

**POLICY ON  
CHILD AND YOUTH SAFETY  
AND VOLUNTEER SCREENING**

*Approved by Board of Deacons 02/21/10*

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH  
SMITHFIELD, NC

## PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

The purpose of the Children's Safety Committee is to establish and recommend policies for the safety of our preschool, children, youth and their volunteers involved in these ministries of First Baptist Church Smithfield. In the Gospel according to Mark, Jesus says, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." First Baptist Church Smithfield is blessed by large numbers of children and families that choose to participate in worship and education.

In Proverbs, parents are instructed to "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it." Christian education is a serious responsibility given to parents, who turn primarily to the church for assistance. In addition to Christian education, another of the church's responsibilities, particularly in the recent decade, is the matter of youth, child, and volunteer safety in church. The nature of our programs and the actions of the volunteers who graciously provide their time and talents to the programs should reflect the value we place on our children and their education, as well as their safety and well-being. Sadly, abuse of children and youth is a significant issue in today's society. In addition, those who work with children and youth are at times susceptible to accusations resulting from misunderstood conduct or contrived circumstances.

In response to growing concerns such as these and further as recommended and/or required by insurers for our congregation, First Baptist Church Smithfield is therefore implementing this Policy on Child and Youth Safety and Volunteer Screening. This policy is meant to preemptively respond to safety and security issues by providing a screening method for volunteers and guidelines to keep children, youth and volunteers safe and to minimize opportunities for abuse and/or false accusations while participating in the ministries and activities of the church.

No policy is a guarantee against abuse, misconduct or misunderstanding, but through education, training, and heightened awareness, it is our desire that the congregation, staff, and volunteers will join together to continue to make First Baptist Church Smithfield a safe and caring environment for the "training" of our children and youth. This policy is established in an effort to insure the safety of our preschool, children, youth, and their volunteers involved in these ministries of First Baptist Church Smithfield.

## DEFINITIONS

*Existing Volunteers:* any member or individual, who is active in service in the ministries of First Baptist Church without monetary reimbursement prior to the date of institution of this policy by the Church.

*New Volunteers:* any member or individual who wishes to serve in the ministries of First Baptist Church without monetary reimbursement following the date of institution of this policy by the Church.

*Volunteer Screening Panel:* a group of three to four members appointed by the Deacons to serve as needed when information is revealed by the Volunteer Screening process which requires further inquiry. This panel will be given this information and will be allowed to meet with or hear from the volunteer applicant and then will determine if the applicant is eligible to serve as a volunteer. This panel will keep all information provided to them confidential and will not share any of the information with anyone not on the panel.

*Church Staff Member/ Supervising Staff Member:* a paid employee of the church who has responsibility for church ministries involving minors.

*Adult Overnight Volunteer:* any member or individual who wishes to serve in the ministries of First Baptist Church without monetary reimbursement, whose participation in an activity requires an overnight stay with children or youth of the church.

*Adult:* any individual that participates in the supervision of children and/or youth who is not less than 18 years of age.

## SCREENING

Each adult volunteer who works with children and/or youth must complete a "Child/Youth Ministry Application" and have been involved for a minimum of six (6) months in the ministries of First Baptist Church. The application requests background information which may be used in the screening process. The applicant must sign the statement on the

application that they have received, read and agree to the terms set forth in the Policy on Child and Youth Safety and Volunteer Screening and agree to comply with the same. All new volunteers must submit to the screening process. All existing volunteers will be subject to random screenings on a quarterly basis or at the discretion of the supervising staff member. Parents and other volunteers who have not been previously screened may assist other approved volunteers, but may not be left alone to supervise children and youth.

The church staff member who is responsible for overseeing the ministry will be responsible for volunteer screening. If information that requires further inquiry is discovered as a result of the screening process, the applicant will be contacted and asked if he/she would like the matter to be decided by a Volunteer Screening Panel designated by the deacon board. If the applicant would like to proceed, the information collected from the screening process will be presented to the Volunteer Screening Panel. The applicant would be given the opportunity to explain the information to the panel. The Volunteer Screening Panel would be given the authority to approve or disapprove of the applicant. If the applicant was not approved after being considered by the Volunteer Screening Panel, the applicant would be asked not to apply again for a period of at least two years.

## **VOLUNTEERS**

### **GUIDELINES**

At least two adult volunteers should be assigned in each area if at all possible during all First Baptist Church programs or activities involving preschoolers, children, and/or youth. Volunteers should avoid one on one contact with children and youth. An adult volunteer, separate from the two adult volunteers that are assigned in each area during programs and activities, will be assigned as a monitor for the hallways that are occupied by children.

### **OVERNIGHT RULE**

At least two (2) approved adult volunteers will supervise overnight activities. If the participants are male and female, then a minimum of two (2) male and two (2) female chaperones must be present. Special attention will be given to planning and carrying out activities that involve children in overnight stays, on or off church property. Adult supervision, appropriate separation of sexes, and other precautions will be taken. All adult overnight volunteers must clear the appropriate screening procedures before being allowed to participate. With the exception of family members, sleeping arrangements will be made to prevent one adult and one child from being in the room alone. All children and youth participating in overnight church activities will be required to furnish a completed parent or guardian consent and release form.

All adults attending an overnight activity must complete the volunteer screening.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

Transportation to and from church sponsored destinations should be provided by First Baptist Church. Children and youth should not ride in private vehicles without prior parental consent. Consent form must be signed by a parent. Children or youth may not ride with other students without prior parental consent.

Drivers must be 21 years of age or older, and have a good driving record and valid driver's license. Drivers are responsible for the safety and well-being of each child in the vehicle. Children or youth will not be left unattended in a church bus or van.