

# ***Child Protection***

***FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, DANVILLE PA***

Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me  
and do not hinder them,  
for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”  
Matthew 19:14

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## CHILD ABUSE

### 1.) **INTRODUCTION – PROTECT THE VULNERABLE**

Safeguarding the physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being of young people may be one of the most important responsibilities of any ministry organization. The issue of abuse, particularly sexual abuse, is not an easy topic to discuss, but by being aware of its existence and developing plans for preventing it, churches can take important steps toward protecting their children and youth. Any church or ministry that works with children and youth is vulnerable to incidents of abuse. Abuse has no regard for the size of the ministry, its denomination, or its location.

### **WHY PREVENTION PROGRAMS HELP REDUCE THE RISK OF ABUSE**

- Acknowledges the potential for child abuse.
- Employee and volunteer screening procedures, education and monitoring maximizes the safety of children and youth and protects the ministry & its workers' reputations.

### 2.) **IDENTIFYING ABUSE**

WHAT IS ABUSE? Generally, abuse occurs in several forms, all of which could be happening at the same time.

- **Emotional Abuse**: conveys a message that the child is worthless and undeserving of love and care; can take the form of threats, critical words, demeaning terms or names, deprivation of affection, or similar emotional cruelty; can be spoken or unspoken
- **Sexual Abuse**: any form of sexual contact between a child and an adult or older youth; can include showing or talking about sexually explicit material
- **Physical Abuse**: intentional, deliberate behavior that causes bodily harm to a child; can take several forms including assault, shaking, kicking, choking; all non-accidental physical injuries
- **Neglect**: failing to meet a child's needs, such as nutritional, physical, emotional, educational, safety; can include lack of basic needs like weather appropriate clothing, lack of food that results in child being extremely underweight for their age, lack of running water for bathing or cleaning clothes
- **Spiritual**: using religious references or guilt to motivate to shame a child into a particular religious action or behavior

### WHO ARE THE ABUSERS?

- 77% of the perpetrators are a parent to the victim; family members account for 30% of the sexual abuse
- 60% of sexual abuse is committed by someone known to the child, but not a family member, such as a babysitter or other childcare provider; only 10% are strangers
- Do not generally stand out in any special way and match the norms of society regarding education, employment and social status

### WHO ARE THE ABUSED?

- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately 1 in 6 boys and 1 in 4 girls are sexually abused before the age of 18
- 82% of all juvenile victims are girls
- According to *Christianity Today*, an average of 70 allegations of child abuse are reported in churches each week

## **HOW DOES CHILD ABUSE HAPPEN WITHIN THE CHURCH?**

- Ministries within churches are often viewed as easy targets by sexual predators.
- Churches and many related organizations rely heavily on volunteer help in children and youth ministries.
- Churches often have large numbers of children, inadequate child abuse prevention policies, a shortage of willing workers and a culture that sees the good in people.

### **3.) DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE**

- Victims of abuse often gradually disclose what has happened.
- They are afraid of negative reactions of adults or of “getting into trouble” with the abuser.
- Disclosure can take many forms: verbal, non-verbal, behavioral, emotional.
- ***Always listen to children if they disclose abuse.***

### **EFFECTS OF ABUSE**

- Any form of abuse, particularly sexual abuse within a ministry, demoralizes everyone involved – the victim, the victim’s family, the ministry and its leaders, the family of the abuser and the community.
- Steals a child’s innocence.
- Can cause depression, fear, lack of self-esteem, scars that often affect a child’s experiences throughout life.
- Abuse that occurs within a church or ministry setting often creates overwhelming obstacles to a child’s faith development. Trust is broken and questions such as “How could God let this happen to me?” are common.
- Legal and emotional fallout can severely damage a ministry. Litigation resulting from allegations of abuse is often costly, even if the allegation is withdrawn or proven untrue. The damage to a ministry’s reputation can have far reaching, negative consequences.

### **4.) WARNING SIGNS OF ABUSE (May indicate abuse.)**

- Emotional:
  - ~ Excessively withdrawn, fearful or anxious about doing something wrong
  - ~ Shows extremes in behavior
  - ~ Doesn’t seem to be attached to parent or caregiver
  - ~ Actions are inappropriately adult or inappropriately infantile
- Physical:
  - ~ Frequent unexplained bruises, welts, cuts
  - ~ Always watchful and “on alert” as if waiting for something bad to happen
  - ~ Avoids touch, flinches at sudden movements, seems afraid to go home
  - ~ Wears inappropriate clothing to cover up injuries, ie. long sleeves on hot days
- Neglect:
  - ~ Clothes are ill fitting, filthy or inappropriate for the weather
  - ~ Hygiene is consistently bad (unbathed, matted/unwashed hair, noticeable body odor)
  - ~ Untreated illnesses or injuries
- Sexual:
  - ~ Trouble walking or sitting
  - ~ Displays knowledge of sexual acts inappropriate for their age
  - ~ Anxiety
-

## **WHAT IS SPIRITUAL ABUSE?**

Using religious references to frighten, shame or by guilt motivate a child into a particular action or behavior. Our role is to love children into God's Kingdom.

### **SEXUAL PREDATORS' SECRET TECHNIQUES**

Sexual abuse can be difficult to detect. Awareness of pre-abuse behaviors called "grooming", can help detect the potential for abuse. Predators will also use grooming techniques not only on their victims, but also on the gatekeepers (e.g. victim's parents, volunteers, church employees.)

Grooming behaviors typically include:

- Offering gifts, compliments, and lavish attention
- Gaining access by finding or creating situations to be alone with the victim
- Creating opportunities to slowly establish an increasingly physical connection (touches, tickles, hugs)
- Encouraging or threatening a child to "keep their special secret" by using shame and blame

--These techniques are slowly introduced and can cause abuse to remain a secret for some time-whether it is committed within a ministry setting or outside it.

--Grooming behaviors are very difficult to spot, but if something seems out of place, bring it to the attention of ministry leadership. Hold each other accountable and strictly follow policies.

## **5.) WHEN TO REPORT**

- When a child confides in you:
  - ~ Always listen seriously; let the child use his or her own words
  - ~ Remain calm, tell the child they have done the right thing by telling
  - ~ Be a good listener and don't make promises to "fix this"
  - ~ Don't make suggestions or attempt to alter the child's story
  - ~ Document what you were told
  - ~ Immediately alert designated ministry staff (Safe Church Manager or Pastoral Staff or your Ministry Head.)
- Keep the number of people who hear of an allegation to a minimum prior to contacting authorities. This will help preserve the integrity of the information and protect the privacy of those involved.
- A report must be made to the PA Children and Youth Childline if there is any reasonable cause to suspect that child is a victim of child abuse either during an activity at FBC or elsewhere.
- If you suspect someone is in immediate danger or presents an immediate threat to someone else, call the police.
- See the FBC Reporting Child Abuse Booklet for further details and. Booklets are available from the Safe Church Manager and in the Sunday Bible School Office.

### *"Good Faith Reporting"*

*Every state provides protection against liability when the individual reports suspected abuse "in good faith," meaning the person has a reasonable belief that abuse has occurred or is ongoing.*

## CHILD SAFE CHURCH AT DANVILLE FIRST BAPTIST

### 1.) OUR GOAL

- Help our children grow in Christ in a safe and nurturing environment, protect our workers from false accusations and the ministry in which they serve.
- Model tolerance, respect and loving support for others, creating a safe haven for the children under their care.

### 2.) DEFINITIONS

- Adult: Anyone 18 years old and over
- Child: Anyone under 18 years of age
- Mandated Reporter: “An individual paid or unpaid who, on the basis of the individual’s role as an integral part of a regularly scheduled program, activity or service, accepts responsibility for a child.” All FBC volunteers in children or youth ministries are Mandated Reporters. “To fulfill his legal mandate, when a mandated reporter has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is being abused, he must immediately make a report.” ([www.keepKidsSafe.pa.gov](http://www.keepKidsSafe.pa.gov))
- Youth Volunteer: anyone age 17 years old or younger. May assist but is not considered as an adult volunteer and should be supervised.

### 3.) OUR POLICIES

#### PHYSICAL SAFETY MEASURES

- Each room will have a door with a window in it or a half door
- During certain activities doors to other parts of the church are locked
- Surveillance Cameras
- Security Team

#### ADULT VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS

- Six-month Rule– must be actively involved in church activities for 6 months (An exception may be granted in the case of MOPS and Awana for non-leadership positions.)
- Must be known by church leadership
- Complete a Ministry Involvement Application
- Complete Background Checks – Criminal Record and Child Abuse every 60 months.
- Complete FBI Background Check (fingerprinting) for anyone not living in PA for 10 consecutive years. Those who have lived in PA for the last 10 consecutive years will sign a PA Certification form.
- Attend FBC Child Safe Class with a refresher class every 12 month.
- Photo ID

#### YOUTH VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS

- First Baptist Youth Volunteer Application
- Photo
- Signed Parent Permission Form
- FBC Youth Training Class

### SUPERVISION

- Two adult rule – at least 2 adults must be with a child at all times
- Arrive at least 15 minutes before a scheduled activity
- Check-In: Children through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade should be escorted to their classroom by a parent or other responsible adult. Each event will have an attendance sheet which includes the names of each child present, as well as any volunteers and any observing adults who remain for more than 5 minutes.
- Check-out: Children through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade will be released to parents or legal guardians or other persons designated by parents or legal guardians. Under no circumstances should a child be released to any adult or family member including older siblings without the permission of the parent or legal guardian. The responsible person must make the request at the time of arrival and not by a phone call prior to the child leaving.
- No child will be sent to the exit door or parking lot to meet his/her ride. (In the event of a parent mobility issue special arrangements will be made.)

### PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

- Welcome at all programs in which their child is involved
- Must be listed on the attendance sheet
- Should not be involved with the other children
- If a parent wishes to attend on a regular basis, they must complete our volunteer application and background checks. They will not be considered a volunteer.

### DISCIPLINE

- No physical discipline will be permitted. No threats or insults that are meant to intimidate or embarrass children. Physical restraint should only be used when there is no other reasonable means to prevent children from harming themselves or others.
- Try to redirect children in a positive manner.
- Disciplinary issues that cannot be easily resolved should be reported to the ministry leader for guidance and then to a parent or guardian if unresolved. A pastor should be notified about any unresolved issues.

### APPROPRIATE TOUCH

- Based on the child, hugs and lap holding are appropriate for children under 3 years.
- Side hugs, pats on the back, high fives or fist bumps and verbal praise are acceptable for children over 3.
- Be aware that the children are watching so take care with interactions with other volunteers while in the presence of children.

## **4.) OTHER ISSUES**

- Verbal interactions between staff members or volunteers should be positive and uplifting. Children may misinterpret what they are hearing and seeing.
- Please keep cell phones with you in case of an emergency, but please refrain from using otherwise.
- No pictures should be taken without written permission from parent/guardian. Never post anything that will identify a child on social media.
- Tobacco use is discouraged on the church grounds.

**5.) ILLNESS**

- Parents are encouraged to be considerate of other children when deciding whether to place a child under our care.
- Volunteers should not come when sick. Attempt to find an approved replacement for your position and alert your ministry head. If you are not able to find an approved replacement. Notify your ministry head as soon as possible.

In an effort to provide a healthy and safe environment for everyone, we ask that children and adults not be in our classrooms with any of the following symptoms or illnesses:

- \*Fever within the past 24 hours
- \*Vomiting within the past 24 hours
- \*Diarrhea within the past 24 hours
- \*Runny nose (green or yellow)
- \*Symptoms of a communicable disease
- \*Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)
- \*Unresolved Lice
- \*Skin Infections
- \*Coughing

*\*If a child is being treated with antibiotics, he/she should be on the medicine for at least 24 hours before coming to any Children’s Ministries.*

- If any of these symptoms are noticed in a child, please promptly locate the parent/guardian and ask them to pick up their child. For questions volunteers should check with their Ministry Head.

**6.) INJURY**

Be vigilant in looking for safety hazards. Notify your Ministry Head of any potential problems.

FIRST AID: Many Sunday Bible School rooms have a first aid kit. Additional first aid supplies are in the sanctuary coatroom with an AED, simple supplies are located behind the Information Desk in the main foyer. There is a first aid cabinet with AED in the kitchen foyer and on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, near the elevator (no AED.) Phones are located throughout the church. If help is needed, the Security Extension is listed on each phone. Ice is generally available in the kitchen. One time use frozen sponges are in the outer kitchen refrigerator freezer.

INCIDENT REPORT: AN incident report must be submitted for bruises, cuts, pain that last more than a few minutes, falls, head bumps, any other injury. Forms are in the kitchen by the phone and in the Sunday Bible School office. Fill out as completely as possible. Turn into your ministry head or the church office. Always notify the parent/guardian of any injury no matter how small. Call the next day to follow-up with the parents.

**7.) ALLERGIES**

- Food allergies can be life threatening. Please be aware of any allergies children under your care may have.
- External allergies such as insect bites or stings, pollen, etc.
- EPI PEN: Any time an Epi Pen is used 911 is called immediately, followed by a call to the parent/guardian. If parent/guardian is not present, one of the child’s leaders should go with them and stay with them until a family member arrives. Use of an EpiPen always requires an Incident Report.



## 8.) FOODS AND FEEDING

- Children under the age of 5 are at the greatest risk for choking.
- Refrain from feeding children foods that are a choking risk such as uncut grapes, uncut hot dogs, hard candies, difficult to chew foods.
- Generally accepted foods with a low risk factor for allergies are Kix, Cheerios, Animal Crackers.
- Be very aware of children's food allergies. **All rooms are PEANUT FREE.**
- Wash hands before handing out snacks.
- Never leave a small child unattended while eating.
- Children should be seated when eating.
- Food items should not be placed on a bare tabletop.

**VOLUNTEERS: Hot drinks are not allowed in the Infant or Toddler Nurseries  
unless they are in a spill-proof cup.  
Always take care great care with hot drinks when working with any younger children.**

## 9.) BATHROOM PROCEDURES

### DIAPERING

- Female nursery workers or the child's parent or guardian will change diapers of children of either sex.
- Diaper changes should be in plain sight of other nursery workers.
- Children should be changed only at changing stations.
- Babies should never be left unattended on changing tables.
- Children should be re-diapered and dressed immediately after the changing of their soiled diaper.
- Always wash your hands after changing a diaper.

### POTTING TODDLERS

- Two adult rule applies.
- Never leave toddlers unattended in the bathroom.
- Where divided doors are present, keep the upper half of the door partially open.
- Where there is not a divided door (Noah's Ark Lane), stay just outside the door with the door cracked open.
- Help toddlers wash and dry their hands after pottyng.
- "Accidents" should be handled by reassuring the child and completing the changing of diapers or underwear and clothing. Spare clothing of several sizes is available in the Infant Nursery.

### TAKING SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN TO THE BATHROOM

- Remind parents to make a potty stop before the child attends an activity.
- Two adult rule applies.
- Children through third grade should be accompanied to the restroom for supervision and assistance when needed. Children should receive the minimum amount of assistance needed based upon their individual capabilities.
- Children in fourth and fifth grade may use the bathroom if they are with another child and a ministry worker is in the area.

(Continued the next page.)

- When accompanying a child to the restroom, make sure the rest room is empty before the child enters. Kindly ask all adults to wait outside. If necessary, you may crack the door and stand just outside to be aware of what's happening in the restroom. Main floor hallway off the foyer has a family restroom that may be used. Never be the only adult in the restroom with a child.

#### 10.) **MISSING CHILD**

- Do a quick check in your area. If the child is not located immediately notify Security.
- Prepare a description of the child, including as many of the following as possible: name, gender, age, race, eye and hair color, clothes, distinguishing features, location last seen, parents' location. This information should be given to the Security Office, in the Church Office, on the main floor.
- The church will go on an immediate lock down. Everyone except those who are working with the Security Team should stay in place. Security may ask additional adults to assist them. Cars will be held at the driveway entrance and searched by Security if they must leave. The Security Team will follow their procedure for searching the building and grounds.
- Pastors will be notified immediately and will speak with the child's parents/guardians.
- If the child is not located within 10 minutes the State Police will be called.
- If the child is located with someone who normally isn't with the child Security will attempt to delay that person's departure without putting the child, staff or anyone else at risk. This person should be discreetly asked the circumstances of their interaction with the child.
- Regardless of the outcome, the incident will be documented by the volunteer responsible for the child with additions from the Security Team and any others directly involved.

11.) **FINALLY!** You have reached the end of the handbook! Thank you for taking the time to prepare yourself to work with our precious kids. The opportunities to impact their lives as well as the lives of other family members are so important. As a Safe Church Team member, you play a vital role ministering to children in our safe environment. We need to encourage and keep one another accountable to the policies that are in place at FBC. Some of them may seem inconvenient or overly restrictive, however, that is not the intention!

Childcare is more than just watching children play. It is an opportunity to love them, encourage them, teach them, and sometimes even protect them. Although some volunteers are designated "teacher", each person who interacts with a child is teaching them something!

Let's all remember to take time to prepare our hearts and minds before we come to our ministry posts. Please pray for the ministry, the other workers and the children and their families.

May the Lord bless you in your service and may He be blessed by it.

The following resources were used to produce this booklet:  
[www.KeepKidsSafe.pa.gov](http://www.KeepKidsSafe.pa.gov) ; [www.PaSafeKids.org](http://www.PaSafeKids.org)  
 Brotherhood Mutual "Child Protection in a Ministry Environment"  
 Church Law and Tax Handbook "Mandatory Child Abuse Reporting Laws"  
 Calvary Children's Ministries Handbooks