

CHILD AND WORKER PROTECTION POLICY

First Baptist Church of Grandview, Missouri

1416 Main

Grandview, MO 64030

First Baptist Church of Grandview desires to be a safe place for all children, youth and adults who attend any activity. Each year children, youth and special needs adults are victimized by individuals whom they know and trust. The church is not immune to such abuse, either by its members or by those in leadership positions. Incidents of abuse or neglect cut across racial, social, economic, and religious boundaries. Although no organization or individual can assure complete protection, this *Child and Worker Protection Policy* reflects the commitment of First Baptist Church to help protect children, youth and special needs adults from harm. This policy applies to all volunteer and compensated workers of First Baptist Church of Grandview.

First Baptist Church of Grandview will not tolerate abuse or neglect of children, youth or the developmentally disabled. Your cooperation in this commitment not only reflects your concern about individuals' safety in this society, but also your willingness to take steps toward halting abuse of children and the vulnerable.

For the safety and protection of our children, youth, special needs adults and workers, all individuals who participate in church-sponsored activities with children, youth or special needs adults are required to comply with the guidelines provided in this policy.

Revised 5-27-15

Definitions

In this policy the following definitions apply:

1. **Child** - Any individual 17 or younger.
2. **Adult** - Any individual 18 or older.
3. **Youth** - An individual in the seventh grade through age 17.
4. **Child Abuse and Neglect** - Physical or mental injury, sexual abuse, negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child or youth by an adult or youth caregiver.
5. **Special Needs Adult** - Any adult requiring direct adult supervision who is categorized by the state or medical profession as being developmentally disabled.
6. **Physical Abuse** - Abuse that results in physical injury, including but not limited to bruises, cuts, welts, fractures and internal injuries.
7. **Emotional Abuse** - Abuse which results in impaired psychological growth and development, including, but not limited to, belittling, rejection, constant unequal treatment, verbal assaults, excessive demands on a child's or youth's performance, and isolation from normal social activities.
8. **Sexual Abuse** - Abuse that consists of sexual contact or interactions with a child, youth or special needs adult, including physical contact (fondling, genital/oral stimulation, sexual intercourse) and non-physical contact (exhibitionism, child prostitution, pornography, voyeurism).
9. **Neglect** - Failure or inattention on the part of the caregiver to provide for a child's basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter, medical care and supervision.
10. **Compensated Worker** - Hourly, salaried, part-time or full-time employee who works with children, youth or special needs adults at any church-sponsored activity.
11. **Volunteer Worker** - Any non-compensated individual who works with children, youth or special needs adults at any church-sponsored activity.
12. **Caregiver** - Any compensated or volunteer worker (seventh grade or older).
13. **Mandated Reporter** - Any person with the responsibility for the care of children, youth or special needs adults is a mandated reporter. Missouri law states that if a caregiver has reasonable cause to suspect that a child, youth or special needs adult has been or may be subject to abuse or neglect or observes such individual being subjected to conditions or circumstances that would reasonably result in abuse or neglect, that person shall immediately (within 24 hours) report or cause a report to be made to the Missouri Department of Social Services, Children's Division (for children or youth) or the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (for special needs adults).
14. **Corporal Punishment** - Any punishment applied to the body including, but not limited to, slapping, spanking, shaking, pinching, pulling, pushing or squeezing.

Screening for Volunteer and Compensated Workers

1. Volunteer workers must have six (6) continuous months of active First Baptist Church of Grandview involvement, and be church members or enrolled Bible Study members.
2. All volunteer and compensated workers must do the following before participating in any church-sponsored activities for children, youth or special needs adults.
 - a. Complete a standard application. References will be checked.
 - b. Attend training activities appropriate to the level of the volunteer or compensated worker involvement.
 - c. Sign a written acknowledgement stating they have received and reviewed a copy of the ***Child and Worker Protection Policy*** of First Baptist Church of Grandview.
 - d. A personal interview will be conducted with each applicant.

3. Any person who has been convicted of a crime against a child or youth or a violent crime against another adult will not provide service as a volunteer or compensated worker in any church-sponsored activity or program for children, youth, or special needs adults.

Those who have been convicted of either sexual or physical abuse can be forgiven for and cleansed of their sin. However, sin does have consequences and while such persons may serve in certain other areas of ministry at First Baptist Church of Grandview, they will be prohibited from serving in children, youth or special needs adult ministries.

4. All volunteer and compensated workers will have background checks for the purpose of obtaining information regarding criminal history or child abuse findings. National background checks will be conducted on any adult who has lived outside of Missouri at any time since 1979. Missouri statewide background checks will be conducted on all adults.
5. Background checks will be conducted on prospective ministerial staff members before they are brought to First Baptist Church of Grandview in view of a call. Missouri statewide background checks will be conducted on candidates who live or have ever lived in Missouri. National background checks will be conducted on those who have lived in other states.
6. Applications and the results of any screening will be viewed only by the pastor, his designated ministerial staff member and/or members of the Child and Worker Protection Policy Committee. Information will be stored in a locked file cabinet.
7. A list of individuals who meet the above criteria shall be available to church program leaders for obtaining staff and substitutes as needed. Program leaders would include directors of Sunday School, AWANA, VBS, children's mission programs, youth ministry, bus ministry and special needs adult ministry.
8. Outside organizations may provide ministry opportunities through First Baptist Church of Grandview. These organizations are responsible for conducting their own application and/or screening process. However, the volunteers and compensated workers providing services must observe the policies regarding conduct and child safety within this policy.

9. An individual who is a member of another Bible-believing church may be a worker in Vacation Bible School with approval of the senior pastor or Child and Worker Protection Policy Committee and provided the individual successfully completes First Baptist Church's application, background checks and references.

**General Guidelines for Supervision of Workers
Preschool Ministry (Birth through Kindergarten)**

1. A minimum of two adult caregivers must staff each session with children, regardless of how few children are in attendance.
2. The windows of classroom doors will remain uncovered or doors will remain open to allow a clear view of classroom activities.
3. Only female caregivers are allowed to change diapers.
4. Children who leave a classroom to use the bathroom should be escorted by a female caregiver. When possible, children will be encouraged to take care of their own bathroom needs. Should assistance be required, the outer bathroom door or partition door will remain ajar while the teacher assists the child. It is recognized that there may be very brief periods when an adult is alone with a group in a room while the other adult escorts children to the bathroom.
5. When children are taken to and from the classroom or to and from a vehicle, caregivers are to take a count of the children to ensure all are present.
6. Only designated caregivers will be in the room or participate in activities with preschoolers unless (1) a parent/guardian is in the room for the specific purpose of tending to his own child's needs (for example, a nursing mother), or (2) there is an open house activity or meeting for families, or (3) a parent/guardian has requested to come and observe a session with his/her child. In these situations, a parent/guardian will not be asked to take care of the needs of a child other than his/her own. The parent/guardian will not count toward the two-adult minimum for the class.
7. Children will be released to an authorized person at the door of the classroom. A security card will be given when an individual drops off a child, and the card must be presented to pick up the child.
8. A positive approach to discipline will be practiced. Clear, consistent, age-appropriate limits will be established to help the children function appropriately. Corporal punishment is never allowed.
9. An appropriate ministerial staff member must approve any children's activities that are to be held off-site. A parent, grandparent or guardian should attend with each child.

Children's Ministry
(First through Sixth Grade)

1. A minimum of two adult caregivers must staff each session with children, regardless of how few children are in attendance.
2. The windows of classroom doors will remain uncovered or doors will remain open to allow a clear view of classroom activities.
3. Children who leave a classroom to use the bathroom should be escorted either by a caregiver or another child in the same class. Should assistance be required, the outer bathroom door or partition door will remain ajar while the teacher assists the child.
4. When children are taken to and from the classroom or to and from a vehicle, caregivers are to take a count of the children to ensure all are present.
5. Only designated caregivers will be in the room or participate in activities with children unless (1) a parent/guardian is in the room for the specific purpose of tending to his own child's needs, or (2) there is an open house activity or meeting for families, or (3) a parent/guardian has requested to come and observe a session with his/her child. In these situations, a parent/guardian will not be asked to take care of the needs of a child other than his/her own. The parent/guardian will not count toward the two-adult minimum required for the class.
6. A positive approach to discipline will be practiced. Clear, consistent, age-appropriate limits will be established to help the children function appropriately. Corporal punishment is never allowed.
7. An appropriate ministerial staff member must approve any children's activities that are to be held off-site. Written parental permission will be secured for off-site activities, and there will be a minimum of two adults present.

Youth Ministry
(Seventh Grade through Age 17)

1. A minimum of two adults must staff each session with youth. In a Bible Study or similar teaching environment, it is acceptable to have individual classes with only one adult worker, provided other group workers are present in the same room or adjoining rooms with an uncovered window or an open door between. This protects the youth and workers, as well as providing a safer situation in the event of an accident or emergency.
2. The windows of classroom doors will remain uncovered or doors will remain open to allow a clear view of classroom activities.
3. All organized events will be staffed with a minimum of two adults and with a minimum of 1:10 adult to student ratio.

4. An appropriate ministerial staff member will be informed in advance of all activities held on or off church campus. An annual written parent/guardian permission form is required for local, off-site youth activities. Guests may attend these activities three times before a written permission form is required. Separate written permission forms are required for every student, guest or member, for overnight activities. There will be a minimum of two adults present for off-site activities.
5. Overnight events attended by students of both genders must be chaperoned by adults of both genders. All-female events will be chaperoned by at least one adult female and all-male events will be chaperoned by at least one adult male.
6. Only designated workers will be in the room or participate in activities with youth unless (1) a parent/guardian is in the room for the specific purpose of tending to his own youth's needs, or (2) there is an open house activity or meeting for families, or (3) a parent/guardian has requested to come and observe a session with his/her youth. In these situations, a parent/guardian will not be asked to take care of the needs of a youth other than his/her own. The parent/guardian will not count toward the two-adult minimum for the group.
7. A positive approach to discipline will be practiced. Clear, consistent, age-appropriate limits will be established to help the youth function appropriately. Corporal punishment is never allowed.
8. It is recognized that certain counseling and ministerial situations may preclude the presence of two adults and that the general guidelines for supervision of workers should not restrict situations where individual counsel and guidance is necessary. Individual counseling should only take place when others are in the same general area or in a room where the door is ajar or an uncovered window is present.
9. Workers should not spend unsupervised time alone with any youth without the consent of the youth's parent(s) or legal guardian(s).

Special Needs Adult Ministry

1. A minimum of two adult workers must staff each session with special needs adults, regardless of how few special needs adults are in attendance.
2. Workers will be encouraged to observe the two-adult rule for all functions sponsored by the special needs ministry (on campus and off), including helping individuals in the bathroom.
3. It is not realistic to expect our workers to transport two by two. However, workers should not spend unsupervised time alone with any special needs adult without the consent of the individual's parent(s) or legal guardian(s).
4. Though it will not be mandated, workers who choose to spend unstructured ministry time with special needs adults are encouraged to go two by two. We believe this is a biblical principle and ensures protection for both workers and special needs adults.

Transportation Ministry

1. When transporting children, youth and/or special needs adults in church vehicles, at least one worker must be present, in addition to the bus driver. Additional adults riding in the vehicle will not be considered workers unless they have been screened and understand that they are to provide supervision.
2. Workers who use their own vehicles to provide transportation to church activities for children, youth and/or special needs adults are encouraged to have another worker in the vehicle, whenever possible. In addition, the following specific rules apply:
 - a. Males transporting any female youth or child must have a female worker in the vehicle.
 - b. Females transporting a male youth must have another worker in the vehicle.
 - c. Prior consent of parent(s) or legal guardian(s) is required.

Reporting Abuse

It is the responsibility of First Baptist Church of Grandview to report all cases of suspected abuse to the proper legal authorities. When it becomes necessary to report suspected abuse or neglect, the protection of children, youth and special needs adults must be the most important concern. It is the legal responsibility of any person with responsibility for the care of children, youth or special needs adults to report any cases of abuse they observe, and further, to report visible signs of alleged abuse. Failure to report such abuse could lead to civil and criminal liability on the part of the church, the observer, or both.

What is reasonable suspicion? Reasonable suspicion means there is credible evidence or a discrepant or inconsistent history in explaining suspected abuse. A report based on reasonable suspicion does not require proof that abuse or neglect has actually occurred. Rather it is a request for an assessment of the condition of a child, youth or special needs adult by investigating state or local authorities.

Because First Baptist Church of Grandview believes the safety of children, youth and special needs adults is of great importance, upon observing or suspecting abuse, the volunteer/compensated worker should:

- a. Make sure the safety and comfort of the child, youth or special needs adult is secured.
- b. Make sure the child, youth or special needs adult is safely away from the suspected abuser.
- c. Report the abuse promptly to the senior pastor, or in the absence of a permanent pastor, to another ministerial staff member. To preserve confidentiality, it is important to discuss the incident **ONLY** with the senior pastor or ministerial staff member.

Response of First Baptist Church of Grandview

The primary functions of First Baptist Church of Grandview in responding to allegations of suspected abuse are to:

1. Attempt to provide pastoral care to all who are affected.
2. Attempt to assure the safety and protection of individuals who have been harmed.
3. Seek healing by providing pastoral care and other needed assistance to all who are affected.
4. Respect the privacy and rights of all individuals involved and maintain confidentiality of communications, to the extent possible.

If First Baptist Church of Grandview receives an allegation of abuse, the ministerial staff will respond with utmost concern to the victim, parent/guardian, or other party making such allegation. Without clear and convincing evidence to the contrary, the ministerial staff will assume that such allegations are made in good faith. Individuals making such allegations should have no doubt that First Baptist Church of Grandview takes them seriously and will take appropriate action.

If an alleged abuser contacts the First Baptist Church of Grandview office or a church member about allegations, the ministerial staff may confirm an allegation has been received only if they are certain the alleged abuser already knows of the allegation. Discussion of the allegations or making any further comments should be avoided until the proper authorities have had an opportunity to conduct an investigation. The ministerial staff should not identify the alleged victim or complainant during an investigation.

If the media or other parties contact First Baptist Church or a church member about a pending allegation of abuse, they should be referred to the senior pastor. Only the senior pastor or his designee should make comments about the allegations.

Policy Implementation

The ministerial staff with assistance as needed from the Child and Worker Protection Policy Committee will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of this policy and the guidelines included in it.

Policy Review

The *Child and Worker Protection Policy* will be reviewed as needed by the ministerial staff and the Child and Worker Protection Policy Committee. The church will approve any required changes or updates.

**Responsibilities of the Ministerial Staff
First Baptist Church of Grandview
Grandview, Missouri**

1. Take all allegations of abuse and/or neglect seriously.
2. Document all efforts in handling the incident.
3. Contact the Department of Social Services: Children's Division within 24 hours of observing or receiving a report. Do not attempt an in-depth investigation. Investigations should be left to professionals. Important contact information is on file in the church office.
4. Report the incident immediately to the church insurance company and attorney. Do not try to handle this without professional outside assistance.
5. Notify the parent(s) or guardian(s), unless you suspect the notification might further endanger the child, youth or special needs adult.
6. Do not confront the accused until the safety of the child, youth or special needs adult is secured.
7. Do not prejudge the situation, but take the allegations seriously and reach out to the alleged victim and his/her family. Showing care and support helps to prevent further hurt. Extend whatever pastoral resources are needed. Remember the care and safety of the alleged victim is the first priority. Responding in a negative or non-supportive manner may increase the anger and pain of the alleged victim and his/her family, making future reconciliation more difficult and increasing the possibility of damaging litigation.
8. Treat the accused with dignity and support. If the accused is a worker, that individual should be relieved of his/ her caregiver duties until the investigation is completed. The individual may later be asked to avoid all contact with children, youth or special needs adults on a permanent basis. A compensated worker will be suspended with pay until the investigation is completed and may later be terminated.
9. If the accused is a church member or attendee, but not a worker, he or she will be told to avoid all contact with children, youth or special needs adults within the church until the investigation is completed. If convicted, the individual will be told to avoid all contact with children, youth or special needs adults in the church on a permanent basis.
10. If a ministry staff member becomes aware that a convicted sex offender is attending First Baptist Church of Grandview or has become a member, the offender will be told to avoid all contact with children, youth or special needs adults within the church.
11. If a church member or attendee is convicted of a crime against a child, youth or special needs adult, any further disciplinary action will be the responsibility of the senior pastor in consultation with the Council of Deacons.

12. If a First Baptist Church of Grandview member has been convicted of a crime against a child, youth or special needs adult and First Baptist Church of Grandview staff becomes aware this member has joined another church, First Baptist Church of Grandview will attempt to notify the ministerial staff of said church that the individual has been convicted of said crime.
13. Use the text of a prepared public statement to answer the media and to convey information to the congregation. The prepared statement should never be only “no comment.” It should include the steps First Baptist Church of Grandview has taken, such as the development and implementation of this policy, and the care and concern First Baptist Church of Grandview has for all parties involved. Be careful to safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of all involved.