

Preschool and Kid's Ministry Departmental Child Protection Policy

This departmental policy is intended to be used in conjunction with First Baptist Church of Orlando's overarching Child Protection Policy.

- A. **Purpose:** Believing that children are our sacred trust from a loving God, First Baptist Church of Orlando ("FBCO") intends to provide a nurturing and dynamic Christian environment that will foster a child's Christian faith. To that end, the purpose of this policy is to establish procedures that (1) protect the physical and emotional well-being of children; (2) comply with applicable laws; and (3) protect employees and volunteers who report abuse.
- B. **Definitions:**
1. ***Volunteer:*** A volunteer is any person who works with children at FBCO who is not employed as a staff member and does not receive pay, including persons under the age of 18 referred to herein as "student volunteers."
 2. ***Staff/Employees:*** Staff or employees refer to persons directly employed by FBCO.
 3. ***Ministry Worker:*** A ministry worker is anyone who works in the preschool or children's ministry at FBCO and encompasses both volunteers and staff.
 4. ***Child/Children/Kids:*** For the purpose of this Children's Ministry departmental policy, any reference to "child" or "children" herein refers to babies, preschool age toddlers and children through grade five (5).
 5. ***Guardian:*** Refers to a child's legal guardian(s), including parents, foster parents and legally appointed guardians.
- C. **Children's Ministry Protocols:**
1. Children's Ministry Check-in and Check-out Procedures:
 - a. Guardians must register by creating a profile which includes, at a minimum, their contact information. Once registered, guardians can check in via the automated system. Guardians receive a security tag with a matching tag for the child/children. In order to enter the Kids ministry space, the guardian and child must have matching tags. For check out, the tags must be matched before a child can be released for pick up. Children may be picked up by a family member who has been given permission to pick up the child and has the matching tag, as long as the person picking up is at least 13 years of age or older.
 - b. Attendance shall be taken and kept as a record through FBCO's database system.
 - c. All visitors attempting to gain access to preschool and children's areas while ministry is in session must register at Check-in, and if not a fully screened and trained ministry worker, must have visitor identification and an approved escort while in ministry areas (This includes photographers, engineer maintenance workers, musicians...etc.), except for guardians dropping off children and pre-scheduled ministry workers.
 - d. FBCO staff and volunteers will make reasonable, repeated attempts to contact guardians who fail to pick up their child/children and fail to contact FBCO after more than 15 minutes elopes from the scheduled pick-up time. After an

unreasonable amount of time passes (which FBCO defines as more than two hours (2) after the scheduled pick-up time) and FBCO has exhausted its efforts to locate the guardians, a member of FBCO executive leadership should be alerted. In collaboration with the FBCO executive leader, if deemed necessary, the Orlando Police Department (OPD) may be contacted as a next step. If the OPD is unable or unwilling to assist, the FBCO leader may contact the Department of Children and Families for input on next steps, which may result in making a report of abandonment.

2. Ministry Workers and Child Ratios:

- a. Rule of two: A minimum of two non-related persons should be present at all times in teaching and social situations at FBCO. If two related persons (a married couple is considered related) are volunteering together, a third adult or student volunteer must be present.
- b. Rooms with a male staff member or volunteer must also have a female volunteer present, unless the space is in open view of others and the children being cared for do not require bathroom assistance.
- c. At a minimum, a ratio of adult workers to children should be maintained in accordance with state guidelines as follows, congruent with the minimum of two non-related workers present:
 - i. Birth to 11 months = at least 1 adult to four babies
 - ii. 12 months to 23 months = at least 1 adult to 6 toddlers
 - iii. 24 months to 35 months = at least 1 adult to 11 toddlers
 - iv. 36 months to 47 months = at least 1 adult to 15 children
 - v. 4 years to 5 years = at least 1 adult to 20 children
 - vi. Kindergarten to grade 5 = at least 1 adult to 25 children
- d. Student volunteers must be supervised by at least one (1) adult ministry workers.
- e. If moving a child to a different classroom becomes necessary or is advisable for optimal childcare, the parent will be notified, and a notation added to the child's record in FBCO's database system.

3. Restroom & Diaper Changing Procedures:

- a. Male volunteers and staff working in children's ministry have all the responsibilities of female ministry workers with the exception of changing diapers or assisting children in the bathroom (Males may monitor restrooms but may not provide one-on-one assistance). Only female ministry workers should change diapers or provide bathroom assistance. Diaper changing tables should be in open view of others and gloves should be worn at all times when changing diapers.
 - i. Birth-2 years: Regular diaper checks and changing
 - ii. 3-4 years: Diapers changed only as needed
 - iii. 4 years and older: Guardian(s) notified to return and address the diaper/issue themselves (see special needs ministry for special needs exceptions)

- b. If a restroom only has one stall, only one child should enter while others wait outside. If a restroom has multiple stalls, only as many children as stalls should be allowed in the restroom at one time. Restroom doors should be propped open when not in use if possible. Children older than three (3) should be instructed to use the privacy of closed bathroom doors while using the restroom independently. Only female ministry workers may provide assistance to children using the restroom as needed if the child is three (3) years old or younger (or has special needs requiring assistance) and should use a “children’s only” restroom when possible. If, for any reason, an adult needs to enter the children’s only bathroom, then the “rule of two” applies.
- 4. Physical Contact:
 - a. Appropriate Touch (using good judgment):
 - i. An arm around the shoulder
 - ii. Walking hand in hand (younger children)
 - iii. Short congratulatory or greeting side hugs
 - iv. A brief, assuring pat on the shoulder or back
 - v. Handshakes, high-fives, fist pump
 - vi. How to redirect a child’s attention: Get down on their eye level and point to your chin.
 - vii. Physical contact in any form should be above reproach and foster a safe and trust-building culture.
 - b. Inappropriate and Unacceptable Touch:
 - i. Never touch a child in anger or disgust
 - ii. Never touch a child in any manner that may be construed as sexually suggestive
 - iii. Never touch a child between the navel and the knee
 - iv. Never touch a child’s private parts (with the exception of diaper or bathroom procedures as outlined in this policy)
 - v. Kindergarten and up: Do not allow a child to sit on your lap
 - vi. Do not force physical contact, touch, or affection on a reluctant child. A child’s preference not to be touched must be respected, except in cases where the child’s safety or the safety of others, is in question.
 - vii. Physical punishment of any kind should never be used at FBCO.
- 5. Electronic Communication:
 - a. All communication with children should be encouraging and edifying to the child and honoring to the guardians and our Lord. Staff and volunteers should never speak to a child in a way that could be construed by any reasonable observer as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, sexually oriented, or humiliating. Staff and volunteers are expected to refrain from swearing in the presence of children. Ministry workers will encourage children to do the same.
 - b. Social media and online engagement with children in FBCO’s Kid’s Ministry requires prior guardian permission (in writing) and should include an invitation for the guardian to join and participate as well.

- c. Individual online engagement, messaging or texting with a child and an FBCO ministry worker who are not related is forbidden. Ministry workers should not request social media friendships/following or engage with children via private message or other private social media platforms.
 - d. FBCO staff and volunteers should never make phone calls directly to children.
6. Playground Activities:
- a. Staff should have children in their line of sight at all times while at the playground.
 - b. Children should only play on age-appropriate portions of the playground.
7. Special Needs Ministry: The Special Needs ministry (Nathaniel's Hope Buddy Break) shall follow all FBCO child protection policies with the addition of the following guidelines due to the unique nature of those in the Special Needs ministry. Where policies may conflict, Special Needs ministry guidelines will supersede for the safety and wellbeing of those in the Special Needs ministry and those providing care.
- a. Training: Ministry workers and volunteers working in the Special Needs ministry must complete the Special Needs ministry training in addition to children's ministry workers training before serving. Training will include information on communication, how to handle behavioral challenges, restroom and diapering procedures, and how to handle a medical situation.
 - b. Registration and information: Guardians must register and complete the Special Needs ministry intake form indicating the medical, social, behavioral and developmental challenges each child may have.
 - c. Rule of Two: FBCO's Rule of Two applies in all areas of ministry with minors, including the Special Needs ministry.
 - d. Special Needs Child Ratios: Special Needs ministry child to worker ratios will be 1 worker for every 1-5 special needs child based on the complexity of the needs and ability to safely care for each child.
 - e. Restroom and Diaper Changing: All restroom and diaper changing guidelines outlined in this policy apply to the Special Needs ministry with the exception of the age limit. Diapers may be changed for kids up to and including 5 years of age. For children 6 and older, the guardian(s) must be called to assist.
 - f. Medication: Special Needs ministry workers will not dispense any medications to children in the Special Needs ministry. If medication is required, the guardian(s) must return to administer themselves.
 - g. Medical Needs: Childcare for medically fragile children will be assessed on a case-by-case basis for FBCO's ability to adequately meet the needs of the child. If the required medical care needed is too complex and cannot be accommodated, the guardian will be required to provide a healthcare provider of their own, who must be screened and trained prior to providing services at FBCO.