

Students 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 youth 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 students at FBCO who is not employed as a staff member and does not receive pay.
 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 student ministry at FBCO and encompasses both volunteers and staff.
 4. **Students:** For the purpose of this Students Ministry departmental policy "student" refers to youth attending grades six-twelve (6-12).
 - a. **Child/Children/Kids:** For the purpose of this Students Ministry departmental policy, any reference to "child" or "children" herein refers to babies, preschool age toddlers and children through grade five (5).
 - b. **Highschool:** Refers to Students in grades 9-12.
 5. **Student Leader:** A Student Leader is a high school age volunteer who has completed the student volunteer screening process.
 6. **Guardian:** Refers to a child's legal guardian(s), including parents, foster parents and legally appointed guardians.
- C. **Student Ministry Protocols:**
1. Student Ministry Check-in and Check-out Procedures:
 - a. Attendance shall be taken and kept as a record through FBCO's database system.
 2. Ministry Workers and Student Ratios:
 - a. A minimum of two adults, or one adult and one Student Leader (female adults with female groups, male adult with male groups, both female and male adults with mixed groups) should be present at all times in teaching and social situations at FBCO. This includes off campus church sponsored events. Talking one-on-one with a student should only take place in a public area in the presence and full view of others in the immediate vicinity.
 - b. A ratio of one adult worker to every 25 students should be maintained, along with the required minimum of two ministry workers present (gender specific as appropriate).
 3. Physical Contact:
 - a. Appropriate Touch with Students (using good judgment):
 - i. An arm around the shoulder
 - ii. Short congratulatory or greeting side hugs

- iii. A brief, assuring pat on the shoulder or back
 - iv. Handshakes, high-fives, fist pump
 - v. Physical contact in any form should be above reproach and foster a safe and trust-building culture.
- b. Inappropriate and Unacceptable Touch with Students:
- i. Never touch a student in anger or disgust
 - ii. Never touch a student in any manner that may be construed as sexually suggestive
 - iii. Never touch a student between the navel and the knee
 - iv. Never touch a student's private parts
 - v. Do not allow a child to sit on your lap
 - vi. Do not walk hand-in-hand.
 - vii. Do not force physical contact, touch, or affection on a reluctant student. A student's preference not to be touched must be respected, except in cases where the student's safety or the safety of others, is in question.
 - viii. Physical punishment of any kind should never be used at FBCO.
4. Electronic Communication & Technology:
- a. Electronic communication and engagement with students in FBCO's Student Ministry should be encouraging and edifying to the student and honoring to the guardians and our Lord, with a commitment to transparency. Staff and volunteers should never speak to a student 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 students to do the same.
 - b. FBCO reserves the right to request transparency regarding all communication between ministry staff and students, including requests to view text messages and other forms of electronic communication upon request. FBCO may perform random safety checks without prior notice at any time by requesting to view text conversations or social media engagement with specific students. Adult ministry workers will agree to comply with FBCO's standard of transparency prior to serving with students, which includes the duty to disclose private sensitive conversations with Students to leadership. FBCO's standard of transparency extends to conversations, phone calls and all forms of communication with students.
 - c. FBCO will make continued attempts to obtain guardian consent of regular FBCO communication through its established communication platforms. Continued attempts are defined as obtaining consent at student ministry check-in when the guardian is present, via Surge registration, via Camp registration, and other event registration. A welcome email will also be sent to the guardian(s) prompting a response to opt in to FBCO electronic communication.
 - d. FBCO's established communication platforms will be intentionally set up in such a way that multiple users have access, therefore, ensuring transparent and accountable communication. FBCO will evaluate established platforms on a

quarterly basis and provide guidance to leaders and guardians regarding usage. Approved platforms are: Facebook, Instagram, What's App, Tik-Tok, and YouTube.

- e. Social Media: Social Media interaction between adult ministry workers and students should be encouraging and edifying to the student, honoring to the guardians, and honoring to our Lord. Guidelines and best practices regarding social media should be as follows:
 - i. Leaders should only communicate with students on approved social media platforms as outlined in this policy.
 - ii. All public posts, statuses and pictures should reflect FBCO values.
 - iii. Students of opposite gender should be directed to a same-gender leader if issues arise in conversation via social media.
 - iv. In the event of a sensitive conversation, ministry leaders will follow the two adult protocol and bring another adult into the conversation.
 - v. Comments on Reels, Stories or Videos should be done in direct correlation to the post. Conversation should be kept short, to the point and then redirected to a public forum.
 - vi. Ministry workers should not communicate via social media with students after 10 pm. This includes comments on post that are visible to public.
- f. Texting:
 - i. Texting between an adult ministry worker and a student in 6th or 7th grade is allowed as long as a guardian or 3rd person is included in the text. Private texting between an adult ministry worker and a 6th or 7th grader without including a third person is highly discouraged.
 - ii. Group text is strongly encouraged as the preferred model of text communication when possible. When necessary, individual texting between an adult ministry worker and students in 8th grade or higher should be same-gender only, encouraging and edifying and will be subject to review upon request by FBCO in accordance with FBCO's transparency standard. Guidelines and best practices regarding text communication should be as follows:
 - a) Do not text students after 10:00 pm.
 - b) Do not text students of the opposite gender at any time.
 - c) Texts with the opposite gender is allowable in a mixed group text only.
 - d) If in the process of texting an individual of the same gender a sensitive topic comes up, ministry leaders will follow the two adult protocol and bring another adult into the conversation.
 - e) In emergency situations that fall outside of these boundaries, use discretion and communicate with FBCO leadership as needed.
- g. Use of FBCO technology by students will be closely monitored and safeguarded appropriately with passwords. Content filters and blockers should be utilized when possible.

5. Restroom/Locker Room:

- a. Restroom facilities should provide privacy with doors that close, and only one student should use a restroom (single) or stall (multi-stall) at a time.
- b. Students and staff should only ever shower alone. Helping students bath/shower is absolutely prohibited. If an open multi-shower is the only option available, students will be required to wear swimwear while showering and staff are not permitted to shower at the same time.