

**SAFETY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
FOR MINORS**

FERRY FARM BAPTIST CHURCH

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PREFACE

“EVERY CHURCH IS RESPONSIBLE BEFORE GOD TO DO EVERYTHING IN ITS POWER TO ENHANCE SAFETY FOR ITS CHILDREN AND ITS MEMBERS.”

These Safety Policies and Procedures for Minors were developed for Ferry Farm Baptist Church. In today’s environment, we can no longer take safety for granted. We need due diligence and policies in effect that allow us to educate our members on how to prevent harmful incidents and/or emergencies and how to respond properly when they arise. It is our hope that these policies and procedures will make Ferry Farm’s congregation more informed, prepared, and proactive.

These policies and procedures are designed not only to protect minors but also to be a safeguard for adults who serve as volunteers and workers while conducting programs for Ferry Farm Baptist Church. There is no intent to discredit or show lack of confidence or trust in any individual or group of individuals. They are designed to create awareness and assure a safe environment for our children, youth and adults involved in all of our Church programs.

It is the desire of this committee that the Safety Policies and Procedures for Minors will be accepted and used in the spirit for which it is intended, a spirit of unity, trust and cooperation in setting in place and carrying out safeguards for the Ferry Farm Baptist Church community.

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

A. Purpose

The purpose of these policies and procedures is to establish proper preventative measures to protect individuals against misconduct, sexual or other, as well as to specify courses of action in the case of allegations or an actual incident regarding misconduct.

B. Standard of Conduct

All workers, volunteers, paid, full-time and part-time, of Ferry Farm Baptist Church (FFBC) shall comply with this established Safety Policy. Any actions contrary to this Safety Policy shall be dealt with swiftly and shall include disciplinary measures up to and including termination, as well as legal ramifications when applicable.

C. Definitions

Minor - any person under the age of eighteen (18).

Child sexual abuse - any sexual activity with a child—whether in the home by a caretaker, in a day care situation, a foster/residential setting, or any other setting, including on the street by a person unknown to the child. The abuser may be an adult, an adolescent, or another child, provided the child is four (4) years older than the victim (Source: National Resource Center on Child Sexual Abuse, 1992).

Sexual activity - may be violent or non-violent, touching or non-touching, and is an exploitation of a minor's vulnerability and powerlessness. It involves minors in sexual behaviors for which they are not personally, socially, and developmentally ready.

Misconduct - inappropriate behavior which results in non-accidental physical or emotional injury. Also includes acts or circumstances that threaten the minor with harm or create a substantial risk of harm to the minor's health or welfare. (Source: www.childwelfare.gov)

Volunteer – someone age 18 or older who teaches or leads, is a chaperone for, or who has interaction with a Church-related class or group activity that includes minors. Hereafter in this document, they will be referred to as a “volunteer.”

Volunteer Assistant – someone age 15 – 17 who teaches or leads, is a chaperone for, or who has interaction with a Church-related class or group activity that includes minors. This individual must work alongside an adult (18 or older) and must have prior approval by ministerial staff to serve as a Volunteer Assistant.

Worker – someone age 18 or older who is paid by the Church to teach or lead, is a chaperone for, or who has interaction with a Church-related class or group activity that includes minors. Hereafter in this document, they will be referred to as a “worker.”

Incident – a situation where a youth or a child due to his/her personal behavior or their interaction with others results in events such as biting, hitting, spitting, inappropriate language, a tantrum or similar types of behavior.

Accident – a situation where a youth or child is injured such as with a cut, sprain, bump, bruise, scrape or re-injury.

II. POLICIES

A. Supervisory Policies and Procedures

1. A minimum of two (2) Volunteers or Workers or one (1) Volunteer or Worker and one (1) Volunteer Assistant is required in any setting or activity involving minors. There shall be one (1) additional Volunteer/Worker/Volunteer Assistant required for every 10 minors for groups over 20. This applies except as stated below:
 - a. For off-site activities or when there are no other Church functions occurring in the building, when there are minors of both genders, there shall be at least one (1) Volunteer/Worker/Volunteer Assistant of each gender present.
 - b. At no time shall an adult meet alone with a minor in any room where the door is closed or in an area where they cannot be seen. If there is a window in the door, it shall remain uncovered. If there is not a window, the door shall remain open.
 - c. In cases where an adult has a legitimate reason to be alone with a minor, the adult shall obtain the consent of the minor's parent/guardian prior to being alone with the minor.
 - d. When a minor requires assistance which may necessitate an adult being alone with him/her, (i.e. bathroom assistance) the adult shall notify the parents/guardians of the incident when the child is picked up.
2. To reduce the possibility of kidnapping, Ferry Farm Baptist Church will have in place an identification system so that the person(s) who drops off a minor is the same person(s) who picks up the minor or the person picking up is listed as a designated adult or youth for the minor.
 - a. The minister in charge of the ministry shall maintain the system to identify persons authorized to pick up and take responsibility for minors leaving a Church activity.
 - b. Minors who are involved in a ministry (6th grade or older) are permitted to leave the area of the Church activity at the conclusion of the scheduled activity without further supervision of the volunteers/workers unless otherwise instructed by the parent/guardian.

- c. Minors (5th grade and younger) shall be dropped off and picked up by their parent/guardian. A designated adult or youth (high school) can drop off or pick up a minor if this has been prearranged with the volunteers/workers.
 - d. If a minor (5th grade and younger) is not picked up on time, the minor will be kept by an adult leaders in the children's area where safe supervision can be continued until the parent/guardian is located.
3. All volunteers/workers are responsible for addressing suspicious behavior or any behavior that may be contrary to this policy and to document and report such occurrences to the appropriate minister.
 4. Outside organizations that use FFBC facilities shall abide by this policy whenever minors are involved in the activity.

B. Transportation of Minors

1. Each Church-owned vehicle transporting minors shall contain at least two (2) adult volunteers/workers, excluding the driver. Church-owned vehicles operated by Church-approved drivers should be used for transportation. Private vehicles should be used only in extraordinary circumstances and with the approval of the appropriate minister.
2. All drivers shall comply with all state and federal traffic laws and regulations, such as wearing seat belts and obeying posted speed limits, including CDL requirements when applicable.
3. All drivers shall have a valid driver's license.
4. Before operating Church-owned vehicles, all drivers shall be added to the Church-approved drivers list that is maintained by the Transportation Team.

C. Off-Site Activities

1. The appropriate minister shall approve in advance all children, youth and music activities conducted at off-Church sites.
2. For off-site activities, the parent/guardian shall be informed of the following:
 - a. Location and details of the activity
 - b. Date, time of departure and return
 - c. Mode of transportation
 - d. Responsibilities of the children and parents/care-givers
 - e. Coordinator of the event
3. In order for a minor to participate in an activity away from FFBC premises, a signed General Permission and Medical Liability Release Form (Appendix A) shall be received by the appropriate minister in advance of the activity. This permission form is effective for one Church year (September through August).

4. When there are minors of both genders, there shall be at least one (1) Worker/Volunteer/Volunteer Assistant of each gender. There shall be one (1) additional Worker/Volunteer/Volunteer Assistant required for every 10 minors for groups over 20.
5. These “Safety Policies and Procedures for Minors” shall be followed during off-site activities just as they are while on site.

D. Youth House Procedures

1. The youth house will be locked at all times when not in use.
2. Youth house keys will be controlled by the Minister of Youth.
3. No youth will be allowed to enter the youth house without a Church-approved adult present.

E. Medication

Medications required by minors while at a Church-sponsored activity shall be administered as follows:

1. Volunteers/workers shall maintain medications in a secure location.
2. When a child is at Church, the parent/guardian shall assume responsibility for administering any medication to his/her child.
3. Volunteers/workers shall administer medication only in extenuating circumstances and only after receiving signed, written permission and instruction from the parent/guardian.
4. While off-Church premises, the volunteer/worker may supervise the administration of medications to a child. The parent/guardian shall provide signed, written permission and instructions regarding dosage, method of administration and any other pertinent information (see Appendix A, General Permission and Medical Liability Release Form).

F. Implementation, Training and Enforcement

1. Background checks for paid Church staff shall be conducted by the Personnel Committee.
2. Any applicant being considered for employment with the Church shall have a preliminary background check via Protect My Ministry. Their employment is conditional until the satisfactory completion of the FBI background check.
3. Background checks for the Ferry Farm Baptist Preschool staff shall be conducted by the Preschool Director. Implementation of this policy for the Ferry Farm Baptist Preschool is the responsibility of the Preschool Director.
4. Background checks for the various leaders, teachers, workers and volunteers shall be conducted by the appropriate minister who is in charge of the activity.
5. Enforcement of this policy is a Church-wide responsibility. All of us need to provide due diligence to ensure not only the safety of our minors, but we also must protect our adult leaders and volunteers. If there is an issue or concern with a group or activity that is not following this policy's guidelines, then the appropriate minister and/or pastor shall be notified.
6. At the start of each Church year a safety policy training session shall be conducted to review the policy and solicit congregational feedback on any concerns or suggested updates to the policy.
7. Outside groups or organizations shall be provided a copy of this policy when they fill out an application for use of Ferry Farm Baptist Church facilities. After they have been given time to review this policy, they shall be required to sign a statement indicating their compliance with the policy.

III. PROCEDURES

A. Pre-screening of Volunteers/Workers

The Ministers of Children, Youth and Music shall maintain a checklist of each volunteer/worker within his/her ministry to ensure that all appropriate forms and background checks are done as required (see Appendix B, Checklist for Employees and Volunteers/Workers).

1. All volunteers/workers, paid, part time and full time, shall fill out an Application for Volunteer/Worker Ministry (see Appendix C). This form also requires that the volunteers/workers consent to a national criminal records check by an accredited background check agency. The criminal background check will be valid for a period of three (3) years.

2. All volunteers/workers shall fill out the Children, Youth and Music Ministries Volunteer/Worker Covenant (see Appendix D).
3. All volunteers/workers shall be interviewed by the appropriate minister within the Church (Appendix E, Volunteer/Worker Interview Questions).
4. All volunteers/workers shall provide a valid form of photo ID (i.e., state driver's license, or other acceptable form of photo ID).
5. All volunteers/workers shall provide at least two (2) character references upon application to be contacted prior to any service with the Church. The minister contacting references should document any information they tried to secure but could not verify or obtain.
6. All full-time and part-time paid employees shall sign a release for a national criminal records check and undergo a criminal background check by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) prior to any activity of employment with the Church (see Appendix F, Background Check Application for Employees). The criminal background check will be valid for a period of three (3) years.
7. All volunteers/workers in a leadership position with direct interaction with minors shall have been an active participant at FFBC for a minimum of six (6) months prior to filling the position. Volunteers/workers in special or short-term events (i.e., Vacation Bible School, Music Camp, or as the Church designates) will be exempt from this rule but shall provide two (2) character references as described in #5 above and who can attest to his/her suitability to work with minors.
8. **NO** applicant ever convicted of a sexual crime or felony is eligible for service in a position with direct interaction with minors.
9. Any applicant who is a survivor of child abuse in the past should meet with a minister prior to service in a position with direct interaction with minors.
10. A volunteer/worker shall be at least 13 years of age to work with children ages 12 and under. A teenage volunteer/worker shall be under the supervision of an adult age 18 and over while working with children and shall not be left alone with children.

B. Reporting and Responding to Misconduct or Sexual Abuse

The law requires a person to immediately report suspected and reported child abuse to the authorities and, in organizations such as Ferry Farm Baptist Church, to the appropriate minister in charge. A person who fails to do so can be prosecuted for a Class B misdemeanor or, in extreme circumstances, may be subject to civil liability for money damages. Therefore, all employees and volunteers/workers at Ferry Farm Baptist Church must adhere to the following procedures:

1. In the event of suspected, reported or discovered child abuse or violation of the Safety Policies and Procedures of Ferry Farm Baptist Church, the employee or volunteer shall immediately notify the Pastor or the Minister in charge of the activity.
 - a. Physical signs of molestation may include:
 - Lacerations and bruises
 - Irritation, pain or injury to the genital area
 - Difficulty with urination
 - Discomfort when sitting
 - Torn or bloody underclothing
 - Venereal disease
 - b. Behavioral signs of molestation may include:
 - Nightmares
 - Anxiety when approaching the Church building, nursery or preschool area (beyond normal separation anxiety)
 - Nervous or hostile behavior toward adults
 - Sexual self-consciousness or acting out of sexual behavior
 - Withdrawal from Church activities and friends
 - c. Verbal signs of molestation may include statements such as:
 - “I don’t like _____.”
 - “_____ does things to me when we’re alone.”
 - “I don’t like to be alone with _____.”
 - “_____ fooled around with me.”

All allegations of misconduct, sexual or otherwise, shall be taken seriously. The teacher or volunteer/worker shall immediately report the allegation to the Pastor or Minister in charge. Reports shall be documented in writing with the date of the report, the time of the report, the telephone number to which the report was made, the name of the recipient of the report, and a brief synopsis of the report to the Minister in charge. If at all possible, all oral reporting will be done in the presence of a recorded witness. The Pastor or Minister in charge shall notify the parents/legal guardian.

All situations shall be handled forthrightly with due respect for the person’s privacy and confidentiality. Full cooperation shall be given to civil authorities when applicable. No accused shall be addressed by anyone other than the established authorities and/or appropriate Church minister until the safety of the minor or victim is secured. No victim involved in an allegation or anyone responsible for reporting an allegation shall be retaliated against.

All Church employees and volunteers/workers dealing with minor children will receive training at the beginning of each Church administrative year regarding the signs of child abuse, including child sexual abuse and the steps to report any and all suspected child abuse.

The official spokesperson for Ferry Farm Baptist Church shall be the Pastor or his designee. All inquires or requests for information from the media, attorneys or any other parties shall be referred to the Pastor. No person other than the Pastor is to release any information regarding any alleged incident of child abuse.

The Pastor shall immediately report any alleged incident of child abuse to the appropriate local Child Protection Services agency of the jurisdiction and our insurance carrier.

The care and safety of the victim is our first priority. Ferry Farm Baptist Church will not confront the accused without the approval of the Child Protection Services agency or law enforcement authorities.

Ferry Farm Baptist Church will not prejudice any person accused but will take any allegation of child abuse seriously and will reach out in Christian love and support to the victim and the victim's family, extending whatever pastoral care resources are needed. FFBC will fully cooperate with any authorities investigating an allegation of child abuse.

All communication by the Pastor to the media, congregation, and public will protect the privacy and confidentiality of all involved.

All efforts in responding to the alleged incident of child abuse shall be documented by the Pastor and maintained in a secure and confidential file.

C. Reporting Incidents or Accidents

When a minor is involved in an incident, an Incident Report (Appendix G) shall be completed by the volunteer/worker in charge and submitted to the appropriate minister. The parent shall be notified by the minister of this incident and given a copy of the Incident Report.

When a minor is involved in an accident, an Accident Report (Appendix H) shall be completed by the volunteer/worker in charge and submitted to the appropriate minister. The Accident Report should document the type of injury, where and how it occurred, any first aid rendered, any witnesses, and suggestions as to how to avoid this in the future. The parent shall be notified by the minister of this accident and given a copy of the Accident Report.

D. Data Confidentiality

The various forms, applications and other data provided by the volunteers/workers shall be treated as confidential personal data. Therefore, the following steps shall be taken to secure this information:

1. All submitted data, forms and applications shall be locked in secured file cabinets.
2. The keys to the secured file cabinets shall be controlled and secured by the Ministers of Children, Youth and Music. No other staff personnel or congregation member is allowed access to these file cabinets.
3. After a period of three (3) years, all personal data shall be destroyed. The documents shall be shredded via a cross cut shredder.