

First Baptist Church of St Johns, Michigan

Child Protection Policy



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Policy Statement

We strive to provide as safe and secure an environment as possible for all of our children’s ministry participants, and to minimize the ministry’s and workers’ vulnerability to unwarranted accusations, in order to bring glory to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and to point every person toward a saving relationship with Him.

Children’s Worker Screening Procedures

1. Prior to consideration for a position, whether as a volunteer or as a potential employee, any candidate who may be working with children, youth, or the cognitively-disabled
 - a. must have been regularly attending this church for at least one year,
 - b. and must complete the “Ministry Application”, which will be reviewed by a pastor, with references being checked and a criminal records check being made, to make certain that the worker will be appropriate for the ministry position, based on the information provided.
2. The pastors or their designees will have the final judgment as to whether an application is accepted or rejected. Any information indicating that a candidate poses a threat to others or has any prior history of physical or sexual abuse directed against another person will result in the immediate removal of the individual candidate from consideration for, or continued service with, a children’s or youth ministry position with this organization.

Supervision

1) Staffing

At every function or event sanctioned by the church, during every child, youth, and/or cognitively-disabled-persons ministry program, supervision of children who are less than 17 years old and not being supervised by their own parent(s) must include at least one adult female, 18 years of age or older, supervising the children. Each ministry/program leader will be responsible to ensure appropriate and sufficient supervision which may require additional staffing beyond the above-mentioned minimum.

An exception to this adult female staffing requirement would be a group of all-male children being supervised by at least two adult males, such as a boys camp-out, sporting event, etc.

An exception to this requirement would be made for children's Sunday school so long as there is one teacher 21 years or older, the classroom has clear visibility of the teaching area from the hallway and a safety team member or other individual makes random visits to each of the classrooms to monitor the activity.

2) Restrooms

Children (both boys and girls) should be taken to the restroom and assisted as needed by a female. NO adult or teenage male should assist a child in a restroom if that child is not their own child or sibling. Consideration should be given to the number of female workers required, so children are not left without proper supervision during restroom trips, etc.

3) Diapers

Diapers should only be changed by females, or by a male who is an immediate family member of the child.

4) Male workers

If a male worker, of any age, is present, at least one other worker NOT a direct family member (spouse-spouse, parent-son/daughter, or siblings) should be present, and male workers should not be left alone with the children. An exception to this rule would be where an adult male teacher is teaching at the church campus, under active, recorded video surveillance.

5) Pick up, and off-campus activities

Children will be released only to a parent, guardian, or other person specifically authorized to pick up the person, and minors should have written parental permission for any activity off the church property.

6) Clear visibility

All classrooms should have doors with windows that provide a clear view of the teaching area.

7) Males in the nursery

There shall be no teenage or adult males in the nursery at any time children are present.

8) Physical discipline

Workers are never to spank, hit, grab, shake, or otherwise physically discipline anyone.

Reporting Injury, Abuse, Or Molestation

- 1. Workers who become aware of any injury, abuse, or molestation, or any suspicions of neglect, abuse, or molestation involving a child, shall immediately inform both the pastor overseeing the ministry, as well as the ministry leader, regardless of where the injury, abuse, or molestation is believed to have occurred. *** Reporting of any and all signs/indications/observations is mandatory, for the sake of child protection.**
2. Any pastor and/or ministry leader who becomes aware of possible injury, abuse, neglect, or molestation of a child will ensure that the child's parent or guardian is immediately informed unless it is suspected that the parent or guardian is the perpetrator of the abuse or molestation. The pastor and/or ministry leader will promptly report any suspicions to law enforcement authorities and/or Children's Protective Services investigators at the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, according to Michigan law.

Annual Employee/Worker Review

1. All ministry workers, both volunteers and employees, who will be working in any capacity with children, youth, or the cognitively-disabled, will complete a brief "Annual Renewal Application" once each year, and will note that they have read and agreed with this Child Protection Policy.
2. Should the renewal application show that any employee or volunteer worker has become unsuitable for working with children, youth, or the cognitively-disabled, they will be immediately removed from their current position, and will not be considered for other positions involving work with children, youth, or the cognitively-disabled.

Revision of Policy/Procedures

This policy and procedures will be reviewed as needed and can be modified in accordance with the by-laws of the organization. Any such modification should be promptly conveyed to all persons affected by the modification.