

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

SAFE CHURCH POLICY

REVISED 5/8/17
(previous revisions 9/16/13)

PURPOSE OF THE SAFE CHURCH POLICY

- To provide a safe and secure environment for the children, youth and vulnerable adults who participate within the faith community and activities of our church.
- To provide a safe and secure environment for the adults with developmental disabilities who participate within the faith community and activities of our church.
- To satisfy the concerns of parents, family members and staff members that we have employed a comprehensive screening process.
- To provide a system which responds quickly and thoroughly to possible violations against the Safe Church policy.
- To reduce the incidence of false accusations against clergy, employees and volunteers.
- To accomplish these goals while maintaining an atmosphere that is highly conducive to carrying out the work of the church in helping children, youth and adults grow in their knowledge of God within a loving, Christ-centered environment.

DEFINITIONS

The following terms used herein and are defined as follows:

1. *Paid Staff*: Any pastor, minister, preacher, cleric, or employee who is paid.
2. *Children/Youth/Minor*: Any person who has not reached his/her 18th birthday or the age of majority as defined by state law.
3. *Adult*: Any person who has reached his/her 18th birthday or as defined by state law.
4. *Vulnerable Adult*: Any person 18 years old or older who has the functional, mental, or physical inability to care for himself or herself
5. *Volunteer*: Means any unpaid person engaged in or involved in activities and who is entrusted with the care and supervision of minors or a person who directly oversees and/or exerts control or oversight over minors or adults.

6. *Sexual Abuse*: The employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any minor or adult to engage in, or assist any other person to engage in, any sexually explicit conduct or any simulation of such conduct for the purpose of producing any visual depiction of such conduct or rape, and in cases of caretaker or inter-familial relationships, statutory rape, molestation, prostitution, or other form of sexual exploitation of minor or adult, or incest with a minor or adult, or as defined by federal and state law. This includes and is not limited to unwelcome sexual remarks, jokes, advances, leering, whistling, or sexual gestures; sexual touching, fondling, molestation, assault, or other intimate physical contact; compelling another person to engage in a sexual act by threats or fear or undue influence; and providing or displaying pornographic materials to another person.
7. *Emotional Abuse*: Verbal or nonverbal conduct including mental exploitation, degrading communication, or humiliating or threatening conduct that may or may not include bullying or as defined by state law.

What are the indicators of child sexual abuse?

Infants and preschoolers:

- Being uncomfortable around previously trusted persons.
- Sexualized behavior (excessive masturbation, sexually inserting objects, explicit sex play with other children, etc.).
- Fear of rest rooms, showers or baths (common locations of abuse).
- Fear of being alone with men or boys.
- Nightmares on a regular basis or about the same person.
- Abrupt personality changes.
- Uncharacteristic hyperactivity.
- Moodiness, excessive crying.
- Aggressive or violent behavior toward other children.
- Difficulty sleeping or relaxing.
- Clinging behavior which may take the form of separation anxiety.
- Passive or withdrawn behavior.
- Pain, itching or bleeding in genital area.

Pre-adolescent children:

- Being uncomfortable around someone previously trusted.
- Specific knowledge of sexual facts and terminology beyond developmental age.
- Sexualized behavior (excess masturbation, sexual acting with other children on a regular basis, seductive toward peers and adults, etc.)
- Wearing multiple layers of clothing, especially to bed.
- Parentified behavior (psuedo-mature, acts like a small parent).
- Fear of being alone with men or boys.
- Fear of restrooms, showers or baths.
- Constant unexplained anxiety, tension or fear.
- Frequent tardiness or absence from school, especially if excuses are always written by the same person.
- Attempts to make herself ugly or undesirable (such as poor personal hygiene).

- Eating disorders (obesity, bulimia, anorexia).
- Self-conscious behavior, especially regarding body.
- Reluctance to go home after school.
- Abrupt personality changes.
- Child acquires toys or money with no explanation.
- Wetting of bed or clothing after being “broken” of that problem.
- Nightmares on a regular basis or about the same person.
- Changes in sleeping habits (tries to stay up late or seems constantly tired).
- Moodiness, inappropriate crying.
- Unusual need for assurance of love.
- Regressive behavior (fantasies and/or infantile behavior).
- Uncharacteristic aggressive or violent behavior.
- Tendency to seek out or totally avoid adults.
- Inability to relate to peers.
- Running away, especially in a child normally not a behavioral problem.

Adolescents:

- Sexualized behavior (promiscuity, prostitution, sexual abuse of other children, etc.).
- Running away, especially in a child normally not a behavioral problem.
- Drug and alcohol abuse.
- Suicidal gestures or attempts.
- Self-mutilation.
- Extreme hostility toward a parent or caretaker.
- Parentified behavior (pseudo-mature, acts like a small parent).
- Self-conscious behavior, especially regarding body.
- Wearing multiple layers of clothing, especially to bed.
- Eating disorders (usually obesity).
- Nightmares or other sleeping problems.
- Constant fear or anxiety.
- Delinquent behavior.
- School problems (academic or behavioral).
- Defiance or compliance to an extreme.
- Friends tend to be older.

Family indicators of child sexual abuse:

- Role reversal between mother and daughter.
- Extreme over-protectiveness or jealousy toward a child by a parent (parent sharply restricts a child’s contact with peers or adults outside the home).
- Inappropriate sleeping arrangements (child sleeps with a parent on a regular basis or with both parents where she is exposed to sexual activity.)

PREVENTION

All coordinators of Church activities will:

Have adequate number of adults present at events involving children and youth. There should be at least 2 unrelated adults supervising children, youth, and vulnerable adults. If arranged in advance

and agreed to by the staff and parents, these ratios can be changed for special circumstances, and on a case by case basis.

Insure that volunteers and paid child care workers who interact with children, youth, and/or adults with developmental disabilities have been through the screening process (see below).

Obtain medical release, liability, and publicity release for each child or youth. These forms will be on file for each child or youth. (see appendix) These forms are to be updated annually.

Obtain parental permission, including a signed medical release and liability release, before taking children or youth on trips. These release forms are to be carried to any off-site activity. When written permission has not been attained, verbal approval is required and must be documented. (see appendix) These permission slips will be used for each scheduled event.

Insure that all drivers for any church sponsored activities have been through the screening process. (see below)

Monitor facilities during church sponsored activities.

All clergy, staff and volunteers of First Baptist Church will observe the following guidelines when interacting with children and youth:

The Christian community affirms that touching one another is an important means of communication and sharing God's love. Touching is a means of ministering to the whole person. The following guidelines are designed to help you know when and what kinds of touch are appropriate at Church. Also, these guidelines are designed to help you to not become unwittingly involved in controversy, due to the misinterpretation of and the act of touching.

Physical contact

Touching should be age appropriate and based on the need of the minor and not on the need of the adult. Avoid physical contact when alone with a minor. If a minor or individuals with developmental disabilities initiates physical contact, an appropriate, limited response is proper.

Do not engage in the physical discipline of a minor. Only use physical restraint when a child is a danger to himself or herself or others.

When speaking with a distressed child, kneel or sit at their level as opposed to picking them up.

Maintain clear professional boundaries between yourself and the minor or individuals with developmental disabilities or refer the minor or individuals with developmental disabilities to another adult supervisor. If you recognize inappropriate personal or physical attraction developing between yourself and a minor or developmentally disabled individual, refer the person to another adult or supervisor.

This code of behavior also applies to physical contact with vulnerable adults, suitably adapted to recognize their relative maturity.

Restroom procedures

- Nursery-Preschool: Adults should avoid going into the stall with the child. If that is unavoidable, leave the stall door open behind you and the restroom door propped open.
- Kindergarten-5th grade: If one or more children need to use the restroom during class time two of the same gender should go together without the assistance of an adult.
- 6th grade through High School: May use the restroom on their own.
- Individuals with developmental disabilities: May use the restroom on their own. If there is an issue that has to be addressed, call their group/foster home. If someone has to enter the restroom to access the issue; make sure one person is a church staff member or someone who has had a background check.

Guidelines for classroom, overnight events, and all church related activities

Do not be alone with a minor or individuals with developmental disabilities in a closed room or isolated area that is inappropriate to a ministry relationship.

Children and youth should be dismissed to the same parent or guardian that admits them unless other arrangements have been made between the child, guardian, and church worker.

In order to provide a safe and loving Christ-centered environment, youth may not loiter in the building and must participate in an educational or worship offering. If the youth chooses not to participate in these offerings please contact the Pastor, the Youth Ministries Coordinator or the Church Moderator.

Topics, vocabulary, recordings, films, games, electronic equipment, or the use of computer software or any other form or personal interaction or entertainment that could not be used comfortably in the presence of parents should not be employed with minors. Sexually explicit or pornographic material is never appropriate.

On overnight events it may be necessary for volunteers or staff to administer medicine to a child. Medicines may only be administered with written parental permission.

During on-site church events, parents will be asked to administer any medicine that their child may need unless it is a medical emergency.

Have minors always stay in groups of three whenever they go on trips away from church property.

If an adult supervisor stays in a hotel or other sleeping room with a group of minors or individuals with developmental disabilities, the supervisor should sleep in his or her own bed, using a roll away or cot if necessary.

If one-on-one pastoral care of a minor should be necessary, avoid meeting in isolated environments. Schedule meetings at times and use locations that create accountability. Limit both the length and number of sessions, and make appropriate referrals. Notify another adult of the meetings.

If you observe or hear from the child that they have been abused physically, emotionally, mentally, or sexually, you must immediately report the misconduct. (see Reporting)

If you observe anyone (adult or minor) abusing a minor, take appropriate steps to immediately intervene and to provide a safe environment for the minor. Report the misconduct. (see Reporting)

Individuals with developmental disabilities: Overnight events should be addressed case-by-case due to the sensitive nature of sharing a room, medication needs, etc. One option is to coordinate with the care provider of each individual.

If you are communicating with minors electronically or through any digital or social media, act as you would if you were communicating in person. Specifically, communicate with minors using transparency and in a group, or do not communicate at all. If it is necessary to send an individual message outside of a public area to a minor, copy another adult or a parent. Do not initiate a one-on-one relationship (such as friending from a personal profile) with a minor.

SCREENING

In order to safeguard our children, youth, and individuals with developmental disabilities, and to protect the reputation of our church and the Christian community, we are committed to screening all workers and potential workers at First Baptist Church every three years.

The following screening procedures are to be used with clergy, staff and volunteers who work with children, youth, and/or individuals with developmental disabilities. All collected information is to be treated as confidential as defined below.

Six-Month Rule

All volunteers will be required to have been an active participant in the church life of FBC for six months before they begin the following procedure, in order to serve in as a volunteer.

Background check

All clergy and staff must pass a CRIMINAL BACKGROUND check. All volunteers who work with children, youth, or individuals with developmental disabilities must successfully pass a CRIMINAL BACKGROUND check. The release statement must be signed by the applicant to qualify for service within the church.

Employment application

Those applying for a paid position must complete an employment application.

Reference check

There will be complete reference checks for staff and volunteers whose primary function is to provide direct ministry to children, youth, or individuals with developmental disabilities. The church will maintain a written record of each reference check for paid staff in each staff person's personnel folder. Volunteer reference checks will be kept in the children and youth minister's office, or in the Senior Pastor's office (in the case of volunteers within our ministries to adults with developmental disabilities.)

Interview

The church will conduct an interview with each new applicant for both paid and volunteer positions. (See appendix for Personal Interview Form and Reference Check Form)

Possible exceptions to screening procedures

Anyone who has worked with children, youth, or individuals with developmental disabilities during the last program year may not be required to undergo a reference check and/or an interview. However a CRIMINAL BACKGROUND check **must** be completed for everyone.

Confidentiality

Like all personal records, information obtained through the screening process will be kept confidential. All material will be kept in a locked file cabinet and access to it will be restricted to those who have a "need to know."

TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

The staff will provide each new worker (paid or volunteer) with a copy of the Safe Church Policy. Each worker is required to read the Safe Church Policy and sign the acknowledgment form (see appendix).

The staff will provide annual training to staff and volunteer workers on Safe Church Policy, especially when any revisions of the policy occur.

REPORTING

ALL paid and volunteer workers at First Baptist Church are mandatory reporters, meaning that a report must be made if there is reasonable cause to suspect abuse or neglect, to the appropriate organization.

What to do when a child/youth reports his/her victimization to me?

- Believe the child/youth. Although children can lie about this, you should treat the information as legitimate.
- Do not question the child/youth. Leave this to the professionals/county investigators.
- Assure the child/youth that whatever happened is not his/her fault and that you are glad he/she told you.
- Be supportive and reassuring.
- Tell the child/youth that you are sorry he/she is hurt and scared and that you will try to protect him/her from further abuse. Do not promise the child that “everything will be all right.” In fact, state law may require that the abused child be removed from the home.

What to do when a vulnerable adult reports his/her victimization to me?

- Believe the individual. Treat the information as legitimate.
- Do not question the person, but leave that to the county investigator.
- Keep the information confidential.
- For a victim with developmental disabilities, call the Community Developmental Disabilities Program, 503-434-7460.
- For elder and vulnerable adult abuse, call Oregon DHS, 1-855-503-7233.

Reporting Abuse in the United States of America

An oral report of abuse to the Safe Church Ministry Team must take place within 24 hours of observable signs of abuse or of receiving a report of abuse. If the person reporting to the Safe Church Ministry Team has not already done so, and if there is reasonable cause to believe the report of abuse and the team is acting in good faith, an oral report to police officials or child protection authorities should take place.

If the victim is a child under the age of eighteen, notify the Children’s Protective Services if:

- The child is related to the abuser and/or is living in the same residence.
- The child is being abused by parents, siblings or non-relatives either living in the same house or during custodial arrangements.
- The child’s safety is at risk and parents are not protecting the child.

If the victim is a child under the age of eighteen, notify the local police department if:

- The victim is in immediate danger.
- The victim does not know the abuser.
- The victim is not related to the abuser and does not live with the abuser.
- The victim may have contact with the abuser without protection.
- The victim is under the authority of the abuser, who may be a baby-sitter, a schoolteacher, a choir-director and the like.

Anyone with a reasonable suspicion of child abuse should report the matter immediately. A delay in reporting could mean that the child experiences additional abuse. Also, if bruises or an injury is present, medical treatment may be necessary. Evidence of bruises and injury may help substantiate an allegation of abuse. A delay in reporting can diminish the medical evidence and jeopardize the case.

According to Oregon State Law ORS 419B.10 a person making a report of abuse or suspected abuse will make an oral report by telephone to the local office of the Services to Children and Families (SCF) in the county where the child who has been abused resides. If the offender is a caregiver or family member, call SCF first. If the offender is a neighbor, stranger, or teacher (non-family); call the law enforcement agency in the county where the abuse took place.

Contact the Pastor, Coordinator of Children's or Youth Ministries, or other staff person with the report of abuse or suspected abuse. That staff person will contact the First Baptist Church's insurance company as well as the church's attorney.

If the alleged offender approaches clergy, another church leader or a member of the investigation committee to discuss the allegations prior to an interview with police and/or child protection officials, the clergy or others should not discuss the allegations. Instead, the clergy or others should encourage the alleged offender to cooperate with officials. They should also advise the alleged offender that information disclosed to them may be reported to officials. If the alleged offender wishes to confess, carefully note his/her statements and record them immediately afterward. Confessions of child abuse should be reported to police officials or child protection authorities, even if the suspected child abuse has already been reported.

Telephone Numbers

503-472-4634	Services To Children and Families - Yamhill County
503-434-7307	McMinnville Police Department
503-434-7460	Community Developmental Disabilities Program
855-503-7233	Oregon DHS

RESPONDING

Guidelines for the Church Board for handling abuse allegations

A. At the time of reporting

1. The alleged victim or his/her representative should contact the pastor, the moderator or a member of the Safe Church Ministry Team of the congregation of which the alleged victim is a member or of which the alleged abuser is a member of to convey the allegations of abuse and identify the

alleged abuser. If the alleged abuser(s) is on the Safe Church Ministry team, the alleged victim or representative should contact a member of the team not implicated by the alleged victim.

2. In light of the information presented, the Safe Church Ministry Team will recommend to the Board one of the following actions:
 - (a) Take no further action until more information becomes available.
 - (b) Limit the contact between the accused and the accuser (if members of the same congregation) and/or limit the contact between the accused and any children in his/her congregation.
 - (c) Suspend the accused from the office, position or duty pending the outcome of the investigation. Suspension should be carried out with full pay (for paid staff) and without prejudice.
3. As soon as possible, the Board should make known its decision regarding appropriate action. In the case of suspension, the Board should notify the congregation regarding the nature of the allegations made. The Board should not convey any of the particulars relating to the alleged victim's allegations.

B. When criminal proceedings have concluded

The Board should promptly revisit the matter. This should occur whether the result is conviction, acquittal or dropped charges. If the criminal charges are dropped or prosecution does not result in conviction, the Board should decide whether or not to rescind its earlier action and/or take additional action. Conviction or lack of it is not the only criterion the church uses to discern ungodly conduct. An alleged abuser who has been suspended should not be reinstated to a previous position of leadership until the Board, in consultation with the police and/or child protection authorities, legal counsel and child abuse experts deems it is safe and proper to do so.

C. Safe Church Ministry Team

The Board shall appoint a Safe Church Ministry Team including at least one Board member, the Pastor, the Children's & Youth Minister, and (an) advocate(s) for vulnerable adults and developmentally disabled adults. This group will monitor and update policies annually or as needed and report back to the Board.

What is our responsibility to the child, youth, developmentally disabled individual or vulnerable adult after abuse has been reported?

- Continue to support the victim. Never question the victim about why he/she did not tell sooner nor make any statements that might imply guilt.
- Reassure the victim that what happened was not his/her fault and does not make him/her a bad person.
- Do not encourage the victim to forget about the abuse.

- Allow the victim to talk about what happened any time he/she desires to do so. When you respond, remember to be calm and matter-of-fact. Do not ask questions.
- Do not be surprised or upset by expressions of anger or love toward the offender. Depending on the relationship of the offender to the victim, the child may still love the offender even though he/she is very angry about what that person did.
- Protect the victim's privacy by not divulging the incident of abuse to anyone after the proper people have been notified.

NOTE: Our greatest concern is the safety of our children, youth and vulnerable adults at First Baptist Church. A secondary purpose is to protect the church, its reputation and resources.

It is important to know that many allegations are not presented until years after an incident. Families usually pursue court judgements only after approaching the church or organizations and receiving no acknowledgement or validation of their trauma. It is often alienation that drives them to the courtroom. Be sure to be sensitive and show the same concern for, and attention to, a report of misconduct that happened several years ago, as you would for a recent event.

What is our response to the offender?

- Once a person has been accused of a sexual crime, the alleged offender must immediately step down from any leadership position or any other duties that would put the accused person in contact with children/youth. This would include being a sole performer or member of a group performing or making presentations. This step is to be taken once charges have been made. If charges do not lead to conviction, a review will be made to determine if a return to leadership is appropriate.
- Anyone attending First Baptist Church that has been accused and is found to be guilty and/or convicted, must fully comply with the legal process and all restrictions and requirements placed upon them by the legal system. Any violation of these legal conditions will be considered a violation of the church's restoration efforts. Offender must provide a copy of any judgements, conditions of parole or other documents listing restrictions or requirements as a result of conviction.
- The convicted offender must enter into a sexual offender counseling program and complete that program to the satisfaction of the counselor. We strongly suggest that the offender commit to a continual professional counseling program for life.
- The convicted offender will be placed under the oversight of a pastor to monitor progress. Offender will report to pastor/ at least monthly. Pastor will interpret and enforce guidelines.
- The convicted offender will be advised that should he/she desire to relocate his/her membership to another congregation or begin attending another church during the period of their sentence, parole, probation or treatment, FBC will, in response to our Christian, ethical and moral duty, seek to inform the leadership of the other congregation of the factual conditions of the offender's situation.
- The convicted offender will be assured that it is the desire of the leadership of FBC, if there is evidence of a repentant heart on the part of the offender, to love, support and encourage the

offender as he/she goes through this difficult and healing time in their life. It is hoped that by the offender accepting the responsibility and consequences of his/her behavior, receiving professional treatment and receiving the renewal and healing power of God in his/her life, one day he/she will be restored to full fellowship at FBC. **However, this will not include working with children, youth, developmentally disabled individuals and/or vulnerable adults.**

Oregon Law

419B.010. Duty of officials to report child abuse; exception; violations

(1) Any *public or private official* having reasonable cause to believe that any child with whom the officials comes in contact has suffered abuse or that any person with whom the official comes in contact as abused a child shall immediately report or cause a report to be made in the manner required in ORS 419B.015.

419B.005 Definitions

- (3) "Public or private official" means:
- (c) School employee.
 - (h) Member of the clergy.

419B.015. Oral report; notification of law enforcement and local department office

A person making a report of child abuse, whether voluntarily or pursuant to ORS 419B.010, shall make an oral report by telephone or otherwise to the local office of the Department of Human Services, to the designee of the department or to a law enforcement agency within the county where the person making the report is located at the time of the contact.

419B.025. Immunity from liability for good faith reports

Anyone participating in good faith in the making of a report of child abuse and who has reasonable grounds for the making thereof shall have immunity from any liability, civil or criminal, that might otherwise be incurred or imposed with respect to the making or content of such report. Any such participant shall have the same immunity with respect to participating in any judicial proceeding resulting from such report.