

SAFETY AND HEALTH POLICIES

for First Baptist Church's Preschool and Children's Ministry

First Baptist Church, Bainbridge seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for the children who participate in our programs and activities. By implementing the below practices, our goal is to protect the children of First Baptist from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also protecting our staff and volunteers from false accusations.

Selection of Workers

All persons who desire to work with the children participating in our program and activities will be screened. The screening includes the following:

- An individual will only be considered for a volunteer worker role (i.e. Sunday School Teacher, RA/GA/Mission Friends Leader or AWANA Worker) if he or she is at least 18 years of age and has been an active member for at least 9 months or is a transferring member from another Southern Baptist church and can provide one reference from the supervisor he or she served under, preferably a staff member, for volunteer service.
- Workers will be required to complete an initial information sheet. The information sheet will request basic information from the potential worker and will inquire into previous experience with children, spiritual ministry preparedness, as well as the disclosure of any previous criminal convictions. The information sheet will be CONFIDENTIAL between the individual and the children's director. It will remain on file with the church in a secure location.
- Prospective workers are asked to sign an authorization form allowing First Baptist Church to run a criminal background check and will be required to sign the form on an bi-annual basis. What constitutes a disqualifying offense that will keep an individual from working with children will be determined by First Baptist on a case-by-case basis in light of all surrounding circumstances. Failure to disclose a criminal conviction on the application form will also be a disqualifying event. Again, background checks will remain confidential and on file along with an individual's application in a secure location.
- In an attempt to diligently love and protect the weakest among us, all weekly ministry volunteers will be expected to complete a training course on child abuse warning signs and prevention. The courses offered will take approximately two hours to complete and will be offered throughout the year.

Two Adult Rule

NO CHILD SHALL BE LEFT UNATTENDED. It is our goal that a minimum of two adult workers will be in attendance at all times when children are being supervised during our program and activities. Supervision will be maintained before and after the event until all children are in the custody of their parent/guardian. Child to adult ratios under Georgia law will be given every effort to be maintained.

In some instances, youth volunteers will be allowed to lead in activities under the supervision of adults over the age of 18. However, when youth activities are provided (i.e. Sunday School), they are to be in those activities.

Responding to Allegations of Child Abuse

First Baptist workers will follow Georgia laws and regulations for reporting abuse of any kind. Please see attached summary of the law.

Open Door Policy

All events for the children will be open door, meaning that workers or parents have a right to observe any activity if they are able to do so without disrupting the activity. Classroom doors should remain open unless there is a window in the door. Workers or parents wishing to observe the activity in the classroom are requested to observe from the doorway or through the door's window. Doors should never be locked while persons are inside the room.

Check-in/Check-out Procedure for Preschoolers

Every child aged five and below that enters a classroom on the Preschool Hallway must be dropped off or picked up by a parent or guardian or sibling/relative above the age of 15. Each parent/guardian/sibling is requested to register and receive a name tag and code. A corresponding name tag with code will print for your child to be placed on the child's back. Children will only be released to a parent/guardians/sibling who has a corresponding name tag or who knows the code.

In the event that a parent or guardian is unable to present the tag or code, the children's director will be notified and the child will not be released until speaking with the adult who dropped the child off. In the event of emergency, the parent/guardian will receive a text to report to the Preschool Hallway. Workers will notify the parent or guardian of a child 18 months or younger that remains crying 10 minutes after he or she is dropped off. During Sunday morning worship services, parents or guardians or siblings not wishing to miss church service but unable to leave their upset child may use the radio in the Baracca Sunday School class to listen in to the church service.

Drop-Off /Pick-up Procedures for Children

Parents or guardians or siblings/relative above the age of 15 are to walk child/ren in grades 1 through 4 to their activity and pick them up in a timely manner. If a different parent or guardian or sibling/relative will be picking up the child, the parent or guardian or sibling dropping off the child should inform the volunteer worker. The volunteer worker has the right to notify the children's director if he or she is uncomfortable releasing the child into the custody of any unexpected or unknown person attempting to pick up a child. The director will be responsible for releasing the child to the care of the unexpected or unknown person, after discussing the surrounding circumstances. Identification and/or parental contact may be required at that time.

Sick Child Policy

It is our desire to provide a healthy and safe environment for all the children at First Baptist. We suggest parents label all sippy cups, bottles or any other personal item not intended for group use. Parents are encouraged to be considerate of other children when deciding whether to place a child under our care. In general, children with the following symptoms should NOT be dropped off:

- Fever, diarrhea or vomiting within the last 24 hours
- Green or yellow runny nose
- Eye or skin infections
- Other symptoms of communicable or infectious disease (i.e. head lice, severe cough)

Children who are observed by our workers to be ill will be separated from other children and the parent or guardian will be contacted to request that the child be picked up.

Medications Policy

It is the policy of First Baptist to not administer either prescription or non-prescription medications to the children under our care. Medications should be administered at home. Parents are reminded of the sick child policy.

Exceptions to the medications policy may be granted to parents of children with potentially life-threatening conditions (such as asthma or severe allergic reactions). Parents of such children should address their situation with the children's director to develop a plan of action.

Discipline Policy

It is the policy of First Baptist not to threaten or administer corporal punishment, even if the parents have suggested or given permission for it. There should be no spanking, grabbing, hitting or other physical discipline of children.

Behavior expectations and rules should be clearly communicated by adult workers. Adults are reminded to maintain a positive manner and quiet voice; compliment children on good behavior. Misbehavior should be handled promptly. Workers should consult with the children's director if assistance is needed with disciplinary issues. Teachers or volunteer leaders needing to communicate with parents regarding the behavior of their child are to do so privately.

Restroom Guidelines

Children five years of age or younger should use the classroom bathroom. If possible, children over the age of five, should be escorted to the restroom by an adult of the same gender. The worker should remain outside the bathroom door and escort the child back to the classroom. If the worker is unable to walk the child to the restroom, the child may leave only with the consent of the volunteer worker. The worker is encouraged to stand at the classroom door and watch for the child's return while still overseeing the remaining children.

For the protection of all, workers should never be alone with a child in the bathroom with the door closed and never be in a closed bathroom stall with a child. If, for any reason, the worker must enter the restroom to assist a child, the door or stall must remain open. Parents are strongly encouraged to have their children visit the bathroom prior to the start of any activity or worship service.

Accidental Injuries to Children

In the event that a child is injured while under our care, the following will take place:

- For minor injuries, scrapes and bruises, workers will provide First Aid (Band-Aids, etc.) as appropriate and notify the child's parent or guardian of the injury at the time the child is picked up from our care.
- For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple First Aid, the parent or guardian will immediately be summoned in addition to the children's director. If warranted, an ambulance will be called.