

Children’s Ministry Policy and Procedure Manual

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Introduction

This manual is designed to help parents know what to expect when you bring your children to our Children's Ministry. We also designed this manual to help our volunteers and workers to be aware of proper procedures to follow when caring for elementary children while here at church.

The policies and procedures were developed with the best interest of your children in mind. We strive to provide a clean, safe, secure and loving environment where every child can learn about the love of God. We have implemented these policies and procedures because we take the responsibility of caring for and teaching children very seriously.

Whether you are a first time guest or attend regularly, please take a few moments to review the following pages. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact any member of our Children's Ministry staff. We will be glad to help you in any way that we can.

We consider our ministry a partnership with parents on this wonderful journey of faith. Thank you for the opportunity and privilege of loving, guiding and teaching your children.

Our mission: Partnering with Parents to lead children into a saving faith, teach children to obey all God has commanded, and train children to gather, grow, and go.

Our Core Values:

1. I am loved by God.
2. I am a part of His plan.
3. I can trust God and His Word.
4. I should love God and people
5. I should make wise choices.

Rather than having rules kids must follow, we have a list of expectations. These behaviors are how we expect your children to act while here at church with us:

1. Treat others with kindness.
2. Use walking feet inside.
3. Use quiet voices inside.
4. Keep your hands (and all other body parts) to yourself.
5. Participate as we praise the Lord.

Our Church's Vision: **Gather** together in worship | **Grow** together in fellowship | **Go** together to all nations

General Policies

1. There is a two adult rule followed at all times in classrooms. Adults should not be related by marriage unless a third adult is present in the room as well. We will maintain a reasonable ratio of workers to children in each classroom. An exception to the two adult rule may be made if a youth approved by the Children's Director is present to work with an adult.
2. For safety of the children, the following child/teacher ratios are set: 4-5 years 5:1, 6 years and older 8:1, any age special needs 1:1.
3. Parents/Guardians are required to check in their child(ren) at a computer kiosk or iPad to obtain the proper check-in receipt and corresponding security tag necessary for pick-up. Unless otherwise authorized by the Children's Minister, teachers and volunteers are not to accept a child into a classroom until the proper check-in has been completed. Adults dropping children off are not allowed to go off campus in case of an emergency. Please join one of our adult groups (see our discipleship pastor if you need help plugging in).
4. Youth helpers (at least 15 years old) can be used as part of the two adult rule only if approved by the Children's Director. Children under the age of 15 are permitted to help only if a parent is volunteering in the same room as the child.
5. Every person working with children must: have attended FBC regularly for at least 6 months, complete a volunteer application form, provide two personal references and submit to a criminal background check.
6. Only approved enlisted workers, substitutes and pre-screened paid workers are permitted to help with children's activities.
7. Only parents or guardians with the appropriate security receipt or a replacement receipt signed by the Children's Director will be permitted to pick up a child. If you have lost your receipt, permission to pick up a child MUST be authorized by the Children's Director.
8. Any incident of injury or illness must be reported by the teacher or volunteer immediately to the Children's Director, who will contact the parent.
9. Children should be picked up promptly (within 15 minutes) following the end of services or scheduled activities.
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Safety

Safety in children's rooms is of critical importance. The following guidelines are to be followed:

1. All doors leading to the classroom are to have a way to lock in case of emergency. At least one window will not be covered by curtains or papers, etc. which might obstruct a clear view of the classroom.
2. Children are to be left in a classroom by parents when the designated teacher or volunteers are present. If only one volunteer is present, a parent will need to wait with the child until the second volunteer arrives.
3. When restrooms are adjoining or near the classroom, a teacher must assist the child to the restroom at all times.
4. All children's equipment and resources should be free of sharp edges, broken edges and sharp parts. When items are found like this, please remove them from the classroom immediately.
5. Parents are asked to update our Children's Director and teachers if their child is diagnosed with any allergy (i.e. food, plant or animal). Please keep our ministry team updated with this information and any necessary steps that need to be taken in the event of an allergic reaction. If an epi-pen is needed, parents are expected to provide this medication and to be available to administer it during church services and activities.
6. In the event of an injury or allergic reaction, parents will be notified immediately.
7. Teachers and leaders are asked to serve the snacks to the children. If other snacks are provided, they must be approved by the Children's Director.
8. Each classroom will have a student roster with the name of each child, names of parents, and any known allergies or medical/health conditions.
9. Please do not use cell phones or text while working with the children. This can be a huge distraction during the course of the classroom time.

Security

The security of our children is extremely important. The following guidelines have been established to help ensure the security of children:

1. Prior to entering a classroom, parents are asked to check-in their child(ren) at a computer kiosk or iPad. Parents or guardians must submit the corresponding security receipt in order to pick up their child. If the receipt is lost, parents must receive permission from the Children's Director prior to taking the child from the room.
2. Please match the security receipt from the parent to the security number assigned to the child. Stick the corresponding receipts back to back and place them in the classroom trashcan.
3. Parents are asked to report to the Children's Director regarding any legal, custody, or guardianship issues that might cause a security concern for a child.
4. There is a two adult (non-related) rule followed at all times in a classroom. No one will be allowed to work alone in a classroom. Youth workers may be used if pre-approved by the Children's Director.
5. The Children's Director will periodically check on each class during Grow Groups, worship services or other activities to make sure everything is going well.
6. Children's workers will wear a name tag to identify them as approved workers in the classroom.
7. All children will be given name tags and should wear them upon entering the classroom.
8. Children are to be dropped off and picked up by adults only.
9. In the event of an emergency in the classroom, all rooms are equipped with a walkie talkie that reaches the security team. Teachers and volunteers can call the security team for assistance for non-emergencies and the Children's Director. Every room will have the number of the Children's Director on paper. Call 911 if needed.

Volunteer Screening

1. To be considered as a volunteer working with children, a person must be actively attending FBC for at least 6 months.
2. Prior to consideration for a volunteer position, the volunteer must complete and return a criminal background check form.
3. At least two personal references must be provided, and positive references secured prior to volunteering if requested by the children's director.
4. If a criminal background check reflects a positive conviction within the past year, a person will be unable to volunteer unless approved by the Children's Director. If a background check presents a history of bad judgment, the Children's Director has the right to decline volunteer status.
5. If for any reason the Children's Director questions the status of a person to volunteer based on referrals or background check, she will present the request for volunteerism and relevant information to the church staff for review and disposition. The name of the applicant will be withheld for confidentiality purposes.
6. When a background check is completed and approved, the Children's Director will schedule an interview and orientation session with the volunteer. During this session, they will review the requirements of the position, review the Children's Ministry Policy and Procedure Manual, and provide time for questions and answers. A copy of this manual will be provided.
7. Background check updates will be ordered every three years when working with children.
8. All volunteer background checks will be kept completely confidential and properly secured in the church office for safe keeping.
9. All new volunteers will be placed on a teaching team with experience at FBC.
10. All children's workers will be offered periodic training in topics that are appropriate for their ministry.

Registration and Check-in Procedures

Kiosk check-in is available for all members of a children's Grow Group class, Sunday evening programs and Wednesday evening programs. There is a kiosk in the preschool area, at the multi-purpose room entrance, and one kiosk available outside of our children's center. Parents will check-in children at a kiosk and receive a name-tag for classroom check-in as well as a receipt for pick-up.

Teachers will not be allowed to accept a child into class without the proper check-in receipt. Children will not be released from class without the proper corresponding receipt. Teachers or parents are required to contact the Children's Director in the event that a security receipt is lost. Receipts are matched for corresponding numbers and secured back to back and placed in the trash.

Name tags are provided for all children and are kept on at all times in the classrooms.

Visitors are asked to check-in with a volunteer at one of the kiosks to complete the appropriate registration and receive the appropriate security receipts.

Adults are not allowed to leave campus after dropping off a child. They must remain on campus for safety purposes. We have classes offered for adults during all church times. See our Discipleship Pastor for adult class options.

Child Abuse Prevention and Reporting

First Baptist prohibits and is committed to the prevention of any form of abuse including physical, sexual or psychological abuse. Volunteers or staff who become aware of any form of child abuse, whether occurring at the church or at home, will immediately report the incident or information to the Children's Director who will take appropriate action. All suspected cases of child abuse must be reported to the appropriate agency for further investigation.

Volunteers are asked to maintain confidentiality of the investigation. DO NOT DISCUSS the incident with anyone other than the church ministerial staff or those in charge of the investigation.

The Children's Director will be responsible for documentation of all incidents, reports, and follow-up for any suspected case of abuse. The Children's Director will inform the Church Staff immediately and propose a plan of action.

Discipline

For young children, discipline is used to encourage cooperative behavior. The following methods are used by our teachers/volunteers:

1. Give positively worded directions: "You may sit on the floor or on a chair." "Walk inside." "Run outside or in the gym."
2. Redirection: Substitute a positive activity for a negative activity (i.e. "You may throw a beanbag." "We use blocks for building.").
3. Distraction: Change the focus of the activity or behavior.
4. Positive Reinforcement: Try to catch a child being good or affirm a child's appropriate behavior.
5. Active Listening: Help the child determine why there is a problem and help the child acknowledge his feelings and/or reaction.
6. Separation from the group: When all of the above fails, only then is a child briefly (less than 5 minutes) separated from his/her classmates. The child will always be within sight of the teachers.
7. Contact Children's Director: If a child's behavior is a danger to himself or others and/or other measures have been taken and are not effective, teachers and volunteers need to contact the Children's Director or Church staff for additional intervention and assessment.
8. If the child is keeping the other children in the class from learning and none of the above methods work, the children's ministry volunteer or worker may use the walkie talkie to request security find the parent of the child to come and pick him or her up.

Physical discipline and shaming methods are NEVER used.

Illness

If your child is sick or has been sick within the past 24 hour period before church services or events, we ask that you NOT bring your child to church. Please adhere to the 24 hour fever rule, which states that a child needs to be fever free without medication for a 24 hour period before attending church. Children with the following symptoms may be contagious:

1. Fever of 100 degrees or higher
2. Nausea, vomiting, and/or diarrhea
3. Yellow or green nasal mucous
4. Severe coughing, strep throat
5. Any untreated rash, skin infection or open lesion
6. Head lice or nits in the hair
7. Pinkeye or other eye infections with mucous discharge
8. Flu-like symptoms: chills, sweats, body aches, coughing up yellow or green mucous
9. Any symptoms of infectious communicable childhood diseases

If any of these symptoms occur while in class, the child may be isolated away from the other children while the parent or responsible party is located. We will ask you to come to take your child home.

In the handling of bodily fluids, teachers and volunteers are asked to immediately inform the Children's Director or church staff that assistance is needed. Help will be immediately sent to the location to properly clean the room. If necessary, children will be temporarily relocated to another room until a thorough clean up is completed. Disposable gloves are provided for the safety and well being of children and adults.

Parents are asked to inform the Ministry Staff of any medical conditions that might need to be addressed while in the care of our staff or volunteers. Information will be kept confidential and will be made known only to those teachers/volunteers on a need to know basis.

For safety reasons, parents are asked to be responsible for giving medications to their own children. Volunteers are not permitted to give medications.

Hygiene

To protect children and volunteers, it is essential to adhere to good hygiene practices.

1. Volunteers and staff are requested to use a bleach disinfecting solution when cleaning in a children's setting. Cleaning solution: 1 tablespoon bleach to 1 quart of water.
2. All teachers and volunteers are asked to wash hands upon entering the classroom.
3. Bleach water solution will be used to disinfect eating tables, bathrooms, toys and teaching materials that the children handle.
4. Disinfectant wipes and anti-bacterial soap/hand gel are provided in all classrooms.
5. All cleaning products are to be kept in a locked cabinet or out of reach of children.
6. Any spills of body fluids (i.e. urine, feces, blood, saliva or nasal discharge) must be cleaned up and the area disinfected with bleach solution immediately. Workers must inform the Children's Director in order to enlist the assistance of others to clean.

Emergency Procedures

Each children's classroom has an emergency plan (hurricane, fire, tornado, earthquake, lockdown) posted in the classroom next to the door. Every teacher/volunteer needs to be familiar with the course of action needed to take for each emergency. There will be a walkie-talkie provided in each children's room. If indicated by the security team through the walkie, talkie, gather children and follow the room specific plan.

In the event of a building evacuation, all children will be taken to the steps of the courthouse to be reunited with their parents.

A First Aid kit is stocked and kept in every children's classroom. A member of our First Responders team as well as a parent will be paged or contacted for instructions regarding an injury requiring more than a Band-Aid. Parents will be contacted if a Band-Aid is needed.

All injuries or incidents need to be reported in writing to the Children's Director. Forms (see appendix A) are located in the classrooms or can be obtained from the Children's Director. The Children's Director will follow-up with parents regarding all reported incidents and injuries.

In the event of a security threat, the security team will announce so by the walkie-talkie. Classroom doors will be locked, and all windows will be covered. Remain calm and follow the emergency plan posted on the back of all doors.

Inclement Weather Policy

In the event of inclement weather, church closings will be announced on the FBC BSL Children's Ministry Facebook group. Use your best judgment for your family during inclement weather.

If you would like to receive text message updates for the children's ministry,

text: @fbcbslk

to the number: 81010

Playground Policy

Two playground areas are provided for our children. Two adults are required on the playground at all times when a group is present. Playground times are assigned to the preschool and children's ministries. The children ages k-5 are not allowed on the playground during the preschool's designated times unless approved by the children's director and preschool director and they are using different playground areas.

Children are not allowed to go outside of the gated area at anytime for any reason. If a ball or another toy goes outside of the gated area, a volunteer or security team member will safely bring the toy back to the gated area.

Children who do not adhere to these rules will immediately be escorted back to the church building and taken to the supervision of the Children's Director or a volunteer until their class returns from the playground area. There will be no exceptions to this rule for safety reasons.

Please inspect playground areas and pick up and throw away any dangerous item or trash. Any equipment that needs repair should be immediately reported to the Children's Director or Preschool Director.

Children, who may need to go to the restroom while on the playground, will always be accompanied by a volunteer. If another adult is needed on the playground during this time in order to abide by our two adult rule, please ask the Children's Director or another approved volunteer to assist the child to the restroom or to go to the playground until the volunteer returns.

Appendix

Bay Saint Louis' First Baptist Church

Child Accident/Incident Report

Name of child(ren)/youth: _____ Date, time and place of incident: _____ Is this an (circle one): accident
incident allegation other: _____ Person reporting the incident: _____

Description of the incident as reported or witnessed: _____

Adults present during incident: _____

Did anyone else witness the incident? If so, list names: _____

Were there visible injuries? If yes, please list: _____

How were the injuries treated? _____ Who treated the injuries? _____ Were parents/guardians notified? _____
Date/time: _____ Name of preparer: (please print) _____

Does this incident require mandatory reporting to authorities? _____ Were any authorities notified? Who? When? _____ Was the insurance company notified? When? _____

Other details: _____

Signature: _____ Position: _____

Form must be turned in to the Children's Minister on the same day as the accident/incident.

Children's Director Description

Position: Children's Director

Staff Liaison: Senior Pastor

Status: Part-Time

FBC Mission Statement and Purpose: The primary purpose of all staff members is to fulfill the mission of FBC. The mission of FBC is to *gather together in worship, grow together in community, and go together to all nations.*

Primary Function: To lead the children's ministry (k-5th grade) at FBC, to encourage, recruit, and train our volunteers to disciple the next generation of children, to be an advocate for parents as they take on the primary role of disciple maker for their children.

Relationships: Reports to the Senior Pastor, interfaces with other staff members, engages with all FBC ministry team leaders and members.

Responsibilities:

- Disciple and send out the next generation of children to be the light of the world
- Plan and facilitate weekly children's worship times
- Help expand children's Christian worldview
- Responsible for recruiting, training, and coordinating the work of volunteers in various aspects of children's ministry, to supervise all volunteers in all related areas of children's ministry
- Coordinate all ministry activities and events for children
- Implement an ongoing ministry to parents, help equip children's ministry parents in the discipleship of their children
- Assist in ministering to the young families of the church
- Administer the line items of the children's ministry budget with attention to detail
- Assist in updating and utilizing the church database for ministry
- Maintain the child check in system and to help train volunteers on how to use it

Skill Sets:

- Ability to teach the Bible to children
- Ability to coordinate and delegate children's ministry with an attention to detail
- Strong verbal communication skills with an ability to adapt to a vast array of personality types and spiritual depths.
- An ability to give positive critique and communicate responsibility to others
- Strong ministry experience and ministry support experience, preferred
- Personal integrity and commitment to confidentiality
- A passion for members to walk with Jesus and to make disciples of all Nations

Personal Responsibilities:

- Above all, to grow closer to Jesus Christ. Through a daily quiet time with the Lord, seek to keep Jesus Christ as the priority, realizing that prayer, Bible study, and Christian fellowship are essential to growing in God's will each day
- Keep family in the right position of priorities and place them before everything except one's own personal relationship with the Lord.

Elementary Grow Group Teacher Description

Position: Elementary Sunday School Teacher

Staff Liaison: Children's Director

Key Characteristics:

- Have a passion for children and a call to ministry to teach
- Have a deep commitment to a personal relationship with Christ and the mission of the church
- Knowledge of child development or a willingness to learn
- Ability to work with a teaching team
- Ability to work with children from diverse backgrounds with varied educational and emotional needs

Qualifications:

- Love of children and willingness to teach
- Submit to a criminal background check and reference check
- Attend new teacher's training with Children's Director
- Active attendance at FBC for at least 6 months

Responsibilities:

- Commitment to Grow Group for at least a year
- Provide adequate preparation of lesson and activities prior to class each Sunday
- Arrive no later than fifteen minutes prior to start time in order to be prepared for children to arrive at
- Greet each child by name and welcome him/her to class
- Provide a loving and accepting environment for all children
- Provide a variety of relevant activities to address the varied learning styles of children
- Attend two teacher training/meetings per year as planned by Children's Director or Discipleship Pastor
- Develop relationships with children and personally contact children who are absent for 3 consecutive weeks
- Secure a substitute for vacations or weeks when absent or ask Children's Director to assist with finding a sub when needed
- Adhere to all Children's Ministry Policies and Procedures
- Provide at least a two week notice to Children's Director if resigning from Position.

Elementary Bible Drills Teacher Description

Position: Elementary Bible Drills Teacher

Staff Liaison: Children's Director

Key Characteristics:

- Have a passion for children and a call to ministry to teach
- Have a deep commitment to a personal relationship with Christ and the mission of the church
- Knowledge of child development or a willingness to learn
- Ability to work with a teaching team
- Ability to work with children from diverse backgrounds with varied educational and emotional needs

Qualifications:

- Love of children and willingness to teach
- Submit to a criminal background check and reference check
- Attend new teacher's training with Children's Director
- Active attendance at FBC for at least 6 months

Responsibilities:

- Commitment to Sunday night activities for at least a year
- Provide adequate preparation of lesson and activities prior to class each Sunday
- Arrive no later than fifteen minutes prior to start time in order to be prepared for children to arrive at
- Greet each child by name and welcome him/her to class
- Provide a loving and accepting environment for all children
- Provide a variety of relevant activities to address the varied learning styles of children
- Attend two teacher training/meetings per year as planned by Children's Director or Discipleship Pastor
- Develop relationships with children and personally contact children who are absent for 3 consecutive weeks
- Secure a substitute for vacations or weeks when absent or ask Children's Director to assist with finding a sub when needed
- Adhere to all Children's Ministry Policies and Procedures
- Provide at least a two week notice to Children's Director if resigning from Position.
- Have Bible Drill experience or be willing to learn how Bible Drills works.

Elementary Grow Group Assistant Description

Position: Elementary Sunday School Volunteer

Staff Liaison: Children's Director

Key Characteristics:

- Have a passion for children and a call to ministry to assist teachers
- Have a deep commitment to a personal relationship with Christ and the mission of the church
- Knowledge of child development or a willingness to learn
- Ability to work with a teaching team
- Ability to work with children from diverse backgrounds with varied educational and emotional needs

Qualifications:

- Love of children and willingness to assist teachers
- Submit to a criminal background check and reference check
- Attend new teacher's training with Children's Director
- Active attendance at FBC for at least 6 months

Responsibilities:

- Commitment to Grow Group for at least a year
- Provide adequate help each Sunday for class
- Arrive no later than fifteen minutes prior to start time in order to be prepared for children to arrive
- Greet each child by name and welcome him/her to class
- Provide a loving and accepting environment for all children
- Help the teacher to provide a variety of relevant activities to address the varied learning styles of children
- Attend one teacher training/meeting per year as planned by Children's Director or Discipleship Pastor
- Develop relationships with children
- Adhere to all Children's Ministry Policies and Procedures
- Provide at least a two week notice to Children's Director if resigning from Position.

Elementary Bible Drills Volunteer Description

Position: Elementary Bible Drills Volunteer

Staff Liaison: Children's Director

Key Characteristics:

- Have a passion for children and a call to ministry to assist teachers
- Have a deep commitment to a personal relationship with Christ and the mission of the church
- Knowledge of child development or a willingness to learn
- Ability to work with a teaching team
- Ability to work with children from diverse backgrounds with varied educational and emotional needs

Qualifications:

- Love of children and willingness to teach
- Submit to a criminal background check and reference check
- Attend new teacher's training with Children's Director
- Active attendance at FBC for at least 6 months

Responsibilities:

- Commitment to Sunday night activities for at least a year
- Arrive no later than fifteen minutes prior to start time in order to be prepared for children to arrive at
- Greet each child by name and welcome him/her to class
- Provide a loving and accepting environment for all children
- Help the teacher provide a variety of relevant activities to address the varied learning styles of children
- Attend one teacher training/meeting per year as planned by Children's Director or Discipleship Pastor
- Develop relationships with children
- Adhere to all Children's Ministry Policies and Procedures
- Provide at least a two week notice to Children's Director if resigning from Position.

Elementary Kid's Worship Volunteer Description

Position: Elementary Kid's Worship Volunteer

Staff Liaison: Children's Director

Key Characteristics:

- Have a passion for children and a call to ministry to assist teachers
- Have a deep commitment to a personal relationship with Christ and the mission of the church
- Knowledge of child development or a willingness to learn
- Ability to work with a teaching team
- Ability to work with children from diverse backgrounds with varied educational and emotional needs

Qualifications:

- Love of children and willingness to teach
- Submit to a criminal background check and reference check
- Attend new teacher's training with Children's Director
- Active attendance at FBC for at least 6 months

Responsibilities:

- Commitment to Sunday morning activities for at least a year on a three-week rotation.
- Arrive no later than fifteen minutes prior to start time in order to be prepared for children to arrive
- Greet each child by name and welcome him/her to class
- Provide a loving and accepting environment for all children
- Help the teacher provide a variety of relevant activities to address the varied learning styles of children
- Attend one teacher training/meeting per year as planned by Children's Director or Discipleship Pastor
- Develop relationships with children
- Adhere to all Children's Ministry Policies and Procedures
- Provide at least a two week notice to Children's Director if resigning from Position.

Elementary Children in Action Volunteer Description

Position: Elementary M&M Volunteer

Staff Liaison: Children's Director

Key Characteristics:

- Have a passion for children and a call to ministry to assist teachers
- Have a deep commitment to a personal relationship with Christ and the mission of the church
- Knowledge of child development or a willingness to learn
- Ability to work with a teaching team
- Ability to work with children from diverse backgrounds with varied educational and emotional needs

Qualifications:

- Love of children & Missions and willingness to teach
- Submit to a criminal background check and reference check
- Attend new teacher's training with Children's Director
- Active attendance at FBC for at least 6 months

Responsibilities:

- Commitment to Wednesday night activities for at least a year
- Arrive no later than fifteen minutes prior to start time in order to be prepared for children to arrive at
- Greet each child by name and welcome him/her to class
- Provide a loving and accepting environment for all children
- Help the Children's Director provide a variety of relevant activities to address the varied learning styles of children
- Attend one teacher training/meeting per year as planned by Children's Director or Discipleship Pastor
- Develop relationships with children
- Adhere to all Children's Ministry Policies and Procedures
- Provide at least a two week notice to Children's Director if resigning from Position.
- Musical experience or talent preferred but not required.