

ABUSE PREVENTION PROGRAM

First Baptist Church of Murfreesboro

Murfreesboro, Tennessee

Introduction

To help protect children, First Baptist Church has adopted the following Abuse Prevention Program. It is mandatory that all First Baptist Church paid staff and volunteers understand and implement these guidelines to help prevent sexual abuse.

Volunteer Screening Procedures

The following screening procedures will be used with all volunteers who are entrusted with the care and supervision of minors. All information collected will be maintained in confidence.

1. *Volunteer Application*: Any volunteers who will work with a minor must complete the Volunteer Application and sign the attached release statement.

Our Volunteer Application includes questions regarding:

- Current address.
 - Volunteer experience.
 - Criminal history information.
2. The staff member for the ministry area in which they will be serving will review all statements made in the application and clarify any questionable information.
 3. The character and qualification of the volunteer must be approved by the appropriate committee or team of the ministry area in which they wish to serve.
 4. *Criminal Background Check*: First Baptist Church will conduct a criminal background check on all volunteers who are entrusted with the care and supervision of minors. All criminal background checks will be updated at least every 3 years.

Employee Screening Procedures

The following screening procedures are to be used with paid staff who are entrusted with the care and supervision of minors or a person who directly oversees and/or exerts control or oversight over minors. All information collected will be maintained in confidence.

1. *Employment Application*: Any paid staff being considered for work with a minor must complete the Employment Application and sign the attached release statement.

Our Employment Application includes questions regarding:

- Current and previous residence addresses.
 - Current and previous employment, including addresses, dates, and titles.
 - Names and addresses of schools attended and degree(s) earned.
 - References from previous employers and organizations that serve children, if possible.
 - Pending criminal charges (where not prohibited by state law).
 - Criminal history information.
2. Applications include a statement, which the applicant should acknowledge in writing, certifying that statements provided in the application are true and complete, and any misrepresentation or omission may be grounds for rejection of the applicant or for dismissal if he or she is employed. This statement authorizes First Baptist Church to contact any individual or organization listed in the application.

3. Review all statements made in the application, paying specific attention to any gaps in time and irregular employment patterns or unexplained absence. Pursue these gaps with employers listed and in a subsequent interview.
4. Conduct interviews with qualified applicants.
If detrimental information is uncovered but the applicant remains desirable, discuss this information with the applicant. In the event the applicant is ultimately hired, document the reasons for overriding the prior information. At least 2 members of First Baptist Church will participate in the interview.
5. Contact all listed references and employers for paid staff. Inquire as to the reason the applicant left and ask for any information that might help determine the applicant's suitability for the position. If a response is not received within a reasonable period of time, follow up and keep notes if possible.
6. *Criminal Background Check*: First Baptist Church will conduct a criminal background check on all paid staff and who are entrusted with the care and supervision of minors or a person who directly oversees and/or exerts control or oversight over minors. All criminal background checks will be updated at least every 3 years.

Confidentiality

Information obtained through the screening, application, reference check, interview, and criminal background check will be kept in confidence, unless otherwise required by law. All information discovered or obtained through the above-referenced means will be kept in a secure location and access to it will be restricted to the Pastor and Personnel Committee Chair or a representative designated to oversee the receipt and processing of that information. These materials will be archived.

Supervision Procedures

Unless an extenuating situation exists, First Baptist Church:

1. Will have adequate number of screened and trained paid staff or volunteers present at events involving minors. Supervision will increase in proportion to the risk of the activity.
2. Will monitor facilities during activities involving children.
3. Will require that young children be accompanied to the restroom and the paid staff or volunteer wait outside the restroom to escort the child back to the activity. Whenever possible, the escort will be the same sex as the minor.
4. Will encourage minors to use a "buddy system" whenever minors go on trips off of First Baptist Church property.
5. Will screen all paid staff and volunteers and approve those individuals in advance for any overnight activities.

Behavioral Guidelines for Religious Organization Paid Staff

All volunteers and paid staff will observe the following guidelines:

1. Do not provide alcoholic beverages, tobacco, drugs, contraband, or anything that is prohibited by law to minors.
2. To the extent possible, First Baptist Church events that are co-educational will have both male and female chaperones.
3. Whenever possible, at least two unrelated paid staff or volunteers will be in the room when minors are present. Doors will be left fully open if one adult needs to leave the room

temporarily and during arrival to the class or event before both adults are present. Speaking to a minor or minors one-on-one should be done in public settings where paid staff or volunteers are in sight of other people.

4. Avoid all inappropriate touching with minors. All touching shall be based on the needs of the individual being touched, not on the needs of the volunteer or paid staff. In the event a minor initiates physical contact and/or inappropriate touching, it is appropriate to inform the minor that such touching is inappropriate.
5. Never engage in physical discipline of a minor. Volunteers and paid staff shall not abuse anyone in any way, including but not limited to physical abuse, verbal/mental abuse, emotional abuse, and sexual abuse of any kind.
6. If you recognize an inappropriate relationship developing between a minor and adult, maintain clear professional boundaries and refer the minor to another individual with supervisory authority.
7. Anyone who observes abuse of a minor will take appropriate steps to immediately intervene and provide assistance. Report any inappropriate conduct to the proper authorities and officials of First Baptist Church for handling.

Disqualification

No person may be entrusted with the care and supervision of minors or may directly oversee and/or exert control or oversight over minors who has been convicted of the offenses outlined below, been on a probated sentence or received deferred adjudication for any offense outlined below, or has presently pending any criminal charges for any offense outlined below until a determination of guilt or innocence has been made, including any person who is presently on deferred adjudication. The following offenses disqualify a person from care, supervision, control, or oversight of minors:

1. Any offense against minors as defined by state law.
2. A misdemeanor or felony offense as defined by state law that is classified as sexual assault, indecency with a minor or adult, assault of a minor or adult, injury to a minor or adult, abandoning or endangering a minor, sexual performance with a minor or adult, possession or promoting child pornography, enticing a minor, bigamy, incest, or family violence.
3. A prior criminal history of an offense against minors.

Response to Sexual Abuse

First Baptist Church will respond promptly to investigate any reports of sexual abuse. All reports of sexual abuse will be taken seriously. It is important to be appropriately respectful to the needs and feelings of those who report sexual abuse and those who have been reported for sexual abuse.

When an allegation is made involving sexual abuse, the person reporting the complaint is to be told about the guidelines and the procedures to be followed. The Personnel Committee Chair or a person appointed by the Personnel Committee Chair will begin investigating the allegations and may use the assistance of legal counsel or other consultants. If the Personnel Committee Chair is the individual accused of sexual abuse, then the Pastor will conduct the investigation. The investigation will be conducted as follows:

1. Report the incident to appropriate authorities in accordance with the state mandatory reporting laws.
2. Report the matter to First Baptist Church's insurance carrier.
3. Cooperate with authorities and the insurance carrier.
4. First Baptist Church may suspend (with pay for paid staff) the alleged offender while a confidential investigation is being conducted.
5. The Personnel Committee Chair or their representative (and legal counsel or other consultants) will then meet with the Ministerial Staff of First Baptist Church and present a report on their investigation, which will include findings and recommendations of actions.
6. An official of First Baptist Church will meet with the alleged perpetrator and notify him/her of the results of the investigation and recommendations for actions.
7. An official of First Baptist Church will meet with the person reporting, along with his/her parents or legal guardians, and notify them of the results of the investigation and recommendations for actions.
8. During the investigation, an official of First Baptist Church shall maintain contact with the person reporting and his/her parents or legal guardians, and inform them of the actions taken and assist them in their process of healing.
9. An official of First Baptist Church (and legal counsel or other consultants) may meet with the alleged perpetrator, the person who initiated the report, and any others with knowledge of relevant facts.
10. Communicate with criminal and civil legal counsel of First Baptist Church.
11. Communicate with those affected by the ministry of the alleged perpetrator.

Abuse Prevention Program Acknowledgment

These guidelines have been designed to guide and assist you when working with minors. The information establishes general practices and guidelines and should not be construed in any way as a contract of employment or continued employment. First Baptist Church reserves the right to make changes in the content or application of this program and to implement those changes with or without notice.

The terms defined herein are defined for the purposes of the program and do not suppose or establish a legal relationship. These terms are not defined for the purposes of creating a legal relationship with First Baptist Church or any related or associated entity and instead are to be used with this document.

I have received a copy of First Baptist Church's Abuse Prevention Program. I understand it is my responsibility to become familiar with and adhere to the information contained herein. I understand that these policies are the property of First Baptist Church.

Print Name

Signature

Date