



CHILD AND YOUTH SAFETY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

Last Revision April 2021

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Safety Policies and Procedures	3
Screening Process	3
Prospective Workers	3
Two Adult Rule	4
One-to-One Interactions	4
Worker to Child Ratios	4
Accountability	4
Building Safety & Playground Safety	5
Discipline	5
Bathroom Supervision and Assistance Guidelines	6
Intoxicants	6
Medication	7
Respect of Privacy	7
Transportation	7
Basic First Aid and CPR Certification	8
Parental Contact	8
Parental Involvement	8
Emergencies and Injuries	8
Physical Contact	8
Sexually Oriented Conversations & Materials	9
Sleeping Arrangements	9
Tobacco Use	9
Verbal Interactions	9
Release of Youth	10
Enforcement of Policies	10
Reporting Suspicious or Inappropriate Behaviors	10
Consequences of Violation	11
Response to Report of Abuse	11
Response Team	11
Statement of Acknowledgement and Agreement	15

SAFETY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

These Child and Youth Safety Policies and Procedures apply to all volunteers, staff or other employees (hereafter referred as workers or volunteers) and apply to activities which take place within our buildings and properties, as well as programs, activities, or events scheduled as part of the ministry of First Baptist Church Dripping Springs (FBCDS) which take place elsewhere. They provide an overview of FBCDS guidelines and are intended to facilitate a safe and nurturing environment in which youth, children and vulnerable populations (hereafter referred to as youth, children or vulnerable populations) can grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ and to protect them, and the mission of FBCDS. These policies and procedures are primarily to protect youth, however they also serve to protect workers from false accusations of abuse.

SCREENING PROCESS

Screening and supervision (**especially the two adult rule**), are the two key strategies to establish an environment of accountability, safety, and in turn, reduce the risk of child abuse or injury.

Depending on the volunteer's position, differing levels of screening may be required:

1. Criminal Background Check (18 years or older only)

Complete the **Screening Process Consent Form (SC1)**. Undergo a criminal background check.

2. Screening Information

Complete the **Screening Process Application Form (SC2A or SC2B) and Agreed Code of Conduct form (SC2D)**. Volunteers may also be required to complete a face-to-face interview. Volunteers under the direct supervision of a screened individual, may be exempt (ex. Awana, teens)

3. Policies & Procedures

Review these policies and sign the bottom portion of the **Policies and Procedures Statement of Acknowledgement and Agreement form (SC3)**, indicating that he/she has read and understands the material.

4. Child Protection Training

Complete state approved Child Protection Training to become equipped with basic information necessary to recognize abuser characteristics and 'grooming' behavior. Instructions on how to take this training online will be sent to you by email. Please contact the Church Office if you prefer to read the information and take a written test. Additional training may be required periodically.

5. Valid Timeframe

Criminal Background and reference checks must be completed and updated every 3 years. Policies, Procedures and Training should be updated and completed as needed.

PROSPECTIVE WORKERS

FBCDS prefers volunteers to actively attend FBCDS for six months (or another evangelical Christian church) prior to serving regularly in one of our children or youth ministries. Where appropriate and when necessary, the pastoral staff and/or other appointed group may approve an exception to this requirement. (ex. a new professional ministry staff member)

All primary volunteers must be 18 years or older. The church may allow responsible teens (under the age of 18) to serve under the direct supervision of approved adult volunteers, but they should be five years older than the oldest participant in the group.

It is our desire to welcome everyone to our congregation, but participation by those who have been convicted of, accused of (while under investigation by law enforcement and/or child protective services) or pled guilty to sexual or physical abuse, will be limited to ensure the safety of our youth and to assure that these individuals will not be subject to future accusations. While they may serve in other areas of ministry at FBCDS, they will be prohibited from participation in all activities that involve children, youth, and special needs individuals. A Response Team will be responsible to develop an accountability plan for these individuals. Examples of sexual and physical abuse: criminal homicide, aggravated assault, sexual abuse, sexual assault (rape), aggravated sexual assault, injury to a child, incest, indecency with a child, inducing sexual conduct or sexual performance of a child, possession or promotion of child pornography, the sale, distribution, or display of harmful material to a minor, employment harmful to children, abandonment or endangerment of a child, kidnapping or unlawful restraint, public lewdness or indecent exposure, enticing a child.

TWO ADULT RULE

Removing the opportunity for abuse is a key step in prevention. Every effort will be made to have a minimum of two adults (preferably not related) working together with youth. This protects them, prevents adults from encountering a situation where they could be wrongfully accused, and provides a safer situation in the event of an accident or emergency. It is acceptable to have only one adult worker, provided another volunteer is present in the general area and available to make regular, random checks.

In the event a volunteer finds himself/herself alone with a single child, who is not their own, that volunteer should take the child to another room or building occupied or easily observed by others. (ex. If a youth is the last to be picked up.)

ONE-TO-ONE INTERACTIONS

Workers should only conduct one-to-one meetings with an individual youth at a time when others are present and where interactions can be easily observed. In the event a closed-door meeting needs to occur, a room with a window in the door should be used. Another adult, must be in the area and the door should remain unlocked.

WORKER TO CHILD RATIOS

FBCDS is committed to providing adequate supervision in all youth ministries and programs. Accordingly, the following minimum worker to youth ratios will be observed:

Program	Workers	Youth
Nursery	2	10
Preschool-2 and 3 years old	2	12
Preschool-4 and 5 years old	2	18
Elementary	2	20
Youth	2	25

The above ratios are minimum recommendations. Where supervision is concerned, more is generally better. If only one adult is present and there is a “floating” aide supporting several classes, the minimum worker youth ratios should be divided by two.

If a worker is ‘out of ratio’ it is his or her responsibility to notify their immediate supervisor, or program supervisor without delay. Supervisors will make a diligent effort to find substitute workers to quickly bring ratios into compliance with church policy.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Volunteers must be accountable to one another and watchful for questionable behavior. They should act in the best interest of the children and youth in their care and provide them proper protection.

BUILDING & PLAYGROUND SAFETY

On the children's playground, workers are to circulate the playground, watching children during play periods, giving particular attention to the areas which are not easily seen from all viewpoints (ex. under slides, in corners, behind structures). Any two children together in an unseen or less easily viewed area should be redirected to another more open area of the playground.

DISCIPLINE

FBCDS policy prohibits workers from using physical discipline in any manner for children, youth or vulnerable adult behavioral management. This includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behavior. Clear, consistent, age appropriate limits shall be established to help children and/or youth function appropriately. Discipline should be given in love and with concern and not be designed to create fear or guilt.

Younger children are to be disciplined using time-outs and other non-physical methods of behavior management. Workers should observe the following guidelines:

- 1) Verbally redirect the child before actively intervening. With younger children some physical redirection may be necessary (ex. Removing a toy from the hands of a child that is hitting another.).
- 2) If the behavior does not cease, remove or direct the child away from the group to a corner of the room where the group is meeting (avoid being alone with the child).
- 3) Provide the child with a simple, understandable reason for the time-out, and provide the child with a clear explanation of your expectations. ("Jamie, you didn't stop hitting Chris when I asked you to, so you need to sit quietly in the blue chair for three minutes.") In addition, be verbally reassuring, as being removed from the group will likely upset the child. Do not physically hold the child in time-out.
- 4) Provide the child with a chair to sit in or a "spot" to sit on (using a pillow, blanket, carpet square, etc.) until their time-out is complete.
- 5) Follow the rule of thumb that a time-out is ineffective if it lasts longer than one minute for every year of the child's life (ex. 3 years old – 3 minutes).
- 6) Monitor the child through the entire time-out without giving your undivided attention. For longer time-outs give intermittent praise to reassure the child and keep them on task. (ex. "Jamie, you're doing a great job of sitting quietly – just 2 more minutes.")
- 7) Upon rejoining the group, remind them that repeating their initial behavior will result in further time-out. Follow this with praise.

If an older child or youth is unruly or fails to comply with verbal warnings or instructions, that child or youth will be asked to leave (if not endangered by doing so) or the child or youth's parents will be contacted to pick them up. In the event of a fight or physical altercation, workers will verbally redirect the youth involved and will try to avoid physical intervention. Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported without delay to parents and the child's or youth's immediate supervisor.

BATHROOM SUPERVISION AND ASSISTANCE GUIDELINES

Nursery and Preschool age Children:

Because these children may require complete assistance with their bathroom activities, all volunteers and employees will observe the following policies:

Diapering

- 1) Only female nursery workers or the child's parent or legal guardian will undertake the diapering of children of either sex.
- 2) Changing of diapers should be done in plain sight of other nursery workers.
- 3) Babies should be changed on changing stations or appropriately modified areas only and never be left unattended. (ex. A large child may need to be changed on the floor with a covering)
- 4) Any special instructions given by parents who leave their children in the nursery should be written. (ex. "Seth Adams has medicine in his bag for rash.")
- 5) Children should be re-diapered and re-clothed immediately upon the completion of changing their soiled diaper.

Toilet training

- 1) No child will be forced to toilet train.
- 2) Only female nursery workers or the child's parent or legal guardian will participate in toilet training efforts with children of either sex.
- 3) When children are taken into bathrooms, the door should be left partially open.
- 4) Young children should never be left unattended in bathrooms.
- 5) Parents should be consulted on each child's progress in the toilet training process before they leave the child with volunteers or employees. Any special instructions given by parents should be written. (ex. "Georgia can use the toilet, but she needs to be reminded – ask her if she needs to go.").
- 6) Children should be assisted in straightening their clothing before returning to the room with other children.
- 7) "Accidents" should be handled by reassuring the child and completing the changing of diapers or underwear and clothing.

School age children:

School age children may be accompanied to the restroom for supervision and assistance when necessary. However, children should receive the minimum amount of assistance needed based upon their individual capabilities. Workers should never take only one child to the restroom. To avoid the need for a child to go to the restroom alone, the worker should take all the children under their care to the restroom as a group.

If a worker must go into the restroom to check on an individual child, he or she should seek out another worker to accompany him/her. If another worker is not available, he/she should go to the exterior bathroom door, knock, and ask if the child needs assistance. If the child requires assistance, the worker should leave the exterior bathroom door open when entering the bathroom area and try to verbally assist the child in completing their activities, while the child remains behind the door of the bathroom stall. Any assistance with the straightening or fastening of garments should be done in the presence of another staff member or volunteer.

Special needs Individuals:

Parents will offer instruction to staff volunteers or employees about changing diapers of special needs individuals. After the age of 4, parents or legal guardians will change all special needs individuals.

INTOXICANTS

Workers are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drugs while supervising children on or off the FBCDS campus.

MEDICATION

Medication should be administered to a child or youth by a parent or guardian only. If circumstances deem this impossible, medication may be given to a child by a worker, with a doctor's prescription or specific written instructions from the parent or guardian (ex. "Seth Adams has a medicine in his bag for rash."). The medication should be in the original packaging, including over the counter medication.

RESPECT OF PRIVACY

Adults must respect the privacy of youth in situations such as changing clothes and taking showers. An adult would only intrude to the extent that the health and or safety of the youth would be in question. Youth must also respect the privacy of the adults in these situations. It is not permissible for FBCDS youth or workers to move about in the presence of others unclothed or dressed immodestly. Clothes such as swimsuits, shorts, and tops are not to be revealing or in any way draw attention to the private areas. In the event there is a situation that may call for or require the possibility of nudity (i.e. changing clothes during a pool party, weekend or overnight retreat, etc.), workers should make a plan concerning arrangements for showering or changing clothes to ensure children, youth and adult privacy.

TRANSPORTATION

Volunteers and employees may from time to time need to provide transportation for children and youth. The following guidelines should be strictly observed while transporting youth:

- 1) Parents shall provide FBCDS with written permission in advance for their child or children to be involved in FBCDS sponsored programs, activities and transportation off the FBCDS campus.
- 2) Children and youth should be transported directly to their destination. Unauthorized stops to a non-public place should be avoided. Volunteers and employees will avoid transportation circumstances that leave only one child or youth in transport.
- 3) Workers and drivers should avoid physical contact with children or youth while in vehicles.
- 4) No cell phones may be utilized by the driver while transporting children or youth in their own vehicle or while driving vans, or vehicles owned or rented by FBCDS.
- 5) Drivers will obey all traffic laws and will be in compliance with any driving restrictions.
- 6) Seat belts are to be worn as required by law.
- 7) If reports are received and found to be valid, that a driver has operated a vehicle in a negligent manner while transporting children or youth, that driver will be discontinued.
- 8) Persons who drive FBCDS owned or privately-owned vehicles for conducting church business or transporting children on a regular basis must maintain a current valid Texas driver's license, provide proof of insurance in such amounts as may be required by the church insurance carrier and comply with all other church transportation policies.

BASIC FIRST AID AND CPR CERTIFICATION

Volunteers and employees are encouraged, but not required to maintain current certification in basic first aid and basic CPR.

PARENTAL CONTACT

Parents who leave their child in the care of FBCDS volunteers and/or employees during church services or activities will be contacted if their child becomes ill, injured, or has a severe disciplinary problem while participating in children or youth activities. It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to provide current phone numbers where they can be reached in case of emergency.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parents are encouraged to visit any and all FBCDS services and programs in which their child is involved. However, parents who desire to participate in or have continuous, ongoing contact with FBCDS children or youth ministry programs will be required to complete the First Baptist Church screening process.

EMERGENCIES AND INJURIES

Workers will provide first aid (band aids, etc.) as appropriate for minor injuries, scrapes, and bruises. Basic first aid kits are located in the kitchen, the preschool house and the church office. The child's parent or guardian will be notified of the injury at the time the child or youth is picked up.

For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple first aid, the parent and/or guardian will immediately be summoned. If warranted by circumstances, an ambulance will be called. An Incident/Illness Report form will be completed and turned into the church office once the child has received appropriate medical attention, in the case of injuries requiring treatment by a medical professional.

Youth volunteers and employees may receive information that a student or other person has thoughts or desires to harm themselves or others. This information should be taken seriously and should be reported **immediately** to their supervisor and/or staff member. If the youth seems to have the imminent intent to do harm, a worker should stay with them, and 911 should be contacted.

911 should be called immediately in cases of suspected criminal or dangerous activities on the church campus or near ministry activities.

PHYSICAL CONTACT

The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by anyone working in children and youth ministry programs:

1. Frontal hugging, pats on the back and other forms of appropriate physical affection are important for child development, and are generally suitable in the church setting.
2. Inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection are forbidden and should be immediately reported to a supervisor, Education Council representative and/or pastoral staff member.
3. Physical contact should be for the benefit of the child or youth, and never be based upon the emotional needs of a volunteer or employee.
4. Physical contact and affection should be given only in observable places or when in the presence of others. It is much less likely that touch will be inappropriate or misinterpreted when physical contact is open to observation.

5. Physical contact in any form should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing. The personal behavior of volunteers or employees in children and youth ministries must foster trust at all times. Personal conduct must be above reproach.
6. Do not force physical contact, touch or affection on a reluctant child or youth. A child's or youth's preference not to be touched must be respected.
7. Children and youth workers are responsible for protecting children/youth under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by others.
8. Rough housing or hazing is prohibited. An adult will not wrestle, tickle, or in any way engage a child or teenager in an activity where the adult's hands might come in contact with their breasts or genital area. The adult must be particularly careful about physical contact with youth while in the swimming area.

SEXUALLY ORIENTED CONVERSATIONS & MATERIALS

Volunteers are prohibited from having any sexually oriented conversations or discussing any inappropriate or explicit information about their own personal relationships, dating or sexual activities with any youth or in the presence of any youth. Adults should avoid sexual references, jokes and innuendo. Youth shall be encouraged to refrain from sexual talk.

Volunteers in FBCDS youth ministries are prohibited from possessing any sexually oriented materials (magazines, cards, images, videos, films, etc.) on church property or in the presence of youth.

SLEEPING ARRANGEMENTS

It is anticipated that certain children or youth ministry activities may occasionally require that overnight sleeping arrangements be made for youth and staff/volunteers (i.e. lock-ins, mission trips, ski trips, etc.). In the event an activity requires sleeping arrangements, volunteers and employees will strictly observe the following rules:

- 1) The two adult rule must be followed. The two adult leaders present must have previously completed the FBCDS application and screening process.
- 2) Overnight sleeping arrangements should be discussed prior to the activity.
- 3) Leaders should check with parents and use good judgment regarding PG or PG-13 movies. R-rated movies should not be shown.
- 4) Appropriately modest sleeping attire must be worn.

TOBACCO USE

First Baptist Church is a tobacco-free facility. All volunteers and employees must abstain from the use of tobacco products in church facilities, while in the presence of children, youth or their parents, or during First Baptist Church activities or programs.

VERBAL INTERACTIONS

Verbal interactions between workers and youth should be positive, encouraging, constructive, and mindful of the churches mission to aid parents in the spiritual growth and development of their children. To this end, volunteers should not talk to child in a way that is or could be construed by any reasonable observer as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. In addition, volunteers are expected to refrain from swearing.

RELEASE OF YOUTH

At any time that a youth has been entrusted to FBCDS volunteers, the church incurs responsibility for their safety and well-being. Workers are responsible for releasing children in their care only to parents, legal guardians, or other persons designated by the parents or legal guardians. It is presumed a person who drops off a child has authority to pick up the child.

ENFORCEMENT OF POLICIES

An Education Council may be established to implement and enforce all FBCDS Safety Policies and Procedures. Violations of these policies are grounds for immediate dismissal, disciplinary action, or reassignment from youth/children positions. Decisions related to policy violations may be the responsibility of the Children/Youth leadership, an Education Council, Response Team and/or appointed group.

First Baptist Church Dripping Springs Children/Youth leadership, an Education Council, Response Team and/or appointed group will be responsible to:

- 1) Ensure FBCDS maintains a safe environment for all ministry activities and protects youth from physical, emotional or sexual harm.
- 2) Monitor all youth ministry programs and activities and ensure they are in compliance with FBCDS Safety Policies and Procedures.
- 3) Sponsor periodic volunteer training opportunities covering areas related to FBCDS Safety Policies and Procedures.
- 4) Take appropriate steps to ensure the immediate safety of children and/or youth if an allegation of abuse or suspicion of abuse occurs.
- 5) Ensure FBCDS pastoral staff, not directly involved in the allegation, and a Response Team is notified if an allegation of abuse or suspicion of abuse occurs. Notification should be limited to those who need to know about the allegation and to those who can provide professional assistance (Example: church attorney or insurance agent).
- 6) Regularly review the effectiveness of FBCDS Safety Policies and Procedures and make changes when necessary
- 7) Review individual screening information. In the event there is a “red flag”, the Children/Youth leadership and/or appointed group should seek council from FBCDS professional staff and/or call on a Response Team.
- 8) Ensure Incident Report Forms are filled out when necessary (located in the Appendix), for all incidents, accidents or unusual occurrences
- 9) Maintain strict confidentiality.

REPORTING SUSPICIOUS OR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR

FBCDS is committed to providing a safe, secure environment for children and their families. An element of the safe environment includes the fostering of a culture of reporting relevant information.

In the event that volunteers or employees observe any inappropriate or suspicious behaviors (i.e. neglectful supervision, poor role-modeling, ‘grooming’ behavior, etc.), suspected abuse (physical, emotional, or sexual), any questionable circumstance, observation, act, omission, or situation that is a violation of these policies, it is their responsibility to immediately report their observations to their immediate supervisor and a pastoral staff member not directly involved in the allegation. Regardless of whether the child or youth has given permission to share this information, it should be reported immediately. This information should be shared only with those directly involved in the reporting

process (ex. pastoral staff, Response Team, Child Protective Services, church attorney and/or insurance agent) and not anyone else.

Any report of inappropriate behavior or suspicions of abuse will be taken seriously and will be reported, in accordance with this policy and state law, to law enforcement, Child Protective Services, or other appropriate agency.

Texas law requires that any person having cause to believe a child's or youth's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect must make a report to the appropriate law enforcement agency. Failure to report may be punishable by a fine or jail sentence. Reports made 'in good faith' and without 'malice' have protection from legal and civil litigation. Church workers should understand that reporting reflects caring and is not an act of disloyalty.

Failure to report a prohibited act to the designated person is a violation of this policy and grounds for termination of employment of a staff member or employee. Volunteers who fail to report a prohibited act may be restricted from participation in any activities involving children, youth or vulnerable populations at First Baptist Church Dripping Springs.

CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATION

Any person accused of committing or found to have committed a prohibited act or any act considered by the church to be harmful to a child, youth, or vulnerable person will be immediately suspended from participation in children or youth ministries. This suspension will continue during any investigation by law enforcement or child protective agencies.

RESPONSE TO REPORT OF ABUSE

A Response Team will be formed by the pastoral staff to determine and make decisions about the appropriate action to take if a report of abuse or suspicion of abuse occurs, in the event a person convicted, accused or admitted to sexual or physical abuse is attending FBCDS and/or if the Children/Youth leadership and/or appointed group needs additional support to approve or disapprove a volunteer to work in FBCDS youth programs.

RESPONSE TEAM

This team may consist of members of the staff, deacon body, Children/Youth leadership, Education Council, the church attorney or others, as determined by the most senior pastor not directly involved in the allegation. Ideally males and females should be involved and represented on the Response Team.

In the event someone reports they observed any inappropriate behavior or suspicion of abuse the Response Team will:

- Work with the Children/Youth leadership and/or Education Council and/or appointed group to ensure the immediate safety of all youth.
- Take seriously any report of inappropriate behavior or suspicion of abuse and ensure they are reported, in accordance with this policy and state law, to law enforcement, Child Protective Services, or other appropriate agency.
- Assure the victim and the victim's family that the church desires to extend care and support in whatever way possible. Listen carefully, respectfully and lovingly and treat information confidentially.
- Ensure parents are notified.
- Seek to quickly gather as much initial information as possible. *No church or leader should think they should be the investigator of an incident.* Leave this to the professionals. Fact

finding is to simply try and understand what is being alleged and who is involved. Document the allegation, in writing, by collecting and confidentially maintaining the following information:

- 1) The name, age, gender and address of the victim.
 - 2) The name, age, gender and address of the alleged perpetrator.
 - 3) The nature of the sexual misconduct or abuse alleged to have occurred.
 - 4) How many times the alleged misconduct or abuse occurred.
 - 5) The date(s) and location(s) of the incident(s).
 - 6) The relationship between the victim and the alleged perpetrator.
 - 7) Other evidence that supports the allegation.
- Commit to cooperating with authorities
 - As soon as possible after the initial fact-finding phase, the mandatory reporting according to Texas requirements should be made. The Texas Family Code requires professionals to make a report within 48 hours of first suspecting abuse, neglect or exploitation of children. Delaying this process is to your own peril. If appropriate, a member of the pastoral staff and/or Response Team will inform the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (1-800-252-5400), or make a report through their secure web site at www.txabusehotline.org. The person making a report is immune from civil or criminal liability provided they make the report in good faith. The State of Texas permits the reporter to remain anonymous. However, if an individual desires to remain anonymous, the report should be made over the phone in the presence of an attorney or other independent witness who can verify later, if necessary, the identity of the reporter. This may become important if the reporter later is charged with negligence for failing to make a report. If no witnesses to the report exist, and the report is done anonymously, providing a defense becomes problematic. Any person suspecting abuse and not reporting it can be held liable for a misdemeanor or state jail felony. Reporting suspected child abuse makes it possible for a family to get help.
 - Ensure any person accused of committing a prohibited act or any act considered by the church to be harmful to a youth, is immediately suspended from participation in children or youth ministries or activities. This suspension will continue during any investigation by law enforcement or child protective agencies.
 - Ensure any person found to have committed a prohibited act is excluded from future participation in all activities and programming that involves children, youth or vulnerable adults at First Baptist Church Dripping Springs.
 - If it is known that a person convicted of, accused of (while under investigation by law enforcement and/or child protective services) or pled guilty to sexual or physical abuse is attending FBCDS, the Response Team will take appropriate action and/or precautionary measures to reduce the risk to FBCDS children or the offender of an incident or accusation. This may involve closely monitoring their behavior, assigning them accountability partners, limiting them from going on the playground or any children/youth areas, and/or limiting their participation in activities where preventing one on one contact with a child or youth would be difficult (Example: The fall Harvest Festival). The Response Team may also write an accountability covenant calling for the person to formally promise to follow guidelines for the protection of the children, the church and their witness. This should be a positive document built around a strong desire to be redemptive as well as provide safety and security for the church and to enable the church to go about its work in an orderly manner.
 - Determine if the conduct of a staff member or employee, is grounds for termination of employment at First Baptist Church Dripping Springs.
 - Determine if a volunteer or employee's failure to report a prohibited act to the designated person is grounds for termination of employment or restriction from participation in any activities involving children, youth or vulnerable populations.

- Respond to congregational concerns
- Notify the FBCDS insurance carrier of the situation.
- Ensure information about an allegation is limited to only those who need to know and who can provide professional assistance (ex. church attorney or insurance agent). All reports of child abuse or neglect shall be held in absolute confidence. No person shall communicate any information concerning the alleged event to any person except as necessary to cooperate with any official investigation. The pastor, in consultation with the official conducting the investigation, may authorize limited additional disclosure if necessary to protect other children from harm in the near future, particularly where the person responsible for the abuse cannot be identified, but in no case shall the identity of the victim or the accused person be disclosed except as required by law.
- When necessary, designate a spokesperson to respond to the media. The spokesperson should understand the legal concerns associated with making public comments, and be briefed by the church's attorney before meeting with the media. Develop a clear FBCDS position statement regarding child sexual abuse. This statement can be released if an allegation of abuse occurs. Having a carefully prepared statement is far superior to making no comment.

**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND AGREEMENT**

- I have received and read a copy of First Baptist Church Safety Policies and Procedures and understand the importance of the material in the manual. I agree to abide by these guidelines while serving or working at First Baptist Church.
- I understand the manual may be modified at any time, and that any guideline may be amended, revised, or eliminated by First Baptist Church.
- I have reviewed the duties listed in my ministry position description, and I agree to fulfill these duties. While ideally, I will serve in this ministry for the full term specified in the position description, I understand I may choose to end my employment or voluntary service at First Baptist Church at any time (If possible, I will provide two weeks' notice to my supervisor).
- I acknowledge and understand that the materials and guidelines contained in this handbook in no way express or imply a contractual employment relationship between me and First Baptist Church. If applying as a volunteer, I acknowledge and agree that I will receive no monetary compensation for hours worked.
- I understand it is my responsibility to review new guidelines which may be created and distributed as well as manual guidelines that are changed or deleted.

Signature

Print name

Date

Sign and return the Statement of Acknowledgement and Agreement form below and return it to the church office.



**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND AGREEMENT**

- I have received and read a copy of First Baptist Church Safety Policies and Procedures and understand the importance of the material in the manual. I agree to abide by these guidelines while serving or working at First Baptist Church.
- I understand the manual may be modified at any time, and that any guideline may be amended, revised, or eliminated by First Baptist Church.
- I have reviewed the duties listed in my ministry position description, and I agree to fulfill these duties. While ideally, I will serve in this ministry for the full term specified in the position description, I understand I may choose to end my employment or voluntary service at First Baptist Church at any time (If possible, I will provide two weeks' notice to my supervisor).
- I acknowledge and understand that the materials and guidelines contained in this handbook in no way express or imply a contractual employment relationship between me and First Baptist Church. If applying as a volunteer, I acknowledge and agree that I will receive no monetary compensation for hours worked.
- I understand it is my responsibility to review new guidelines which may be created and distributed as well as manual guidelines that are changed or deleted.

Signature

Print name

Date