

First Baptist Church Newland Children and Student Ministry Safety Policies and Procedures

Our purpose is to assist families in nurturing the spiritual formation of their children through a fun, loving, and accepting environment where they can learn Bible stories, learn about God's gift of salvation and his vast love for them, learn how to apply what they learn to their daily lives, and grow to love the Lord with all their hearts, souls, mind and strength knowing him as their personal Lord and Savior. As a result, we pray that our children will choose to follow Christ's leadership in a lifelong journey of faith.

Parental Responsibilities

We believe a healthy, thriving church is the product of healthy families seeking the will of God and guidance of the holy spirit for their lives. The family unit is the foundation of the Church and society as God seeks to redeem humanity through his grace. At FBCN we want to equip and support families as they seek the will of God for their families through Student and Children's ministries demonstrating the love, care and grace that Christ offers to all. No person in a child's life will have more opportunity to share Christ with that child more than their parent/s, or guardian/s and that is who is ultimately responsible for the spiritual growth and development of a child. The Student and Children's ministries at FBCN seek to support, love, and provide theological and spiritual guidance for families, students and children as they embark upon the utmost important task of accepting, understanding and sharing the love and grace of Christ with each other and the world.

Staff and Volunteer Requirements

Screening and Training:

- Reviewing and understanding FBCN's Church Safety Policies and Procedures including this document
- Completing an application and interview with the Children's or Student Minister
- Completing a criminal background check (This applies to all new volunteers.)
 - Completion of "Ministry Safe Sexual Abuse training and program dictated training" (These are required for all new volunteers but do not require annual recertification.)

Supervision

The Children's and Student Ministry staff and volunteers are responsible for the supervision of children during ministry activities, including observing the environment and equipment for unsafe situations, removing children from potentially dangerous conditions, and reporting problems immediately. Staff should make sure that anyone who has not been successfully screened does not have unsupervised access to children. Supervision of children will be guided by the two-adult rule described in the next section. Parents are responsible for their children up until the time the activity is scheduled to begin and after the activity's scheduled ending time. Leaders are responsible for informing parents of the beginning and ending times. When children arrive to any church ministry or program, they are expected to remain in that program until the program ends and supervision is transferred back to parents. Children may not leave the program early without a parent's permission. A child's failure to follow this policy will be considered unacceptable behavior, and discipline policies will be enforced (see separate section on discipline). Children's ministry leaders are not responsible for children who do not show up at a ministry activity. Each Sunday a member of the Deacon body is responsible to monitor halls and classrooms as needed and will initial and time stamp parental sign in sheets upon completing classroom checks.

The Two-Adult Rule

The Two-Adult Rule states that there must always be two adults present when supervising one or more children. This rule is designed for the safety of children as well as adults, and is required across all ministry areas with few exceptions (see guidelines for these cases below). Planning ahead will help avoid the potential of being alone with one or more children. Compliance to the two-adult rule includes the following:

- Two volunteer approved adults must be present when supervising one or more children.
- Adults should be in sight of each other at all times.
- Adults are defined as 18 years old and up

Exceptions to the Two-Adult Rule

The purpose of the Two-Adult Rule is to make sure the actions of any one leader are known to at least one other leader and to encourage leaders to support each other in ministry. Guidelines for exceptions to the Two-Adult Rule (outlined below) follow this same idea—that even when only one adult is present, the actions of that leader are known and visible to others. This is accomplished by visible and public locations, as well as communication with other ministry staff.

Guidelines for Unplanned Situations with Only One Adult

Occasionally, leaders will find themselves without another adult present due to unforeseen circumstances. The following procedures should be followed.

- Immediately inform the Children’s or Student Minister, member of the Deacon Safety Team, or other approved volunteer. If this is impossible the leader should call and remain engaged in a phone conversation with one of the above listed persons.
- Visible location--For any time when there is only one adult present, the group must be in a location that is visible to others with an unobstructed window, open door, etc.

Classroom Safety:

- Each Classroom will have doors that allow for full classroom visibility, if this is not available in the room the door will remain open.
- Each Sunday a member of the deacon body will be assigned to monitor halls and classrooms.
- Each Classroom will be equipped with a basic first aid kit. Volunteers will only treat minor injuries without otherwise contacting parents. If a child has special medical needs treatment shall only be administered by parents except in the event of an emergency. It is the responsibility of parents to make staff and volunteers aware of any special medical or learning needs of a child. The Deacon Safety Team and appropriate staff member will determine if FBCN can effectively accommodate the needs of the child.

Check in and Check Out Procedures:

Parents are responsible for their child until their child is checked into and once their child is checked out of a church ministry program. Programs serving children from Preschool through Grade 2 have check in and out procedures which require the parent to sign in when they bring the child to the program and sign out when they pick up the child at the end of the program. This means that parents are expected to escort their child to the check in area and that children in Preschool through Grade 2 should not be released from a program or activity without parents coming to pick them up and signing them out unless otherwise specified by a Parent. Children may not leave the program early without a parent’s permission.

Preschool Check-In and Checkout Procedures:

- Parents are required to sign their children in and out of preschool classrooms
- Each parent must provide a phone number at which they may be reached by text (during worship) or call. If a child has an emergency needs a diaper change or has any other need that cannot be met by a volunteer a parent will be contacted via text during worship service times or call at all other times.

Bathroom Procedures

Children in grades 2 and under must be escorted to the restroom. It is understood that bathroom visits represent a time in which the “2 Adult Rule” is potentially broken. If this occurs volunteers will abide by the guidelines outlined in the “Exceptions to the 2 Adult Rule Section.” Deacon hall and class room monitors will make themselves available to assist in supervision during worship.

Volunteers will not diaper any children and will contact parents via text if a child needs a diaper change or bathroom assistance of any kind. Parents should be aware of this and encourage children to use the bathroom prior to being in the care of staff or volunteers. Parents should also dress children in garments in which they can successfully use the restroom while wearing.

Discipline and Classroom Management

Hebrews 12:7-11 tells us that discipline, though sometimes painful, produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those trained by it. It also tells us discipline should be born out of love and not be intended solely as punishment or behavioral control. It should be a growth mechanism through which we receive necessary correction, guidance, training and molding of character.

Classroom Rules

1. Obey the teacher
2. Listen
3. Be kind
4. Be safe
5. Keep your hands and feet to your self

Corrective Actions

1. Handle situations individually as much as possible.
2. Give a warning when a child fails to follow the rules
3. Remind the child of the rules
4. Explain why the behavior is unacceptable
5. Redirect the child to something positive

6. Explain the consequences of unacceptable behavior by describing the correct way to behave.
7. If a child repeats the action, guide him/her to a quiet place separate from the other children for a short, but designated period of time.
8. After a third time, the child will be escorted to the Director of Children's Ministry for appropriate discipline and parental notification.

Sexual Abuse and other Zero Tolerance Policies

First Baptist Newland has a zero-tolerance policy for sexual abuse. All volunteers and staff must undergo Ministry Safe sexual abuse and prevention training. This training seeks to prevent sexual abuse in all circumstances and forms i.e. Child to Child, Adult to Child and Adult to Adult. Any sexual abuse or suspected sexual abuse will be reported to the Deacon Safety Team, Parents/Guardians, and appropriate law enforcement agencies as dictated the laws of the State North Carolina.

Student and Children Staff and Volunteers will not address sexuality or sexual education other than a Biblical stance of abstinence in their curriculum. We believe that it is the role of parents to guide and teach their children in issues pertaining to sex and sexuality. Any sexually oriented or natured questions from children will be directed to parents.

There will be zero tolerance for behavior that is deemed out of control or abusive verbally, physically or sexually by the teacher or leader.

1. Behavior deemed out of control will result in immediate removal of the child from the ministry activity and personal family contact by the Ministry Staff.
2. If the offense deems it necessary, the police will be contacted.
3. The child may be suspended from ministry activities for an amount of time determined by the Director of Children's Ministry.
4. **The child and family will be treated with respect and love, and the child will be welcomed back to ministry activities after the suspension period if possible.**

Physical Contact

Respect, safety, and appropriate boundaries are the guiding principles for physical contact between ministry leaders and children. Any inappropriate or threatening contact between children or children and volunteers should be immediately reported to the Deacon Safety Team, Appropriate Staff, Parents/Guardians and in the case of illegal actions, Law Enforcement. **Love and affection are part of church life and ministry. There are many ways to demonstrate affection while maintaining positive and safe boundaries with children and youth.**

Field Trips/Driving

If children are taken off campus, parents must be pre- informed and must pre-approve the trip. If the children are transported in vehicles, signed releases and “Consent to Treat” must be obtained and carried on the field trip. All children under 12 must be transported in the rear seat(s) and each must have their own seat belt. Drivers must be over 25 and be approved by FBCN insurance policies. Children who require a child safety or booster seat will be transported only if parents provide and install child safety and booster seats.

Communication Outside of Usual Ministry Functions

All communication to preschool and kindergarten children should be through parents. Leaders of children may contact children in their program if the leader first receives documented approval from parents/guardians.