

CHILDREN FIRST
Voluntary Screening Program
(Preschool, Children, and Youth Programs)
First Baptist Church Booneville, Mississippi

I. The Children First Committee

The Children First Committee shall consist of the Pastor, Director of Education, Director of Music Ministries, the Minister of Youth, a church member nominated by the Nominating Committee, and a deacon appointed by the Chairman of Deacons (the appointments shall be for three years). In implementing their duties, the Children First Committee should appoint or consult with at least one lay person with appropriate expertise in the areas of child abuse and/or neglect.

The purpose of this Committee is to:

1. monitor compliance with the Children First Program,
2. manage the program,
3. periodically review and recommend changes in the Children First Program to the church, and
4. be responsible for handling any violations and dealing with any other issues arising under the program.

II. Policies

A. Volunteers

Any person volunteering for First Baptist Church (FBC) activities and working with children under the age of 18 must complete the following requirements in order to become a cleared person (see next section for definition):

1. be a regularly attending member of FBC or a member of a Sunday School Class at FBC for at least six consecutive months,
2. complete a Volunteer Application Packet (see attached),
3. submit to a criminal background check,
4. complete the interview process,
5. have personal references checked, and
6. be at least 18 years old.

Those who wish to volunteer and have complied with items 2 through 6 above, will be permitted to volunteer, but will not satisfy the Two Cleared Person Rule (see next section for definition) until they have complied with item 1 above.

B. Two Cleared Person Rule

It is the position of the FBC that at all regularly scheduled church events, a reasonable effort shall be made to provide a minimum of two cleared adults at the activities with minor children (under age 18). At the discretion of appropriate church directors or ministers or their designee, non-cleared persons may assist the two cleared persons on a one time only basis, as needed.

Only a cleared person may supervise preschool children in the restroom.

- C. **Special Event Volunteer**
Special Event Volunteers are those persons who, on certain occasions, assist cleared volunteers, but are not intending to become a cleared volunteer. To qualify as a Special Event Volunteer, a person must complete a Special Event Application Form (see attached) or have one on file that is no more than one year old and be recommended by at least one FBC member. The Pastor, Director of Education, Director of Music, or the Youth Minister shall approve those events when a Special Event Volunteer may be utilized. Furthermore, the Special Event Volunteer does not satisfy the two cleared person rule.
- D. **Frequency of Criminal Background Check**
Follow-up criminal background checks will be conducted no less than once every seven years. However, additional follow-up criminal background checks may be conducted at the discretion of the Children First Committee.
- E. **Parental Permission**
Parental permission in writing is required for all children, sixth grade and under, to attend church sponsored off-campus events and other events as designated by the Pastor, Director of Education, Director of Music, Minister of Youth, or their designee.
- F. **Auto Safety**
Persons who drive church vans or privately owned vehicles for conducting church business or transporting children on a regular basis must complete the appropriate paperwork, maintain a valid Mississippi driver's license, provide proof of insurance in such amounts as may be required by FBC, and comply with all other FBC transportation policies.
- G. **The Screening Process**
Since all Ministers and Church staff currently undergo a similar criminal background check and reference check, this screening applies to all those who come into contact with minor children (under age 18) and are not currently subject to the employment screening process. It should be noted that any of the crimes or offenses listed in questions 2 -6 on the Confidential Questionnaire may disqualify a volunteer from working with children under the age of 18.

All volunteers must be at least 18 years of age. However, youth who are under 18 years of age will be permitted to assist in group activities if they are recommended by a FBC staff member, satisfactorily complete the Seventh - Twelfth Grade Volunteer Code of Conduct form, and complete training provided in recognizing and preventing child abuse and neglect. There shall be a current list of approved youth in the church office. These youth aides do not satisfy the two cleared person rule. Therefore, youth aides may not supervise a child or children alone.

FBC will make every effort to enlist volunteers who work primarily with children and youth from within the church's membership. In the event that qualified and interested applicants are unavailable, the church will then seek qualified applicants of like minded faith who are active members of other churches or Christian college students in the community.

BACKGROUND CHECKS WILL BE DONE BY EITHER THE PASTOR OR MINISTRY ASSISTANT/CHURCH SECRETARY. THIS INFORMATION WILL BE KEPT IN THE CHURCH VAULT. ALL INFORMATION ACQUIRED DURING THE SCREENING PROCESS WILL BE TREATED AS CONFIDENTIAL AND WILL NOT BE DISCLOSED TO ANYONE OUTSIDE THE CHILDREN FIRST COMMITTEE.

H. The Appeal Process

For every person who makes application to become a volunteer, a Certificate of Approval or notification of non-acceptance as a volunteer will be given to them. Anyone who receives notification of non-acceptance as a volunteer may appeal that decision to the Children First Committee. The appeal should be made in writing within two weeks of receipt of the notification of non-acceptance; it should clearly state the reasons for disagreeing with non-acceptance and provide all substantiating evidence. The decision of the Children First Committee shall be final.

I. Reporting an Observed or Suspected Incident of Abuse or Neglect

If any volunteer, church staff member, or other church member observes another person who is working with children in a church sponsored activity and believes that abuse or neglect has occurred during that activity, it should be reported immediately to the Pastor or the Chairperson of the Children First Committee.

J. Incident of Abuse or Neglect

Upon notification of suspected abuse or neglect by any volunteer or staff member, the Pastor or Children First Committee shall suspend the accused individual from all church-related duties involving children until such time as the accusations of abuse or neglect are resolved. The determination will be at the sole discretion of the Children First Committee and their findings shall be final.

K. Training and Education

The Children First Committee shall be responsible for overseeing the training of all church volunteers in recognizing and preventing child abuse; they may bring in experts as needed to provide this training. All church volunteers will be expected to attend. The training should be offered at least once each year.

Adult Volunteers (18 and Older)—Complete the Following: 1) Read and Sign the Volunteer Information Sheet; 2) Complete the Volunteer Application; 3) Complete the Confidential Questionnaire; 4) Read and Sign the Adult Volunteers Code of Conduct

Youth Volunteers (Under 18)—Complete the Following: 1) Parent(s)/Guardians and Youth read and sign the Seventh-Twelfth Grade Volunteer Code of Conduct

Occasional Volunteers—Complete the Following: 1) Special Event Application

VOLUNTEER INFORMATION SHEET
First Baptist Church Booneville, Mississippi

1. All volunteers must complete and return the Application Packet to the staff person responsible for the class or activity for which they seek to volunteer; this may be done via US Mail or in person in a sealed envelope.
2. All volunteers must be at least 18 years of age and regularly attend FBC as a member of the church or a Sunday School Class for at least six months before they may become a cleared person.
3. Volunteers should observe the two cleared person rule. This means that workers should avoid a one-on-one situation when working with children under the age of 18 whenever possible.
4. Youth, who are 17 years of age or younger, may be permitted to assist in group activities with the staff person's approval, but will not satisfy the two cleared person rule. There shall be a current list of approved youth kept in the church office.
5. All classroom doors should remain unlocked at all times.
6. Each volunteer should read and abide by the FBC Code of Conduct.
7. Training in the recognition of physical and sexual abuse will be provided by or at the direction of the Children First Committee.
8. If any volunteer or church staff member observes another person who is working with children in a church sponsored activity and believes that abuse or neglect has occurred during that activity, it should be reported immediately to the Pastor or the Chairperson of the Children First Committee. Appropriate action will be taken immediately.
9. Generally, the offenses or crimes mentioned in the Confidential Questionnaire may disqualify a volunteer for service with children under the age of 18.
10. A criminal background check will be conducted on all volunteers.

My signature below indicates that I have read, I understand, and I agree to abide by the rules stated on this information sheet.

Signature

Date

ASSURANCE

I certify that the information in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge. I authorize any references listed in this application to give you any information (including opinions) that they may have regarding my character and fitness for work with preschoolers, children, and youth (under 18 years of age). I authorize the release of the information contained in this application, on a confidential, need to know basis, to any ministry of FBC in which I seek a position. In consideration of the receipt and evaluation of this application by FBC, I hereby release any individual, church, youth organization, charity, reference, or any other person or organization, including record custodians, both collectively and individually, from any and all liability for damages of whatever kind or nature, which at any time may result to me, my heirs or family, on account of compliance or any attempts to comply, with this authorization. To uphold the confidentiality of the references, I waive any right that I may have to inspect any information provided about me by any person or organization, but I may contact FBC to inquire about information provided about me.

Should my application be approved, I agree to abide by the Code of Conduct, to be bound by the bylaws and policies of this church, and to refrain from unscriptural conduct in the performance of my services on behalf of the church.

Furthermore, I hereby request and authorize the release of any information which pertains to any record of convictions contained in law enforcement files or in any criminal file maintained on me whether local, state, or national. I hereby release local, state, and national law enforcement agencies from any and all liability resulting from such disclosure.

I further state that I HAVE CAREFULLY READ THE FORGOING RELEASE AND KNOW THE CONTENTS THEREOF AND SIGN THIS RELEASE AS MY OWN FREE ACT. I understand that this is legally binding agreement which I have read and understand.

Applicant's Full Name (please print) _____
 Applicant's Maiden Name or any Aliases (please print) _____
 Social Security Number _____ Date of Birth _____ Race _____
 Gender Male Female

Applicant's Signature _____ Date _____
 Parent's/Guardian's Signature _____ Date _____
 (if applicant is a minor)

Note: *Please complete and sign this form; return it in person or by US Mail. Do not submit it electronically.*

CONFIDENTIAL QUESTIONNAIRE
 (Preschool, Children, and Youth Programs)
 First Baptist Church Booneville, Mississippi

If you prefer, you may refuse to answer these questions; that refusal may result in your not being approved as a volunteer. If you prefer not to answer in writing, you may discuss this information with the pastor, another staff member, or Chairman of the Children First Committee. The information you provide will not automatically disqualify you from being a volunteer. Your responses will be held in the strictest confidence.

1. Do you have any limitations or conditions preventing you from performing certain types of activities relating to the Preschool, Children, or Youth Programs? ___ yes ___ no If you answered yes, please explain.

2. Have you ever abused drugs or alcohol? ___ yes ___ no If you answered yes, please explain; include what steps you have taken to minimize the impact this has had on your life.

3. Have you ever abused anyone emotionally, physically, or sexually? ___ yes ___ no If you answered yes, please explain.

4. Have you ever voluntarily left, or been asked to leave, a role with an organization due to concern regarding inappropriate conduct with minors or adults? ___ yes ___ no If you answered yes, please explain.

5. Have you ever been accused of and/or convicted of child abuse or a crime involving actual or attempted sexual molestation or exploitation of a minor or an adult? ___ yes ___ no If you answered yes, please explain.

6. Is there any circumstance or pattern in your life (including homosexuality and/or pornography) which would make it inappropriate for you to serve with minors or would compromise the integrity of First Baptist Church? ___ yes ___ no If you answered yes, please explain.

Signature _____

Date _____

ADULT VOLUNTEERS CODE OF CONDUCT
 (Preschool, Children, and Youth Programs)
 First Baptist Church Booneville, Mississippi

I understand that this Code of Conduct is intended as a statement of values and behaviors to be observed in all aspects of Preschool, Children, and Youth Ministries as well as all work and interaction with children and adolescents in First Baptist Church.

I commit myself to respect and protect the inherent human dignity of each of the young people with whom I have the privilege to work. I will treat all of them with the respect due to children of God.

I will:

- Provide guidance and discipline in a loving and appropriate manner;
- Speak in an encouraging and affirming manner and foster that same behavior between children;
- Maintain my voice at an appropriate level and use language which is never demeaning, crude, or derisive.

I will:

- Never touch or act in a manner which could be perceived as physical or sexual abuse;
- Never make sexual comments nor use innuendos, jokes, inferences, or solicitations in a sexual manner;
- Uphold the beauty and holiness of human sexuality, marriage, and human and sexual interaction as taught in the Bible;
- Always be sensitive to the vulnerability of young people to misinterpret sexual information or references.

The body, as God's temple, will be central to our ministry to young people. Therefore, by word and example, I will teach that illegally or inappropriately used substances defile the body and this is contrary to Christian beliefs.

My participation in this ministry will build up this community of believers and will contribute to the feeling of security and value of each participant. The safety of each person will be a priority in all activities. I will respect each person's right to confidentiality.

I agree to immediately notify the staff person who oversees my volunteer service should I be arrested for or charged with an offense classified as a disqualifying offense.

I understand that failure to adhere to the principles and policies as set forth in this Code of Conduct may result in my termination as volunteer in the Preschool, Children, or Youth Ministries. Furthermore, my signature below indicates that I have read, understood, and agree to abide by the rules as stated in this Code of Conduct.

Signature

Date

We, the undersigned parent(s) or guardian of the within named minor, give permission for _____ to serve as a volunteer in the Preschool, Children, or Youth Program at First Baptist Church. He/she understands that when working with children, all volunteers must follow this Code of Conduct.

Signature of Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

Date

SEVENTH - TWELFTH GRADE VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT

(Preschool, Children, and Youth Programs)
First Baptist Church Booneville, Mississippi

I understand that this Code of Conduct is intended as a statement of values and behaviors to be observed in all aspects of Preschool, Children, and Youth Ministries as well as all work and interaction with children under age 18 in First Baptist Church.

I commit myself to respect and protect the inherent human dignity of each of the children under age 18 with whom I have the privilege to work. I will treat all of them with the respect due to children of God.

I will:

- Provide guidance and discipline in a loving and appropriate manner;
- Speak in an encouraging and affirming manner and foster that same behavior between children;
- Maintain my voice at an appropriate level and use language which is never demeaning, crude, or derisive.

I will:

- Never touch or act in a manner which could be perceived as physical or sexual abuse;
- Never make sexual comments nor use innuendos, jokes, inferences, or solicitations in a sexual manner.

The body, as God's temple, will be central to our ministry to young people. Therefore, by word and example, I will teach that illegally or inappropriately used substances defile the body and this is contrary to Christian beliefs.

My participation in this ministry will build up this community of believers and will contribute to the feeling of security and value of each participant. The safety of each person will be a priority in all activities. I will respect each person's right to confidentiality.

I agree to immediately notify the staff person who oversees my volunteer service should I be arrested for or charged with an offense classified as a disqualifying offense.

I understand that failure to adhere to the principles and policies as set forth in this Code of Conduct may result in my termination as volunteer in the Preschool, Children, or Youth Ministries. Furthermore, my signature below indicates that I have read, understood, and agree to abide by the rules as stated in this Code of Conduct.

Signature

Date

Note: Volunteers under the age of 18 must complete this form; at the age of 18, if they wish to continue volunteering, they must complete the Volunteer Application and other required documents.

