

# **Child Safety Policies**

*of First Baptist Church  
Hickory, NC*

Adopted: 2004  
To be implemented: 2005

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## **Introduction**

*Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."* Matthew 19:14

*"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."* John 10:11

## **Purpose**

*The Good Shepherd Program* is designed to help churches and other ministries develop programs to reduce the risk of abuse or injury to infants, children, and youth who participate in their programs. The Good Shepherd Program is about stewardship of one of God's great gifts--children and teens. This program enables churches to develop a prevention program without having to "reinvent the wheel."

Sexual or physical abuse and accidental injury to young people happens more frequently in churches than we realize. Church insurance companies report that incidents are increasing "at epidemic rates." Abuse or serious accidents are disastrous for children, families, church members, church budgets, and the church's ability to spread the Gospel effectively.

Tragically, in a number of cases, the evidence suggests that incidents and injuries could have been prevented with simple procedures and techniques.

## **Good Shepherd Program Objectives**

*The Good Shepherd Program* is designed to:

- educate church leaders and youth ministry workers about prevention of abuse or accidental injury,
- enable church leaders and ministry workers to develop procedures and practices that reduce these risks,
- protect adults from mistaken or groundless allegations,
- reduce liability for churches,
- build parental confidence in church programs, and
- prepare church workers to respond should an incident or accident occur.

The authors strongly believe that churches must strive to protect children from all forms of maltreatment, so this program tries to be as comprehensive as possible. However, child sexual abuse is the most difficult risk for most churches to address. The content of *The Good Shepherd Program* focuses upon prevention of child abuse, child sexual abuse, and overall safety of children and youth.

## **No Prevention Program is Foolproof**

The ideas and techniques suggested here are the result of substantial experience and consideration by a large number of people who care for kids. These concepts have been implemented successfully in a wide variety of churches and youth programs. They are widely considered to significantly reduce the risks of accidents and abuse.

Persons who are driven to abuse children are sometimes capable of circumventing even the best screening, training, and supervision programs. The most careful preparation cannot avoid all accidents. However, leaders in the field of youth programs generally agree that steps can be taken that will greatly enhance the safety of young people participating in ministries.

Further, no model prevention program will be suitable for every church or in every situation that involves young people in the care of church volunteers and employees. *The Good Shepherd Program* is only a starting point for churches who wish to protect the children in their care. Each church or other institution using these policies must carefully review them for suitability for the specific programs hosted by the user organization. These policies are designed as a "first draft," which should be customized by church personnel or legal counsel to fit the needs and preferences of individual user organizations.

Today there are no national standards to define what constitutes a safe children's program. As the techniques and policies presented here have been pioneered by a wide variety of churches and youth organizations across the USA, the authors of this program sincerely believe that these recommendations are sound in most situations. Please do not, however, become overly reliant on these policies. They may not fit your situation. Church and ministry leaders need to use their own common sense, plan for "worst-case scenarios," and review their precautions frequently.

## **No program of risk reduction can prevent abuse or injuries 100 percent of the time.**

As noted above, *The Good Shepherd Program* is a starting point: each user church or organization is solely responsible for developing an adequate program, and for hiring of the staff who will implement and carry out the program in an appropriate manner. The authors and publisher of *The Good Shepherd Program* have no control over how the contents of these materials are adopted and implemented by users, nor do they have control over how and whether staff are hired and directed within ministry programs. Accordingly, the authors and publisher cannot be responsible for cases where abuse or accidents occur in spite of the use of *The Good Shepherd Program*. Each user church or religious program is solely responsible for all liability that may result from such incidents.

## **Legal and Technical Review Required**

The material in this package touches upon technical areas of church management, such as employment law, mandatory child-abuse reporting requirements, and insurance. Laws change and vary by jurisdiction. For these reasons, the publisher and authors of *The Good Shepherd Program* strongly advise user organizations to review these recommended policies and guidelines with qualified advisors and legal counsel who are familiar with the laws that apply in the local community. Such review ought to be conducted on a periodic basis, as deemed necessary in the sole opinion of the user organization and its advisors, to take account of and incorporate legal developments and standards applicable to youth programs.

## **Certification or Licensure May Be Required**

Your church may operate programs that require state certification or licensure. In addition, particular workers in these programs may be required by state law to hold certain certificates or meet educational standards. For these reasons, the publisher and authors of *The Good Shepherd Program* strongly advise user organizations to review the applicability of these types of requirements with qualified advisors and legal counsel. Such review ought to be conducted on a periodic basis, as deemed necessary in the sole opinion of the user organization and its advisors, to take account of and incorporate legal developments and standards applicable to youth programs.

## How To Use This Program

*The Good Shepherd Program* includes seven interrelated components:

**The Good Shepherd Handbook** is a primer to help ministry leaders understand how abuse and accidents occur and to explain possible prevention techniques and approaches. It is intended mainly for ministry leaders, such as senior and youth pastors, Sunday school superintendents, nursery directors, and program chairs. It is appropriate for volunteers or paid staff members. The authors' hope is that users of *The Good Shepherd Program* will familiarize themselves with the Handbook and refer to it occasionally as they manage the safety process. "Rank and file" volunteers can certainly benefit from the Handbook, but it may contain more information than the typical church volunteer needs.

The **Child Protection Audit** is designed to help leaders evaluate their child safety programs. It is not intended for one-time use. Complete the audit and make notes about how your church satisfies the questions in the Audit, and note what needs to be done to shore up any weak spots. Add sections to the Audit if necessary to address unique features of your ministry. Keep the Audit and notes available and review them every six months or annually. Make sure your church continues to address the points in the Audit. The Child Protection Audit is provided on computer disk for convenience, so please respect the copyright rules by using these materials only within the church or ministry that is the original purchaser.

The **Good Shepherd Model Policy Manual** is designed to be customized by the ministries and churches using them. The policies are meant to be printed out and distributed widely to persons working with children or youth, parents, and church or ministry governing boards. Print as many application forms, authorization forms, and guidelines as needed. The Model Operating Policies are provided on computer disk for convenience, so please respect the copyright rules by using these materials only within the church or ministry that is the original purchaser.

The **Background Checking Options** booklet walks you through one of the most vexing problems for ministries - how to do legal, appropriate background checks on ministers, paid workers, and volunteers. You'll get detailed recommendations on what to do and how to get it done as simply as possible.

The **Good Shepherd Training Resources** booklet uses specific training outlines to help participants learn and understand the difficult issues involved in a comprehensive safety program. Training outlines include: sensitizing church leaders, practical tips for volunteers and ministry workers, outcry training for parents and youth, and more!

The **Rapid Response Guidebook** is designed to be reprinted and placed in key locations. Fill in the blank spaces with names and telephone numbers as requested, then print out as many Guidebooks as you need. Place them in the ministry office, classrooms, in the glove boxes of ministry vehicles, and anywhere else you deem appropriate. The Rapid Response Guidebook is provided on computer disk for convenience, so please respect the copyright rules by using these materials only within the church or ministry that is the original purchaser.

The **Good Shepherd Diskette** includes all of the sample policies, sample forms, and other key documents. There is no new software to learn - diskette files are provided in formats compatible with common word processing software (such as MS Word and WordPerfect). You simply open the file, select the forms or policies you want to work with, make the desired changes, then save and print your customized forms. The Good Shepherd Diskette is the fast, easy way to create the tools you need for your child safety program.

## **Questions and Feedback Welcome**

The authors of *The Good Shepherd Program*, William T. Stout and James K. Becker, would like to learn how you have adapted the program to fit your needs. We will try to help if you have questions about implementing these ideas in your church. We especially want to hear from you if you have a criticism of these techniques or can suggest a better way to safeguard children.

## The Language of Prevention \_ A Glossary of Terms

This is a glossary of terminology as used in this manual. Technical definitions used for clinical purposes may differ. Legal definitions will vary by jurisdiction.

*Abused or neglected child* \_ a child whose mental or physical health is endangered or threatened by the actions or failure to act by people responsible for the child's care.

*Boundaries* \_ Property boundaries are the limits or dividing lines between pieces of real estate. People have boundaries, too, that guide our physical and emotional relations. Personal boundaries are like fences, separating appropriate behavior from improper behavior. The lines change according to the child's age and the relationship between the child and the adult. In a physical sense boundaries govern appropriate behavior. For example, it is fine for a four year old to sit on the lap of her Sunday school teacher, but not for her 14-year-old sister to sit on the lap of her youth group sponsor. Any child with weak boundaries is more vulnerable to sexual molestation. Healthy boundaries enable a child to recognize and reject inappropriate behavior.

In relationships, boundaries govern our behavior and roles. For example, youth ministers should understand the boundaries of their roles and avoid intruding into the responsibilities of a parent.

*Child maltreatment* \_ harm to a child by a caretaker or another person who may come into contact with the child. This includes acts of commission (assault) as well as acts of omission (failure to protect). In other words -- physical, emotional, or sexual abuse and neglect.

*Child molester* \_ a person who has sexually violated children.

*Child protective services* \_ a generic name for agencies of municipal or state government that investigate child maltreatment and provide services to victims and families. May also be called "social services, human services, child welfare," or similar names. Child protective services work closely with law enforcement and the courts. Most child protective services staff people have in-depth social work and family counseling training.

*Child sexual abuse* \_ includes but is not limited to any contact or interaction between a child and an adult when the child is being used for sexual stimulation of the adult person or of a third person. The behavior may or may not involve touching. Sexual behavior between a child and an adult is always considered forced whether or not consented to by the child. Also referred to as molestation.

*Children and/or youth* \_ generally anyone less than 18 years of age. This category may also include persons over 18 years of age who are not able to fully protect themselves from exploitation or give consent for sexual activity (due to age, intellectual or physical impairments, or other incapacities). The definition of a "child" or "minor" may differ according to various state statutes and regulations. Consult your legal advisors as to how these terms may be defined and used in your state.

*Denominational organization*\_dioceses, synods, conferences, or similar associations of churches that may have policies that interact with an individual church's policies and guidelines.

*Emotional abuse may take two forms:*

failure to provide love, emotional support, and adult guidance (an act of omission),  
or,

conduct that threatens a child's self-esteem and emotional development, such as humiliating, insulting, or belittling a child (an act of commission).

*Grooming*\_a pattern of behavior by a child molester which makes a child more vulnerable to molestation or prevents a child from reporting molestation. Often molestation occurs only after considerable contact with the molester that allows the molester to evaluate and increase the vulnerability of a victim. Example: a child molester involves a teen in viewing pornography and consuming alcohol as an introduction to sexual activity. Later the molester threatens the child by saying "Don't tell anyone or you'll be in more trouble than me for drinking and having those magazines."

*Mandatory reporting*\_Many states or other jurisdictions have laws that require certain types of caretakers (teachers, social workers, child care workers) to report suspected child maltreatment to child protective services or law enforcement. Since these rules vary greatly by jurisdiction and are frequently changed, *The Good Shepherd Program* strongly advises each user of this program to understand the mandatory reporting requirements that are applicable. If mandatory reporting is required, this information should be integrated into the guidelines and procedures of the user organization.

*Molestation*\_see child sexual abuse.

*Neglect*\_failure of a caretaker to provide for a child's basic needs or prevent harm to the child.

*Pedophile and hebephile* -- Pedophile is a clinical diagnosis of a person with a compulsive sexual desire for children who have not yet reached the age of puberty. A hebephile is similar to a pedophile except the desire is focused on adolescent children. The sexual desire must have lasted at least six months and be strong enough to cause significant stress on the individual or cause the individual to act.

*Warning: These are clinical terms used by mental health professionals for particular types of child molesters. Not all child molesters are pedophiles or hebephiles. Pedophiles or hebephiles who have not acted upon their fantasies are not child molesters. Since most church workers are not qualified to diagnose these conditions, church workers are best advised to stick to the term child molester for reasons of simplicity and clarity. This is especially important when making reports to child protective workers, law enforcement agencies, or in court testimony. The term child molester stems from outwardly visible behavior that is harmful, regardless of its psychological roots.*

*Physical abuse*\_nonaccidental injury to children caused by the acts of parents or others.

*Preferential child molester* \_molester who actively plans to molest children and works to gain access to them. Preferential molesters will typically abuse children repeatedly and will assail hundreds of children throughout their lifetimes.

*Program or ministry leader* \_persons who direct one component of the church's ministry to children. This category includes: youth pastor, nursery school director, Sunday school superintendent, and mid-week club chairperson.

*Red flag* \_an informal term for any indication that an individual may not be well suited to caretaker roles with children or youth. A red flag raises suspicions and causes program leaders to look more closely at an individual's qualifications or behavior. (Please see Model Policy #4 of the Good Shepherd Model Policy Manual.)

*Risk management* \_a field of management in which an organization or business evaluates the risks it faces and minimizes or transfers risk in order to protect the effectiveness of the organization. Risk management usually includes the purchase of insurance as a part of the overall process.

*Sexual abuse/assault/exploitation* \_any act of sexual intimacy lacking mutual consent and involving force or threat of force. This includes situations in which the victim is unable to give consent due to age, intellectual or physical impairments, or other incapacities. Note that this definition applies regardless of the ages of the victim and victimizer (i.e., adult-adult, adult-child, or child-child).

*Sexual misconduct* \_*The Good Shepherd Program* defines this term as improper, exploitive sexual behavior between adults. Examples include a counselor who has sex with a person they are counseling or a minister having an extramarital affair with a church member. Note that some individuals and organizations use this term to refer to all inappropriate sexual activities, relationships, and behavior, whether involving children or adults.

*Situational child molester* \_molester who does not actively plan to molest children but is presented with the temptation and acts on impulse. Often the molestation would not occur without exceptional circumstances or unusual stress.

*Survivors of abuse* \_Often youth workers choose to refer to people who have experienced abuse as "survivors" instead of "victims." This term helps the abused individuals see themselves as people who are overcoming a problem rather than as people who are powerless, defined by the abuse they have experienced.

*Worker or ministry worker* \_any person who has custody or supervision of children under 18 years of age during church activities, whether in a paid or a volunteer role. This includes parents of kids who participate in activities.

*Workers by type:*

**Primary workers**\_All paid staff and those volunteers in roles with greater responsibility or risk should be classified as primary workers and should meet the primary screening standards (please refer to Model Policy #3 of the Good Shepherd Model Policy Manual). Primary workers have greater responsibility and more opportunity to harm children, so churches must take extra care in their screening.

**Secondary workers**\_Secondary workers are people who occasionally interact with minors and/or do so in less risky circumstances. For example, a volunteer who sees children only in a group setting, on church premises, and with a ministry leader present may be classified as a secondary worker. This category includes parents of participants who supervise activities.

*Note*\_Some experts recommend that all workers who have access to children be screened to the most stringent level. This is a good idea, if possible. The Good Shepherd Program provides the option of primary and secondary categories for churches who decide that a single standard for screening is not feasible. However, treating all workers as primary workers is safer than using a primary-secondary system.

## **Policy #1:**

### **Ongoing Supervision of the Child Safety Program**

The Senior Pastor and Minister of Christian Education will appoint one person to supervise the child safety program hereafter to be referred to as the Child Safety Program Coordinator. This program shall govern all church activities that involve custody of children and teens less than 18 years of age.

#### **Annual Review of Safety Program**

Annually, in May each program leader will review compliance with safety policies and potential risks and submit a brief written report that will be given to the Child Safety Program Coordinator. The report should include a listing of any new programs or program changes and the additional risks these changes may incur, and a brief summary of policy violations and the program leader's response to these violations.

Any pattern of violations that suggest policy changes are needed should be identified. The Child Safety Program Coordinator will summarize the reports received from program leaders and submit an overall report to the leadership of the church.

#### **Waiver of Policies**

Church policies may be waived occasionally for exceptional circumstances. The goal of First Baptist Church Hickory is to promote safety while maintaining practical flexibility in children's and youth ministry. Waiving policies should only be authorized, in writing and signed, by either the Senior Pastor, Minister of Christian Education or the Safety Coordinator. Waiver must state reason for exception.

#### **Modification of Policies**

Changes in these policies must be approved by the Church Council. These policies may be modified or withdrawn by First Baptist Church Hickory at any time. These policies are not intended to create an implied or express contract with any person. They are not intended to create a legally enforceable or binding promise or representation.

#### **Activities Covered by These Policies**

All activities of First Baptist Church Hickory, with the exception of the Child Development Center, and the Boy Scouts of America that require church workers acting within the scope of their duties to have custody of persons less than 18 years of age shall follow these policies. The Child Development Center shall follow guidelines appropriate for a licensed weekday education program. Scouts shall follow guidelines in accordance with the policies of B.S.A.

Community Programs using FBC facilities but not affiliated with the church are responsible for providing copies of their safety policies and liability coverage. For example: BSF, Kindermusik, etc.

First Baptist Church Hickory interprets the above guideline to mean, as of this date, that the following activities of the church should observe these policies:

Extended Session  
Sunday Morning Bible Study  
Missions Groups

Vacation Bible School  
Summer Programs  
Age-Graded Choirs

## **Policy #2:**

### **Operating Policies for All Children's and Youth Ministries**

#### **Statement of Purpose**

As a church, we believe that the spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being of children is vital. This policy is intended to ensure that church activities involving children are consistent with the teachings and example of our Lord Jesus Christ and with the Christian tradition of nurturing vulnerable children.

The primary purpose of this policy is to promote the safety and well-being of children and youth by providing clear instructions about the operation of children's and youth ministries at First Baptist Church Hickory. The leaders of First Baptist Church sincerely request the cooperation of the adults in our church to abide by the guidelines of this policy.

#### **Child and Youth Safety Takes Priority**

The primary purpose of the children's and youth ministries of First Baptist Church, Hickory is to introduce children to a life-changing encounter with the Gospel and with Jesus Christ. It is obvious that any sexual exploitation, abuse, or endangerment directly contradicts this purpose and the values of First Baptist Church.

Workers and supervisors who oversee children and youth workers must keep this priority in mind. Adults have an opportunity to serve when selected by the church. This means that workers should err on the side of caution as they make subjective decisions involving the well-being of children and youth. All workers must diligently avoid any conduct that would appear wrong to a reasonable observer, even if no actual misconduct takes place.

#### **Policy Standards and General Christian Moral Standards**

Workers in children's and youth ministry are expected to observe these policies and guidelines as well as the other Christian standards of moral behavior.

#### **Supervision of Children's and Ministry Workers**

##### **Adequate Supervision of Youth Workers**

Church staff and volunteers who supervise youth workers are charged with the diligent enforcement of these policies. Violation of these policies are grounds for immediate dismissal, disciplinary action, or re-assignment from youth work for both volunteers and staff, at the discretion of the Personnel Committee in regards to paid staff and by the Supervising Staff Minister in relation to volunteers.

Supervisors and all volunteer workers with minors who suspect any unhealthy or abusive activities must discuss their suspicions promptly with the Safety Program Coordinator or the Senior Pastor.

### **Worker to Child Ratios**

First Baptist Church Hickory has a goal of maintaining the following ratios of ministry workers to children whenever feasible. These ratios are goals. The church recognizes that in some circumstances achieving these ratios may not be feasible, such as an unexpected number of children showing up for an event.

### **Worker to Child Ratios**

<b>PROGRAM</b>	<b>WORKERS</b>	<b>CHILDREN</b>
Extended Session	2	12
Sunday Morning Bible Study	2	16
Scouts	2	14
Missions Groups	2	16
Age-Graded Choirs	2	16
Vacation Bible School	2	16
Summer Programs	2	10

### **Touching Policy**

We live in an age where child abuse is a reality in our society. The church needs to deal with this issue as a "good shepherd" by taking steps to protect the children in our care. First Baptist Church, Hickory has implemented a touching policy that will safeguard our children while promoting a positive, nurturing environment for ministry to them. The guidelines below are to be carefully followed by anyone working with children and youth.

1. Hugging, kisses and other forms of appropriate physical affection between workers and children are important for a child's development and are generally suitable in our church setting.
2. Physical affection should be appropriate to the age of the child or youth. (For example, it is generally appropriate for a four-year-old to sit in a nursery worker's lap and give a kiss on the cheek, but it is not appropriate for a teenager and youth leader to behave this way.)
3. Touching should be initiated by the child or youth. It should be a response to the child's need for comforting, encouragement, or affection. It should not be based upon the adult's emotional need.
4. Touching and affection should only be given when in the presence of other children's ministry or youth workers. It is much less likely that touches will be inappropriate or misconstrued as such when two adult workers are present and the touching is open to observation. This rule is especially important when diapering a baby or helping a young child change clothes or use the restroom.
5. Touching behavior should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing. As ministry workers, our behavior must foster trust at all times; it should be above reproach.

6. A child's preference not to be touched should be respected. Do not force affection upon a reluctant child.
7. Church workers are responsible to protect children under their supervision from inappropriate touching by others.
8. Church workers must promptly discuss inappropriate touching or other questionable behavior by other workers with their Senior Pastor, or Minister of Christian Education, or Safety Coordinator.

## **Policy #3:**

### **Worker Selection and Supervision**

The following guidelines will be used as First Baptist Church Hickory reviews applicants for positions in children's or youth ministry:

#### **Minimum Age**

All workers must be 16 years of age or older. Younger persons may assist adults (21 or older), but they may not take the place of adult workers.

#### **Auto Safety**

Persons who will drive vehicles for conducting church business or transporting children on a regular basis must complete an "Auto Safety" form. This rule is at the discretion of the appropriate ministry leader. It is not necessary for people who will not transport minors.

#### **Confidential Interviews**

All applicants must be interviewed for suitability for the work they desire to do. Interviews will be conducted by the Safety Coordinator. A team of interviewers may be used. Church policy and guidelines should be discussed during the interview.

#### **Six-Month Rule**

Applicants must have been an active member of First Baptist Church Hickory or a regular attendee of the church for at least six months. This time of interaction between ministry leaders and the applicant allows leaders to better evaluate the suitability of an applicant for work with minors. If the six-month rule is waived, such as with church employees or interns who are not church members, program leaders may take additional steps to screen the applicant at their own discretion.

#### **Application Forms**

Applicants must complete and sign an application and the related waivers giving permission to check references and background information.

#### **Survivors of Child Abuse**

Any applicant who is a survivor of childhood sexual or physical abuse needs the love and acceptance of the First Baptist Church Hickory family. A person's experience with abuse and their recovery process may be pertinent to their suitability as ministry workers. Applicants who are survivors of abuse should discuss this in confidence with the person who conducts the confidential interview. If an applicant is uncomfortable doing so, they may have the interview conducted by the pastor.

When evaluating candidates, the following factors will be considered if an applicant is a survivor of child abuse:

- Whether the applicant has previously committed an act of child abuse or molestation (anyone who has maltreated children may not serve in children's or youth ministry)
- The extent of professional counseling the applicant has received.
- The opinion of references, especially professional counselors who have served the applicant.

- The opinion of leaders in other churches or youth organizations in which the applicant has been involved.
- How closely the church is able to supervise and monitor the position for which the applicant is applying.

### **Criminal Background Check**

Required for primary worker positions. Optional for secondary worker applicants at the option of the leader of the program in which they will work.

### **References**

Church leaders will check at least two references for each worker. The references will be done by phone, mail, or in person. Whenever possible, the references should include: one person who has known the applicant well for an extended period of time, a former supervisor, and a member of the applicant's immediate family. For applicants for compensated positions, additional former supervisors may be checked.

The "Children's and Youth Worker Reference" form will be filled out by the person conducting the phone reference check.

### **First Aid Training**

Church employees who supervise young people must maintain current certification in basic first aid and basic CPR (or their equivalent if other is offered in the church's locality). Costs for this training will be paid by the church. New employees must get this certification within 90 days of the start of their employment. Nursery workers and others serving young children may also want training in infant and toddler CPR. Other workers are encouraged, but not required, to get training if they frequently accompany kids on adventure activities: water sports, camping, home-building mission trips, etc.

### **Signatures on Guidelines**

All applicants must agree by signature that they understand the guidelines pertaining to their positions and that they agree to abide by them. This requirement will be met by having applicants sign the printed "Guidelines" forms that are appropriate to their position. Staff members or volunteers who work with several ministry areas should sign the appropriate form for each ministry area.

### **Confidentiality of Information**

The church will keep confidential all information received in the applicant selection process. Selection information will be marked as such and stored with limited access afforded only to the Child Safety Program Coordinator.

### **Delays in Receiving Information**

While the church is waiting for background information and references, applicants may not begin working in contact with children. Failure to receive satisfactory responses in a timely manner may result in withdrawal of the offer to work with the ministry program.

### **Classification of Workers According to Their Duties**

In order to screen workers appropriately to their responsibilities, First Baptist Church, Hickory will categorize workers into two categories: primary and secondary. Please note that the terms primary and secondary do not refer to the ages of children served, but rather to relative levels of responsibility and risk.

**Primary workers** -- All paid staff and those volunteers in roles with greater responsibility or risk should be classified as primary workers and should meet the primary screening standards. Primary workers have greater interaction with and access to children.

**Secondary workers** -- Secondary workers are people who occasionally interact with minors and/or do so in less risky circumstances. For example, a volunteer who sees children only in a group setting, on church premises, and with a ministry leader present may be classified as a secondary worker.

### **Recommended Screening Requirements for Primary and Secondary Workers**

	<b>Primary</b>	<b>Secondary</b>
Six-Month Rule (may be waived for employees and interns)	Yes	Yes
Application Form	Yes	Yes
Records Request Authorization	Yes	Optional
References	3 or more	2 or more
Confidential Interview	In-depth	Brief
Criminal/Court Records Background Check	Yes	Optional
Child Abuse Registry (if available in your state)	Yes	Optional
Auto Safety Form	Yes*	Yes*
Guidelines (signed) and Job Description	Yes	Yes

*\* If operating a vehicle for church business.*

**Form #1:**

**Personnel File Checklist**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Reviewer \_\_\_\_\_

Has applicant been a church member for at least six months?      **Y**      **N**      Waived

<b>Items contained in this file:</b>	<b>R=Received, W=Waived, NR=Not Required.</b>			<i>Initials/Date</i>
Form 2: Volunteer Information & Protection Form	__ <b>R</b>	__ <b>W</b>	<b>mandatory</b>	_____
Form 3: Volunteer Authorization For Criminal/Court Records Check	__ <b>R</b>	__ <b>W</b>	<b>mandatory</b>	_____
Form 4: Children's and Youth Worker Reference Form	__ <b>R</b>	__ <b>W</b>	__ <b>N R</b>	_____
Form 5: Auto Safety Certification	__ <b>R</b>	__ <b>W</b>	__ <b>N R</b>	_____
Form 6: Guidelines for Preschool Workers	__ <b>R</b>	__ <b>W</b>	__ <b>N R</b>	_____
Form 7: Guidelines for Sunday Bible Study Teachers	__ <b>R</b>	__ <b>W</b>	__ <b>N R</b>	_____
Form 8: Guidelines for Children and Youth Group Leaders/Teachers	__ <b>R</b>	__ <b>W</b>	__ <b>N R</b>	_____
Form 13: Trip Planning Sheet	__ <b>R</b>	__ <b>W</b>	__ <b>N R</b>	_____
Form 14: Permission/Waiver Form	__ <b>R</b>	__ <b>W</b>	<b>mandatory</b>	_____

**The applicant has:**

Received a copy of the job description(s)	__ <b>R</b>	__ <b>W</b>	__ <b>N R</b>	_____
Received a copy of the applicable Guidelines for Youth Workers	__ <b>R</b>	__ <b>W</b>	__ <b>N R</b>	_____
Received a copy of the Rapid Response Guidebook	__ <b>R</b>	__ <b>W</b>	__ <b>N R</b>	_____
Attended appropriate training	__ <b>R</b>	__ <b>W</b>	__ <b>N R</b>	_____
Current CPR and first aid certification	__ <b>R</b>	__ <b>W</b>	__ <b>N R</b>	_____



Social Security # \_\_\_\_\_ Driver's License # \_\_\_\_\_

What age of children/youth work do you prefer? \_\_\_\_\_

On what date would you be available? \_\_\_\_\_

### **Background Information**

- Y N** As a church minor worker, do you agree to observe all guidelines and policies regarding working with minors?
- Y N** Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offense (felony or misdemeanor, except for minor traffic violations)? You will need to answer "yes" if you have entered into a plea agreement, including a deferred sentence or deferred judgment arrangement, in connection with a criminal charge. If you have been convicted of such an offense, please attach a statement of explanation, including nature of offense, date, court where conviction was entered, and any other relevant information.
- Y N** Have you ever been charged with a sexual offense, offense relating to children, or crime of violence? If you have been charged with such an offense, please attach a statement of explanation, including nature of offense charged, date, law enforcement agency making the charge, and any other relevant information.
- Y N** Have you ever been reported to a social services agency, law enforcement authority, child abuse registry, or similar organization regarding abuse or misconduct involving children? If so, provide a description of the circumstances and name and address of the entity receiving the report.
- Y N** Have you ever been subjected to expulsion, reprimand, or other discipline by a church, denomination, or other organization? If so please describe the circumstances and provide the name and address of the church, denomination or religious organization involved.
- Y N** Have you ever been disciplined or dismissed from employment or a volunteer position by any employer, including charitable and religious organizations, following an allegation of sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, or other immoral or inappropriate behavior or conduct? If so please describe the circumstances and the name and address of the employer.
- Y N** Have you ever been the subject of a civil lawsuit involving sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, or other immoral behavior or conduct, involving adults or children? If so please describe the circumstances and provide the name and address of the employer, educational institutions, church, or other organization where the lawsuit, investigation, or allegation arose or occurred.

**Y N** Have you ever been the subject of a complaint or disciplinary proceeding against a professional license or other license held by you to provide child care or similar services?

**Y N** Have you ever been the subject of any disciplinary action, transfer, or dismissal, or been named as a defendant in a civil or criminal lawsuit, as a result of an accident or mishap involving children? If so please describe the circumstances and provide the name and address of the employer, church, or organization with which you and/or the children were associated at the time of the incident.

**Y N** Do you have any investigation, review, or disciplinary action pending by an employer, organization in which you volunteered, licensing authority, or professional association for sexual misconduct, violence, or misconduct involving children?

**Y N** Were you abused as a child? *You may refuse to answer this question, or you may discuss your answer in confidence with the Senior Pastor, the Minister of Christian Education, or the Safety Coordinator rather than answering on this form. Answering yes or failing to answer will not automatically disqualify an applicant for children or youth work.*

**Church Activity**

List other churches you have attended over the past five years.

<i>Church Name</i>	<i>Telephone</i>	<i>Contact</i>	<i>Years Attended</i>
_____			
_____			
_____			

Name of church of which you are (check one): \_\_\_\_\_

a member currently       most recently       I have never been a member of a church before.

If a member of this church, how long have you been attending First Baptist Church, Hickory? \_\_\_\_\_

List previous work (church and non-church) involving children or youth.  
Use a separate sheet of paper if needed.

<i>Organization</i>	<i>Telephone</i>	<i>Contact</i>	<i>Type of Work</i>
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List gifts, callings, training, education, or other factors that may have prepared you for work with children and youth. Use a separate sheet of paper if needed.

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**Employment History**

Identify all employers for whom you have worked since the age of 21. Include part-time and temporary employers. Start with your most recent employer. Attach an additional sheet if necessary. List any jobs, prior to age 21, involving work with minors.

<i>Employer Name &amp; Supervisor's Name</i>	<i>Area Code &amp; Phone Number</i>	<i>Title &amp; Duties</i>	<i>Dates Employed</i>	<i>Reason for Leaving</i>
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Please describe your activities during any gaps in employment in excess of three months. Do not include leave or time off due to illness or medical treatment.

**References**

<i>Name</i>	<i>Address &amp; Telephone</i>	<i>Years Known/Relationship</i>
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**Applicant's Statement**

I understand and agree that it is critical to the mission and ministry of First Baptist Church, Hickory that all employees and volunteers conform to the highest standards of safety, interpersonal conduct, and sexual morality. I affirm that I will strictly comply with First Baptist Church, Hickory youth ministry policies and procedures, including those concerning child safety and protection, sexual abuse and misconduct, and interpersonal relationships. I understand and agree that failure by me to abide by such policies and procedures may result in my dismissal, or in disciplinary action by the Senior Pastor or the Safety Coordinator.

I am possessed of sound mind and legally competent to execute this release. I hereby authorize any references or churches listed to give First Baptist Church Hickory any information that they may have regarding my character and fitness for work with children or youth.

I do hereby for myself, my heirs, executors, and administrators release and forever discharge the listed references and churches from any and all claims, actions, and causes of action which may arise as a consequence of compliance or any attempts to comply with this authorization.

My responses above are truthful and accurate. I understand and agree that if they are not truthful and accurate, First Baptist Church, Hickory may determine to disqualify me from further consideration for service and may be considered justification for dismissal if discovered at a later date.

Applicant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

Witness \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

*To be witnessed by a church staff member*

**Form #3:**

**Volunteer Authorization for Criminal/Court Records Check**

*This form is used to check an applicant's court records.*

**Release Authorization**

In connection with my application for placement, I understand that an investigative report may be requested that will include information as to my character, work habits, performance, and experience, along with reasons for disciplinary action or termination of past employment. I understand that as directed by policy and consistent with the job described, you may be requesting information from public and private sources about my: criminal record, driving record, education, and previous employment.

The fact that applicants have a criminal record will not be an automatic bar to employment or work as a volunteer. Factors such as age at the time of the criminal offense, seriousness and nature of the violation, time elapsed, and subsequent rehabilitation will be taken into account. I acknowledge that a telephonic facsimile (fax) or photographic copy shall be as valid as the original. This release is valid for most federal, state, and county agencies, including the Minnesota Department of Labor.

I hereby authorize, without reservation, any law enforcement agency, court, institution, information service bureau, school, employer, or other organization or person contacted by the employer or its agent to furnish the information described above.

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*Signature* *Print your full name* *Today's Date*

**The following information is required by law enforcement agencies and other entities for positive identification purposes when checking records. It is confidential and will not be used for any other purpose.**

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*Print other last names you have used*

---

*Home Address* *City* *State* *Zip*

*Social Security Number*

*Date of Birth*

---

*Driver's License Number*

*Name as it appears on license*

*State Issuing License*

**Notarize here**

Subscribed and sworn before me:

Date

Notary Public

My commission expires

**Form #4:**

**Children's and Youth Worker Reference Form**

*Let the reference know that "all information will be held in confidence and will not be released to unauthorized persons."*

Applicant Name \_\_\_\_\_

Reference Name \_\_\_\_\_

Church or Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Date \_\_\_\_\_

Person Contacting the Reference \_\_\_\_\_

Method of Contact    \_\_\_ phone    \_\_\_ letter    \_\_\_ personal conversation

**Reference Questions**

How do you know the applicant? For how long have you known him or her?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Would you recommend this applicant for a position of trust supervising youth and children? Why or why not?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*At this point ask any relevant and legal questions that are appropriate to the situation, such as specific duties, length of employment, strengths and weaknesses when dealing with young people, etc. Information may be noted on the back of this paper. Remind the reference that "information will not be disclosed to unauthorized persons."*

**Closing Question**

Is there anything else we should know about this person before putting him/her in a position of trust with youth and children?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Form #5:**

**Auto Safety Certification**

*This form is intended for workers who have responsibility to conduct church business or transport minors by personal auto and/or church van or bus. Only persons with valid driver's licenses and valid personal auto insurance may transport others as part of church activities.*

Circle either **Y** for Yes or **N** for No. The information on this application will not be disclosed to unauthorized persons.

**Y N** Are you now a licensed driver? Please present your license to staff so they may copy it for the records.

**Y N** Do you currently have personal auto insurance? Please present your proof of insurance card to staff so they may copy it for the records. *(Some states do not require drivers to have proof of insurance cards. If your state does not, then you may delete this paragraph.)*

**Y N** Have you been ticketed for driving violations (parking tickets not included) within the past 2 years? (If yes, please explain the nature of the tickets on the back of this paper.)

**Agreement to Notify of Driving Events**

I agree to immediately inform the Safety Coordinator or senior pastor if my driver's license is suspended or revoked, if I am ticketed for a driving offense, or if I have DUI or DWI charges pending. I must also notify the Safety Coordinator or the senior pastor if my personal auto insurance is canceled or not renewed. These notifications are required even if the offenses are not related to church work. The church will not release this information to unauthorized persons. *Note: Being ticketed for a minor offense does not automatically disqualify a worker from transporting people.*

**Seat Belt Usage**

I agree to transport persons only in passenger seats equipped with appropriate seat belts and child safety seats. I agree to require seat belt usage and child safety seat usage at all times. In buses that are not outfitted with seat belts, this rule does not apply. *(Some buses are not required to have seat belts and are not fitted with them. If your church owns or charters such a bus, you may wish to include the exception to this rule. You might also consult the bus manufacturer or your state's highway patrol or motor vehicle department for advice on retrofitting seat belts.)*

**Safe Vehicles**

I agree to transport persons only in vehicles that are in safe operating condition.

**I have truthfully and accurately responded to the questions above. I agree to notify the church if any of the driving events listed above occurs.**

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please print name \_\_\_\_\_

*Note to church staff: This form, together with a copy of the applicant's driver's license and insurance card, should be filed with the applicant's application.*

## Form #6:

# Guidelines for Preschool Workers

*Note: We live in an age where child abuse is a reality in our society. Churches must take steps to protect the children in our care. First Baptist Church, Hickory has implemented a policy that will safeguard our children while promoting a positive, nurturing environment for ministry to them. The guidelines below are to be followed by anyone who has custody or supervision of nursery age children. We pray for God's blessing for our children, workers, and church.*

### Before You Begin

**Six-Month Rule** -- All workers must be members or regular attendees of First Baptist Church, Hickory for at least six months before working in the preschool. This guideline may be waived for employees.

**Completion of Application** -- All preschool workers must complete and sign an application form.

**Release Authorization Form** -- All preschool workers must complete and sign a Release Authorization form.

**References** -- After gaining the applicant's permission, the Safety Coordinator will contact references. Persons asked for references may be suggested by applicants or selected by church leaders. The Safety Coordinator may contact employers, former ministers, and persons who have supervised applicants in church work previously.

**Interview** -- All preschool workers will be interviewed by the Safety Coordinator to determine their suitability for nursery work. Information from this interview will remain confidential.

**Background Check and Social Services Registry** -- After gaining the applicant's permission, the Safety Coordinator will conduct a criminal background check and a registry check for applicant.

**Auto Safety Form** -- All preschool workers who will be driving children or conducting other church business need to complete and sign an Auto Safety form.

**Signed Agreement to Follow Guidelines** -- All nursery workers must sign the agreement at the end of these guidelines to show their commitment to observe these guidelines.

### Guidelines

**Two-Person Rule** -- Two workers must be present in each nursery room at all times. This rule accomplishes two important objectives. First, it reduces the risk of child abuse. Secondly, it reduces the risk of unfounded claims of abuse. Teams of workers cannot be of the same family.

**Only assigned workers may be in the preschool area.** There are *four* exceptions to this rule: nursing mothers, parents called to the preschool to calm an upset child, children of on-duty Extended Session Workers, and the Deacon of the week.

**Only parents can receive their child from the preschool.** Preschool workers should release children only to their parents (not to older siblings) or to adults authorized by the parent.

**Corporal Punishment** (hitting or spanking) and other forms of punishment involving physical pain are never appropriate at First Baptist Church, Hickory activities. This rule holds true even if parents have suggested, or given permission for, corporal punishment. Preschool workers must consult a Preschool Coordinator or other church leader if they need help with discipline techniques.

**Workers must report suspected or observed child abuse** to the Preschool Coordinator or a pastor immediately. Violations of these guidelines or suspect behavior by other workers must be reported in the same manner.

**Workers must avoid even the appearance of misconduct.** This is needed in order to maintain parental confidence and avoid mistaken allegations.

**Workers who disobey these guidelines may be reassigned or relieved** from all duty with minors by the Safety Coordinator.

**I have read the guidelines above. I agree to observe them faithfully:**

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Form #7:

# Guidelines for Sunday Bible Study Teachers

*Note: We live in an age where sexual misconduct and child abuse is a reality in our society. The church must deal with this issue as a "good shepherd" by taking steps to protect the children in our care. First Baptist Church, Hickory has implemented policies to help safeguard our children while promoting a positive, nurturing environment for ministry to them. The guidelines below are to be strictly followed by anyone working in the Sunday school program. We pray for God's blessing for our children, workers, and church.*

## Before You Begin

**Six-Month Rule** -- All workers must be members or regular attendees of First Baptist Church, Hickory for at least six months before teaching Sunday Bible Study.

**Completion of Application** -- All Sunday Bible Study teachers must complete and sign an application form.

**Release Authorization Form** -- All Sunday Bible Study teachers must complete and sign a Release Authorization form.

**References** -- After gaining the applicant's permission, the Safety Coordinator will contact references. Persons asked for references may be suggested by applicants or selected by church leaders. The Safety Coordinator may contact employers, former ministers, and persons who have supervised applicants in church work previously.

**Interview** -- All Sunday Bible Study teachers will be interviewed by the Safety Coordinator. Information from this interview will remain confidential and accessible only by the Child Safety Program Coordinator.

**Background Check and Social Services Registry** -- After gaining the applicant's permission, the Safety Coordinator will conduct a criminal background check and a registry check for applicants

**Auto Safety Form** -- All Sunday Bible Study teachers who will be driving children or conducting other church business need to complete and sign an Auto Safety form.

**Signed Agreement to Follow Guidelines** -- All Sunday school teachers must sign the agreement at the end of these guidelines to show their commitment to observe these guidelines.

## Guidelines

**Two-Person Rule** -- Two workers must be present in each Sunday school room at all times. This rule accomplishes two important objectives. First, it reduces the risk of child abuse. Secondly, it reduces the risk of unfounded claims of abuse. Teams of workers cannot be of the same family.

**Corporal punishment** (hitting or spanking) and other forms of punishment involving physical pain are never appropriate in First Baptist Church, Hickory activities. This rule holds true even if parents have suggested, or given permission for, corporal punishment. Teachers must consult their supervisors or a pastor if they need help with misbehaving youth or discipline techniques.

**Teachers must report suspected or observed child abuse** to the Sunday Bible Study Coordinator or a pastor immediately. Violations of these guidelines or suspect behavior by other workers must be reported in the same manner.

**Workers must avoid even the appearance of misconduct.** This is needed in order to maintain parental confidence and avoid mistaken allegations.

**Workers who disobey these guidelines may be reassigned or relieved** from Sunday Bible Study duty at the discretion of church leaders.

**I have read the guidelines above. I agree to observe them faithfully:**

Signature\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_

## Form #8:

# Guidelines for Children and Youth Group Leaders, and Teachers

*Note: We live in an age where child abuse is a reality in our society. The church must deal with this issue as a "good shepherd" by taking steps to protect the children in our care. First Baptist Church, Hickory has implemented a policy that will safeguard our children while promoting a positive, nurturing environment for ministry to them. The guidelines below are to be strictly followed by anyone working with youth in First Baptist Church, Hickory. We pray for God's blessing for our children, workers, and church.*

### **Before You Begin**

**Six-Month Rule** -- All workers must be members or regular attendees of First Baptist Church, Hickory for at least six months before becoming children/youth workers (except compensated employees and interns who meet "frequent contact" screening standards).

**Completion of Application** -- All children/youth program leaders must complete and sign an application form.

**Release Authorization Form** -- All children/youth workers must complete and sign a Release Authorization form.

**References** -- After gaining the applicant's permission, the Safety Coordinator will contact references. Persons asked for references may be suggested by applicants or selected by church leaders. The church may contact employers, former ministers, and persons who have supervised applicants in church work previously.

**Interview** -- children/youth leaders must be interviewed by the Safety Coordinator to determine their suitability for children/youth group work. Information from this interview will not be released to unauthorized persons.

**Background Check and Social Services Registry** -- After gaining the applicant's permission, the Safety Coordinator will conduct a criminal background check and a registry check for applicants.

**Auto Safety Form** -- All children/youth workers who will be driving children or conducting other church business must complete and sign an Auto Safety form.

**Signed Agreement to Follow Guidelines** -- All children/youth leaders must sign the agreement at the end of these guidelines to show their commitment to observe these guidelines.

### **Guidelines**

**Team Leadership** -- Whenever feasible a youth will not be in the primary care of only one adult. Teams of adults (preferably male and female) will supervise activities. This policy has three purposes: it provides for more than one adult to help ensure appropriate levels of supervision, it protects adults from unfounded allegations, and it lessens the possibility of an adult having undue influence over an individual youth.

**Overnight Activities** -- At least two adults will supervise overnight activities. If the participants are male and female, then male and female chaperons must be present. If these conditions cannot be met, then the event should be postponed. It is never appropriate for an adult chaperon who is not a family member to share a bed with a youth. Males and females attending events must not share the same sleeping quarters and should have separate access to bathroom facilities. Experienced adult workers should be included with adults who are newcomers to the youth ministry.

**Individual Counseling** -- Team counseling is preferable whenever possible. When team counseling sessions are not feasible, notify another adult of the location and with whom you are meeting. Counseling should be done in a public place where private conversations are possible but occur in full view of others. Guard carefully to avoid seclusion. If possible, have female adults counsel female youths and males counsel males.

**Long-Term Counseling** -- Children/Youth workers should not meet with youth more than two times to discuss the same issue. Children/Youth workers are not prepared or supported for long-term counseling or formal therapy. Adult leaders are encouraged to refer youth who they suspect have a serious need for counseling to professionals in the community. Questions about referral must be discussed promptly with the youth minister or the Senior Pastor.

**Informal Contact (Independent of Church Activities)** -- Informal contact refers to phone calls, letters, or face-to-face contact between an adult worker and a youth that is not connected to official church activities.

The church recognizes that informal contact between worker and youth frequently occurs. Parents are responsible for monitoring this informal contact.

**Transportation To and From Meetings** -- Transportation to and from meetings is not part of church or youth group activities. Parents are responsible for providing or arranging for this transportation. Parents are discouraged from asking leaders to transport children. However, if a leader does transport a child at the parent's request, this should be recognized as informal contact (not a part of church activities), and the guidelines for informal contact should be followed (see paragraph above).

**Transportation as a Part of Church Programs** -- The church may from time to time provide transportation as an official part of church activities. For example, the church may provide transportation to out-of-town events or field trips. When children are transported as a part of church activities, all guidelines will apply. Following the two-adult rule and having all drivers complete an auto safety certification form are especially important.

**Confidentiality** -- Youth workers must report to a clergy person if a minor discusses harming himself or others, committing a crime, or being abused. There are limits to confidentiality when working with youth. Questions about such cases or other issues of confidentiality must be discussed promptly with the senior pastor (or minister on call if the Senior Pastor is unavailable). The minister will also protect the confidential nature of the discussion. Conferring with a minister on sensitive issues is not considered breaking a confidence.

**Youth Supervising Youth** -- Minors may help adults lead youth activities only under the direct leadership of adults. A minor may not be used to meet the team leadership or team counseling guidelines discussed above.

**Gifts** -- Youth workers are generally discouraged from giving personal gifts or money to youth. When the giving of personal gifts is desired, the youth worker must first notify parents and the youth minister. Gifts can be easily misinterpreted. Gifts given to groups of young people are appropriate, such as graduation presents or awards for participation.

**Corporal Punishment** -- Corporal punishment (hitting or spanking) and other forms of punishment involving physical pain are not appropriate in First Baptist Church, Hickory, activities. This rule holds true even if parents have suggested, or given permission for, corporal punishment. Children/Youth workers must consult their supervisors or a minister if they need help with misbehaving youth or discipline techniques.

**Open Door Policy** -- All youth events should be open door. This means that workers, parents, and church members have a right to observe any youth activity.

**Dating or Sexual Involvement** -- No adult youth worker is to date a youth or be romantically or sexually involved with a youth. Any adult with prior incidents of sexual misconduct (i.e. in appropriate touching) may not be a youth worker or serve in any capacity of youth ministry at First Baptist Church, Hickory. There are no exceptions to this guideline.

**Workers must report suspected or observed misconduct** by other workers to the Safety Coordinator immediately.

**Supervision and Communication** -- Youth workers must meet on a regular basis with the Minister of Students, and the Minister of Students must meet with the senior pastor periodically to discuss any issues regarding these guidelines. Appropriate topics that must be discussed include problems, accountability, policy clarification, personal feelings, or other issues that may interfere with youth ministry efforts

**High Adventure Activities** -- Special precautions must be taken on high adventure activities, such as rock climbing, hiking, overnight camps, raft trips, or the like. Both physical safety and safety from abuse are at risk in high adventure situations. A high ratio of adults to youth is recommended. Guides for high adventure activities should be licensed by the sports governing body or government authorities to guide groups whenever possible. *High adventure camping often raises unique circumstances involving individual privacy, sleeping arrangements, bathroom facilities, and so on. Adult leaders must be vigilant to avoid suspicious or misinterpreted behavior in these circumstances.*

**Workers must avoid even the appearance of misconduct.** This is necessary in order to maintain parental confidence and avoid mistaken allegations.

**Workers who disobey these guidelines may be reassigned or relieved** from youth program duty at the discretion of the Safety Coordinator.

**I have read the guidelines above. I agree to observe them faithfully:**

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Policy #4:

# Guidelines for Interviewing Applicants

### Red Flags

*Red flags alone do not mean that an individual is a potential danger to youth.* But they are possible indicators that an individual may participate in unhealthy relationships with children or even be a child molester. Red flags are signals for the Safety Coordinator to consider the applicant more carefully, to look a bit deeper into his or her background, and to be especially careful in making decisions to approve or disapprove the applicant.

**A specific interest in a certain age group or gender.** Child molesters sometimes fixate on children of the same age they were when first molested.

**Over-involvement with children and youth.** Excessive activity with youth may indicate a person is fixated on youth, lacks adult outlets for recreation, or is seeking access to youth in a variety of programs.

**Lack of adult relationships.** Healthy workers have adult relationships for friendships. They do not need to turn to youth to meet their basic need for relationships.

**Lack of adult interests.** Interest in adult hobbies and in adult groups, shows that youth workers have balanced lives that are not overly concentrated on children.

**Instability in work and life.** Look out for people who move or change jobs frequently and do not have a plausible explanation for it. Child molesters often move from place to place as people become suspicious or to seek out new opportunities to molest children. Instability in work may mean that an applicant has a drug or an alcohol problem.

**Gaps in a person's life history.** An unexplained gap in a resume or history may mean that the applicant served a prison term or is covering up a difficult time in his or her life.

**A history of abuse or family instability.** A person who experienced abuse or family problems while growing up may have unresolved emotional issues. These issues can interfere in their ability to work with children. Also, child abuse often occurs in unstable families facing problems with alcohol/drugs, mental illness, extreme poverty, etc.

**Stressful events in the applicant's recent past.** Events such as the death of a close family member, divorce, marital problems, unemployment, etc., often cause stress. This stress can lead applicants to react in unhealthy ways.

**Evasive or misleading answers.** Dishonesty is an indicator that a person is not trustworthy enough for working with kids and may be hiding vital information.

**Rigidity in belief or doctrines.** Applicants may have strong beliefs, but they should demonstrate flexibility in dealing with different points of view and accepting people as they are. A larger-than-expected proportion of child abusers come from rigid, orthodox backgrounds that encourage a one-dimensional perspective on important issues. Be cautious with applicants who have an overly-strong, personal agenda for youth. Look out for statements such as "I want to train children to believe in God just like I do" or "Children today are spoiled, so I want to teach them the strong discipline I grew up with."

## **What To Look For**

Applicants with a clear explanation of why they want to work with youth.

Applicants with well-balanced lifestyles involving work, family, friends, recreation, and spiritual growth.

Applicants who have demonstrated maturity and people skills over the long term in their life experiences.

Applicants who are open to differences in people, flexible in dealing with people, and have a sense of humor.

Applicants who demonstrate appropriate reactions to stress.

Applicants who understand the need for screening and supervision and who react to it positively rather than defensively.

## **Interview Questions**

Start the interview with a reminder that "information will not be disclosed to unauthorized people." Begin with light questions and ask the more personal ones as the applicant relaxes.

1. Tell me about your family when you were growing up.
2. What were your family's religious beliefs when you were a child?
3. Tell me about your hobbies and interests outside of church.
4. What is the biggest problem in children's lives right now? (Look for a coherent, well-reasoned answer that demonstrates the applicant has thought about kids' problems.)
5. Give me a brief rundown of your life. (Follow up with questions to address where they grew up, their childhood, education, work experience, churches they have been a member of, job and residence changes, etc.)
6. Tell me about other work with children you have done.
7. Is there anything else I should know about you that might affect how you work with children at First Baptist Church, Hickory?

## Policy #5:

# Training Strategies for Prevention of Abuse

### Outcry Training for Children and Parents

First Baptist Church, Hickory will institute outcry training for kindergarten-age children and above and their parents. The objectives of outcry training are to enable kids or parents to:

- recognize abuse,
- resist abuse,
- report abuse or attempted abuse, and
- reduce the shame, stigma, and confusion with open discussion, clear information, and unconditional support for children.

### Training for Children's and Youth Ministry Workers

First Baptist Church, Hickory will train workers to keep young people safe. This training is mandatory for children's and youth ministry workers and other church workers who may work with children's and youth ministry.

The training will be offered to incoming workers. Refresher training will also be offered to veteran workers. The training will include the following information:

1. The nature of the problem, especially child sexual abuse
2. Recognition of child abuse indicators in children and in adults who may be abusers
3. Explanation verbally and in writing of policies and rules that apply to each category of worker
4. Discussion of expectations
  - Avoiding the appearance of misconduct
  - Monitoring coworkers' behavior
  - Accountability for violation of rules
5. Recognizing inappropriate behavior and situations open to problems or misunderstandings
6. Reporting requirements
7. How to respond to an incident or an emergency. This should include topics such as:
  - What to do when you believe a child is the victim of inappropriate conduct by a church worker
  - What to do when you believe a child in your program is a victim of abuse by family members or others
  - What to do when you believe that two children in your program are involved in inappropriate sexual activities
  - What to do when two adult church workers are engaged in an inappropriate sexual relationship
8. Your church's touching policy
9. Appropriate discipline techniques.
10. Who to turn to for advice or help

## Policy #6:

# Response Procedures for Serious Incidents: Abuse or Accidents

### General Principles

When responding to allegations of abuse, the church and its representatives will keep several key principles in mind:

1. Reports should be taken seriously.
2. Allegations should be handled with sensitivity for people's privacy and confidentiality.
3. The church should cooperate with law enforcement and social services. (*An attorney should be retained to guide the church in this area.*)
4. The victim should not be blamed.
5. The church should seek to provide support as appropriate for alleged victims, alleged offenders, and their families during this period of great stress.
6. The insurance carrier should be contacted as soon as possible.

### Reports of questionable behavior must be taken seriously.

They should not be ignored or allowed to circulate without concern for the integrity and reputation of the accuser, the accused, and the church.

### Allegations may occur in a variety of ways.

Since the church cannot control how a report will surface, it is important that church representatives, employees, and volunteers follow the steps described below. These steps will ensure that the allegation is channeled to the appropriate person and that the problem is not compounded by an improper response.

### Non-church related allegations must be taken seriously.

Young people frequently choose to confide in church youth workers about abuse happening outside of the church. It is important that reports of this type are also handled sensitively and appropriately. The church's policies also apply to reported allegations not related to church activities or workers. These policies are appropriate for allegations involving church activities and non-church related reports of abuse.

### When a Victim Reports Abuse:

The person hearing the initial report should follow these steps:

**Listen supportively.**

**Hear the victim out** -- do not minimize or discount the allegation.

**Do not judge** the allegation negatively or positively.

**Ask basic questions** to clarify facts if needed, but do not try to investigate or verify the allegations of the report.

**Note the pertinent details in writing** as soon as possible after hearing the report, but don't take notes when the victim is speaking. Give him or her your full attention.

**Contact the senior pastor immediately.** If he is not available, contact one of the staff ministers immediately. The minister will help decide on the next step, consult with legal counsel, and make the report to law enforcement if necessary.

**If the senior pastor is being accused,** the person receiving the initial report should contact the Deacon Chair.

**Do not discuss the allegation** with anyone except those who are helping to respond.

**If the safety of the child is at issue,** the worker must use his or her own judgment to decide the best way to proceed. Workers may contact law enforcement directly if timing is critical and church leaders are unavailable for consultation. You may add the phone numbers for law enforcement and child protection hotlines here.

Police 911 or (828) 324-2060

Sheriff's Department 911 or (828) 464-5241

Child Protective Services 911 or (828) 695-5600

### **Church Workers Who Observe Questionable Activities or Suspicious Behavior:**

Any person who observes violations of church guidelines or has reasonable suspicions of inappropriate activity is required to report these concerns the Safety Coordinator or a staff minister.

**Write brief notes** to document specifically what you have observed.

**Contact the senior pastor as soon as possible.** If he is not available, contact one of the staff ministers immediately. In a private conversation, the pastor can help evaluate any suspicions.

**The Safety Coordinator or Senior Pastor is responsible for any further response to the situation.** He or she must document the report in the confidential files. Possible responses can range from reminding the worker about following guidelines to reporting the incident to law enforcement.

### **Church Workers Responding to Serious Accidents:**

**Render appropriate first aid** and call for appropriate emergency help.

**Provide emotional support** to the victim(s) and other young people who may be upset by the accident. (Prayer is usually appropriate!)

**Contact the Senior Pastor or Staff Minister as soon as possible** after ensuring the safety of victims. One of these leaders should then take charge of responding to the accident using the procedures listed below in this policy.

**Write brief notes** about what happened while the event is still fresh in your memory.

**Be cautious about making statements** that imply responsibility or provide information against the interests of the church and its workers.

### **Church Leaders Responding to Abuse:**

In cases of serious incidents, the leadership of First Baptist Church, Hickory will form a small team consisting of the Senior Pastor, Deacon Chair, and First Baptist Church legal counsel they may retain. The team should respond quickly to an accident or report of abuse using the following guidelines:

The team should evaluate the report with the person(s) who heard the initial report.

The team should decide if a report to authorities is warranted. Guidance of the church's attorney is often necessary because reporting statutes and relevant criminal statutes may be complicated. This is a decision based on the information at hand and applicable laws.

The team should not attempt to verify the allegations.

The team should contact law enforcement or social services. Phone numbers are:

Police 911 or (828) 324-4260

Sheriff's Department 911 or (828) 464-5241

City or county child abuse hotline \_\_\_\_\_

The team should cooperate with law enforcement under the guidance of the church's attorney. With the consent of law enforcement, the team should inform the victim's parents, the accused worker, and the alleged victim that the child and the worker are not to have further contact (including verbal contact). Also, the worker is to refrain from any work involving minors until the issue is resolved.

The team should designate one of its members as a spokesperson. All contact with the news media should be handled by the spokesperson. The team should inform all necessary persons not to respond to media inquiries except to refer questions to the spokesperson.

The team should document its activities in writing. Briefly log what is learned and what and when actions are taken. Logs should be dated and initialed or signed each time an entry is made.

### **Tips for Dealing with the News Media:**

Your church may be in the media spotlight if you have a serious accident or case of abuse. In general the media (and the public) want to know about institutions like churches that appear to misuse their authority or contradict their own principles. The fact that we do not expect children to get hurt by church workers makes the story newsworthy.

News of serious incidents usually reaches the media--when a law enforcement agency responds it usually goes on the public record.

## **How to Deal with the Media After a Serious Event:**

Refer all inquiries to the spokesperson. Ask everyone to refer media inquiries to the spokesperson.

Some suggested responses by the spokesperson may include:

- \* *"We have no comment out of respect for the privacy of the victims and accused."*
- \* *"We will not comment until we have a better understanding of what has occurred."*
- \* *"The church is committed to the safety of our young people. We have policies in place focused on child safety and we have a very good record to date. Over 200 kids take part in our church activities every year without any problems. Our prayers and sympathy are with everyone affected by this event. We are doing our best to cooperate with the authorities as they conduct their investigation."*
- \* *"The church deeply regrets that this terrible accident has happened. We take the safety of our youth very seriously. We have policies in place focused on preventing injuries. Over 200 kids take part in our church activities every year and this is the first time an accident like this has happened. We are doing all we can to help the victim and his family and friends in this difficult time. They have our sympathy and our prayers."*

**Form #10:**

**Confirmation Letter for Your Church's Insurance Carrier**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

I am writing today in regard to the liability insurance policy for First Baptist Church Hickory, policy # \_\_\_\_\_. I would like to confirm the terms and conditions of this policy as part of my church's overall plan of child safety and risk management.

Please answer the following questions about our policy as specifically as possible:

1. Does this policy cover child abuse, neglect, and child sexual molestation by church employees and volunteers?
2. Does this policy cover sexual misconduct by church employees and volunteers?
3. Does this policy cover church volunteers as well as church employees?
4. Will this policy pay for legal fees if the church, its employees, or volunteers are sued?
5. Will this policy pay for damages resulting from emotional distress and physical injuries? If so, in what circumstances?
6. Are lawsuits related to employment practices covered by this policy?
7. Will this policy pay for libel, slander, and defamation claims?
8. Does this policy cover personal vehicles used by employees and volunteers in the course of church activity?
9. Does this policy cover church activities that occur away from church property? in other states? in foreign countries?
10. Does this policy cover errors and omissions by church employees?
11. Please provide us with a list of specific coverages and activities included in this policy.
12. Please provide us with a list of specific coverages and activities excluded by this policy.
13. Based upon your experience insuring other churches, can you give us a list of specific coverages that we lack and should add to our insurance coverage?
14. Please explain the specific actions our church must take if we need to report a claim.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Sincerely,

**Form #11:**

**Letter or Announcement to Congregation Announcing  
Child Safety Policies**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

We live in an age where sexual misconduct, child abuse, and accidental injury are a reality in our society. The church must deal with this issue as a "good shepherd" by taking steps to protect the children in our care. The leadership of First Baptist Church Hickory will begin implementing new policies to help safeguard our children while promoting a positive, nurturing environment for ministry to them.

Subject to church approval, our church will increase our efforts to screen and supervise staff and employees. We are revising operating policies for children's and youth programs. All volunteers and employees who work with minors will be subject to these new guidelines.

We want to assure you that these changes are not a reaction to a problem or "scandal" that has occurred. Instead they represent our best efforts to *prevent* problems in the future.

These changes will mean additional effort for staff, volunteers, and parents. We, and the leaders of our church, believe the children are well worth the effort. We thank you in advance for your cooperation and your patience with this process.

If you have questions about these new policies, please contact Vera Breazeale, Shellie Bumgarner, Carol Crenshaw, Sandra Foster, Susan Haire, Julie Harding, Diane Johnson, Tom McRary, Tyler Shely, Lisa Wilson, or Greg Whitlock.

Safe and secure kids are a witness to God's love, expressed through careful staff and volunteers. We pray for God's blessing for our children, workers, and church.

Sincerely,

**Form #12**

**Letter or Announcement to Parents Announcing  
Child Safety Policies**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

We live in an age where sexual misconduct, child abuse, and accidental injury are a reality in our society. The church must deal with this issue as a "good shepherd" by taking steps to protect the children in our care. The leadership of First Baptist Church Hickory will begin implementing new policies to help safeguard our children while promoting a positive, nurturing environment for ministry to them.

Soon, our church will increase our efforts to screen and supervise staff and employees. We are revising operating policies for children's and youth programs. All volunteers and employees who work with minors will be subject to these new guidelines.

We want to assure you that these changes are not a reaction to a problem or "scandal" that has occurred. Instead they represent our best efforts to prevent problems in the future.

In an effort to keep you informed, we will be sending you printed information about what we are doing to reduce the risks of harm to your child, and what you can do to help. Also, we will invite you to training that will help you and your child recognize abusive or dangerous situations, and instruct you in how to seek help.

These changes will mean additional effort for staff, volunteers, and for you as a parent. We, and the leaders of our church, believe the children are well worth the effort. We thank you in advance for your cooperation and your patience with this process.

If you have questions about these new policies, please contact Vera Breazeale, Shellie Bumgarner, Carol Crenshaw, Sandra Foster, Susan Haire, Julie Harding, Diane Johnson, Tom McRary, Tyler Shely, Lisa Wilson, or Greg Whitlock.

Safe and secure kids are a witness to God's love, expressed through careful staff and volunteers. We pray for God's blessing for our children, workers, and church.

Sincerely,

Form #13

Trip Planning Sheet

Instructions

Church policy requires children's and youth ministry workers to complete this form prior to events involving children that meet any of the following three standards:

- 1. Trips that are estimated to be longer than 50 miles round trip,
2. Overnight events (in town or out), or
3. taking young people to participate in activities that may pose special hazards, such as swimming, boating, camping/hiking, cycling, climbing/rope courses, skiing, airplane flights, or similar

Submitted by: Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Approved by: Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Who is going on this trip?

\_\_\_ Sunday Bible Study \_\_\_ youth group other \_\_\_\_\_

Adult workers who will be going: Name \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Adult workers who will be driving: Name \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Destination: \_\_\_\_\_

When will you leave?

When do you expect to return?

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency phone number(s) where you can be reached (if possible):

\_\_\_\_\_

If phone contact is not possible, what is the best way to contact you in an emergency? (i.e., sheriff's department, park ranger, resort management, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**How are you traveling:**

church vehicle     private auto    other \_\_\_\_\_

**Check any hazardous activities you expect to participate in during this trip.**

Please be prepared to discuss these hazards and precautions with the church leader approving this form.

swimming                       boating     camping/hiking     cycling

climbing/rope courses     skiing     airplane flights    other \_\_\_\_\_

**Checklist:**

permission waivers signed by parents/guardians (including emergency medical permission)

permission waivers available during trip

first aid kit

safety and maintenance checklist\_if church vehicle used

**Rapid Response Guidebook**

**Miscellaneous notes, additional plans, precautions regarding this trip:**

**Form #14**

**Permission/Waiver Form**

Name of Child or Adult Participant (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s) of child participant \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Age of Child \_\_\_\_\_ Birth Date \_\_\_\_\_ Academic Grade \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_

**Functions and Activities**

It is my understanding that participating in the programs and recreational and other activities of First Baptist Church Hickory is a privilege. Prior to my participation in such activities, I acknowledge that there are certain risks associated with the activities, including, by way of example, physical injury due to activity-related accidents, physical injury due to transportation-related accidents, illness, or even death. In addition, I acknowledge that there may be other risks inherent in these activities of which I may not be presently aware.

**Release of Liability**

By signing this Permission/Waiver Form, I expressly warrant that the child named above or I, if I am a participant, am capable of withstanding both the physical and mental demands of the activities discussed above. I also expressly assume all risks of the child or me participating in the activities, whether such risks are known or unknown to me at this time. I further release First Baptist Church Hickory and its ministers, leaders, employees, volunteers, and agents from any claim that my child may have or that I may have against them as a result of injury or illness incurred during the course of participation in the activities. This release of liability shall include (without limitation) any claims of negligence or breach of warranty. This release of liability is also intended to cover all claims that members of the child's or my family or estate, heirs, representatives, or assigns may have against First Baptist Church Hickory or its ministers, leaders, employees, volunteers, or agents.

I further agree to indemnify and hold harmless First Baptist Church Hickory and its ministers, leaders, employees, volunteers, or agents from any and all claims arising from my participation in its activities and programs, or as a result of injury or illness of my child during such activities.

**First Aid and Emergency Medical Treatment**

I recognize that there may be occasions where the child named above or I, if I am a participant, may be in need of first aid or emergency medical treatment as a result of an accident, illness, or other health condition or injury. I do hereby give permission for agents of First Baptist Church Hickory to seek and secure any needed medical attention or treatment for the child named above

or me, if I am a participant, including hospitalization, if in the agent's opinion such need arises. In doing so I agree to pay all fees and costs arising from this action to obtain medical treatment. I give permission for attending physician(s) and other medical personnel to administer any needed medical treatment, including surgery and, again, I agree to pay for the medical treatment.

**Special Events and Field Trips**

I understand that the child named above or I will be participating in *(insert name of special event or activity)* \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_ until \_\_\_\_\_. I understand that during this period my child/ward or I, if I am an adult participant, may take part in activities such as: \_\_\_\_\_ and other activities consistent with the purposes of the church.

**Publicity**

On occasion, First Baptist Church Hickory takes photographs or makes an audio or videotape recording of children and/or adults involved in church activities. Such photographs or video records may be used by staff and participants to remember the activities and participants. In addition, such photographs and audio/visual recordings may be used in First Baptist Church Hickory publications or advertising materials to let others know about our ministry. In addition, local news organizations may hear of our activities or events, and our church may invite or allow them to photograph or record our events for news reporting on special interest features. I consent to the use of any such audio or visual record of the child named above or me, if I am participating, to be used, distributed, or displayed as agents of the church see fit. This consent includes but is not limited to: photographs, videotape, and audio recordings. Furthermore, I give permission for the child to be interviewed by the news media, or for such photographs and other audio or visual records to be used by the news media.

**Health Insurance Information**

Insurance Company \_\_\_\_\_ Policy Number \_\_\_\_\_

Insurance Company Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Medical Doctor \_\_\_\_\_ Phone number \_\_\_\_\_

**Emergency Contacts**

Names of persons and telephone numbers to call in case of emergency:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Relation \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**Swimming Ability**

\_\_\_ Non-swimmer

\_\_\_ Beginner (capable of swimming for several minutes in deep water)

\_\_\_ Moderate (capable of swimming several lengths of pool)

\_\_\_ Advanced (capable of swimming long distances)

**Medical History**

Special medical needs or concerns (allergies, conditions, dietary needs, medications, etc.):

**Other Information**

Other information leaders should know about the child or adult participant:

**For Use Only if the Participant is a Minor**

I represent that I am the parent/guardian of \_\_\_\_\_, who is under 18 years of age. I have read the above Permission/Waiver Form and am fully familiar with the contents thereof.

I give permission for the child named above to participate in the activities of First Baptist Church Hickory, including any special events/activities described above. In consideration for allowing the participation of the child in the activities of First Baptist Church Hickory, I hereby consent to the Permission/Waiver Form, including the Release of Liability above, on behalf of the child, and agree that this Permission/Waiver Form shall be binding upon me, my family, heirs, legal representatives, successors, and assigns.

Signature of Parent or Legal Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_

Print Name of Parent or Legal Guardian \_\_\_\_\_

Witness Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_

**Adult Volunteers and Employees**

As an adult volunteer or church employee, I hereby agree to each of the consents and waivers listed above, including the Release of Liability, as pertaining to my own participation in functions, activities, special events, and field trips.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_

**Young Person's Agreement**

I agree to participate in the functions and activities of First Baptist Church Hickory, to cooperate with the leaders and other young people, and to conduct myself as a Christian. I promise to respect God, respect myself, respect other persons, and respect property. I understand that my continued participation in church activities depends on my support of this agreement.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_