Checks**

Before an applicant is permitted to work with children, at least two of the applicants' references will be checked. At least one of these references should be of an institutional nature as opposed to personal or family nature. References such as a previous church or an organization where the applicant has worked with children in the past is preferable. Documentation of the reference checks will be maintained in confidence on file at First Baptist Church of Manchester. Note: This policy was added to the process in April, 2024, and members that were already approved have been grandfathered in.

e) **Criminal Background Check**

A national criminal background check is required for all employees (regardless of position) and "volunteers" as defined above.

Before a background check is run, prospective workers will be asked to sign an authorization form allowing FBCM to run the check. If an individual declines to sign the authorization form, s/he will be unable to work with children.

A disqualifying offense that will keep an individual from working with children will be determined by the ministry leadership or pastor(s) 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 form will also be a disqualifying event.

The background check authorization form and results will be maintained in confidence on file at FBCM

## 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 upper elementary and youth classes may have only one adult teacher or a married couple in attendance during the class session; in these instances, doors to the classroom should remain open and there should be no fewer than three students with the adult teacher. We do not allow minors to be alone with one adult on our premises or in any sponsored activity unless in a counseling situation with parental approval.

## Responding to Allegations of Child Abuse

For purposes of this policy, "child abuse" is any action (or lack of action) that 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 that 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.
- **Grooming** - 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.
- **Neglect** – depriving a child of his or her essential needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter, and medical care.

Childcare volunteers/workers may have the opportunity to become aware of abuse or neglect of the children under our care. In the event that an individual involved in the care of children at FBCM becomes aware of suspected abuse or neglect of a child under his/her care, this should be reported immediately to the ministry leader AND Senior Pastor for further action which includes reporting to the authorities as may be mandated by state law. (DCF (800-842-2288).)

In the event that an incident of abuse or neglect is alleged to have occurred at FBCM or during FBCM sponsored programs or activities, the following procedures shall be followed:

- a) The parent or guardian of the child will be notified.
- b) The worker or church member alleged to be the perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct will immediately be placed on leave pending an investigation and instructed to remain away from the premises during the investigation. He or she should be instructed to have no contact with the victim or with witnesses.
- c) All allegations of abuse should be reported to the civil authorities, and the organization will comply with the state's requirements regarding mandatory reporting of abuse as the law then exists. The organization will fully cooperate with the investigation of the incident by civil authorities.
- d) The insurance company will be notified, and the organization will complete an incident report. Any documents received relating to the incident and/or allegations will immediately be forwarded to the insurance company.
- e) The organization will designate the Senior Pastor and/or appropriate spokesperson to the media concerning incidents of abuse or neglect. The advice of legal counsel will be sought before responding to media inquiries or releasing information about the situation to the congregation. All other representatives of the organization should refrain from speaking to the media.
- f) A pastoral visit will be arranged for those who desire it. This should be for the purpose of providing pastoral support during the time of crisis and not for the purpose of investigating the incident or influencing the investigation.
- g) Any person who is not found innocent of the alleged abuse or misconduct will be removed from their position working with children or youth.

### **If Abuse is Suspected**

If a staff member or volunteer has knowledge or suspicion that a child is a victim of sexual abuse or other maltreatment, the information will be reported to the ministry leader AND Senior Pastor and the appropriate authorities as outlined above.

### **Open Door Policy**

Classroom doors should generally remain open unless there is a window in the door or a side window beside it. Doors should never be locked while persons are inside the room.

### **Teenage Workers**

We recognize that there may be times when it is necessary or desirable for babysitters (paid or volunteer) who are themselves under age 18 to assist in caring for children during programs or activities. The following guidelines apply to teenage workers:

- Must be at least age 12 and in the youth program.
- Must be approved by the ministry leadership.
- Must be under the supervision of an adult and must never be left alone with children.
- Should never change diapers or assist children in the nursery wing in the bathroom.

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

For children in our nursery, a security check-in/check-out procedure will be followed. The child will be signed in by a parent or guardian, who will receive a numbered bracelet that matches the identically numbered tag for their child. At pick-up the parent or guardian must present the numbered wristband. The child will only be released to the parent or guardian that matches the child's tag. In the event that a parent or guardian is unable to present the wristband, the Nursery Welcome Desk person will validate their identification against the sign-in form.

### **Bathroom Supervision and Assistance Guidelines**

#### **Nursery-age children**

Bathrooms for children ages six years and younger are located in the preschool wing. If adult assistance is required in the bathroom, the bathroom door must remain at least partially open at all times, until the adult departs the bathroom.

Because very young children may require complete assistance with their bathroom activities, all staff members and volunteers 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.
- 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 (example, "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.

#### **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.
- 3) When children are taken into bathrooms the door will be left partially open.
- 4) Young children will never be left unattended in the bathrooms, the door should remain partially open if the child requests to have privacy.

- 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 (example, "Georgia can use the toilet, but she needs to be reminded – ask her if she needs to go."). We also use toilet training stickers to alert volunteers.
- 6) Children should be assisted in straightening their clothing before returning to the room with other children.
- 7) "Accidents" should be handled by reassuring the child, and completing the changing of diapers or underwear and clothing.

### **School-age children**

School age children may be accompanied to the restroom for supervision and assistance when needed. (However, 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 go 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.

### **Sick Child Policy**

It is our desire to provide a healthy and safe environment for all of the children at First Baptist Church of Manchester. 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 24 hours;
- Green or yellow runny nose;
- Eye or skin infections; and/or
- 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 for the day.

### **Medications Policy**

It is the policy of church not to administer either prescription or non-prescription medications to the children under our care. Medications should be administered by a parent at home. Parents are reminded of our sick child policy. Exceptions to the medications policy may be granted to parents of children with potentially life-threatening conditions (such as asthma or severe allergic reactions). Parents of such children should address their situation with the ministry leader to develop a plan of action.

### **Discipline Policy**

It is the policy of First Baptist Church of Manchester 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 ministry leader if assistance is needed with disciplinary issues.

### **Restroom Guidelines.**

Children in the preschool wing should use a classroom bathroom. For older children under the age of 8, if a classroom bathroom is not available, workers should escort a group of children to the hallway bathroom. They should always go in a group, never taking a child to the bathroom alone. The workers should then remain outside the bathroom stall and escort the children back to the classroom. If a worker is waiting in the hall and a child is taking longer than seems necessary, the worker should open the bathroom door and call the child's name. If a child requires assistance, the workers should prop open the bathroom door, and leave the stall door open as they assist 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.

### **Accidental Injuries to Children**

In the event that a child or youth 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. Reports should be put in the secretary's office to be filed there.

### **Required Training**

FBCM Child Protection Policy requires all workers and volunteers to take the child safety training before beginning work in the Children's Ministry. In addition, all current workers and volunteers involved in FBCM's Children Ministries will be required to take the child safety training. All workers and volunteers will be required to repeat child safety training every three (3) years. Children's Ministries will continue to provide opportunities for additional training classes or events as they are made available. All workers and volunteers are strongly encouraged to attend these training events.

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## **Child Protection Policy for FBCM**

### **Statement of Acknowledgement and Agreement**

I have received and read a copy of FBCM's Child Protection Policy and understand the importance of the matters set forth within the Policy. I agree to follow and abide by these guidelines during my service within FBCM's Children's Ministry.

Further, I understand that FBCM's policy may be modified at any time, and that any guidelines may be amended, revised, or eliminated at any time by FBCM as stated in the Bylaws of the Church.

I understand that I am serving as a volunteer and that I may choose to end this service at any time. If possible, I agree to provide advance notice to allow for a replacement to be found. I further acknowledge and understand that the materials and guidelines contained in this policy statement in no way express or imply a contractual employment relationship between FBCM Childrens' Ministry and me. If I am applying as a volunteer, I acknowledge and agree that I will receive no compensation for the hours I work.

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 this Child Protection Policy manual.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Staff Member or Volunteer's Name (please print)

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Staff Member or Volunteer's Signature

[This page to be signed, detached and delivered to the Childrens Ministry Administrator]



# *Example of Background Search Form (see FBCM secretary)*

## **Volunteer Authorization Form For Consumer Reports**

In connection with your volunteer application, understand that consumer reports or investigative consumer reports which may contain public record information may be requested or made on you including criminal records, sex offender and Department of Corrections. Further, understand that information from various Federal, State, local and other agencies which contain your past activities will be requested.

By signing below, you hereby authorize without reservation, any party or agency contracted by this Church to furnish the above mentioned information. You further authorize ongoing procurement of the above mentioned reports at any time during the duration of volunteer assignments. You also agree that a fax or photocopy of this authorization be accepted as the same authority as the original.

You have the legal right to make a request of First Advantage, upon proper identification and the payment of any legally permissible fees, for the information in its files on you at the time of your request.

You hereby authorize and request, without any reservation, any present or former employer, school, police department, division of motor vehicles, consumer reporting agencies, or other persons or agencies having knowledge about you to furnish First Advantage with any and all background information in their possession regarding you, in order that your qualification may be evaluated.

For California, Minnesota or Oklahoma applicants only, if you would like to receive a copy of the consumer report, if one is obtained, please check this box.  If checked and you are a California applicant, a copy of the consumer reports will be sent within three (3) days of the employer receiving a copy of the consumer report.

For California applicants only, if public record information about your character, general reputation, personal characteristics, and mode of living is obtained without using a consumer reporting agency, you will be supplied a copy of the public record information within seven (7) days of receipt unless you check this box where you hereby waive your right to obtain a copy of the consumer report.

**Print your Full Name (first, middle, last):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Street Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**City: State: Zip:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Social Security Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Drivers License State: License Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

The following is for identification purposes only to perform the background check:

**Date of Birth (MM/DD/YYYY):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

# FBCM Volunteer Application for Childrens' Ministry

- Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- Address: \_\_\_\_\_
- City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_
- Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_
- Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_
- Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

## **\*\*Experience with Children:\*\***

- Have you previously worked with children? If yes, please describe your experience:

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## **\*\*Criminal History:\*\***

- Have you ever been convicted of a felony? If yes, please explain:

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- Have you ever been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor related to minors? If yes, please explain:

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## **\*\*Church Background:\*\***

- Previous Church Attended: \_\_\_\_\_
- Length of time there: \_\_\_\_\_

- Reason for Leaving: \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*Lifestyle:\*\***

- Do you engage in any activities that are contrary to our beliefs as a church? Please explain:

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**\*\*References:\*\***

Please provide the names and contact information of two references who have worked with children or volunteered in a church or organization:

1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*Consent:\*\***

I certify that the information provided in this application is true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I authorize the church to verify any information provided in this application.

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

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