

CHILDREN AND YOUTH MINISTRIES POLICY

First Baptist Church of Lowell
Children and Youth Ministries

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CHILDREN AND YOUTH MINISTRIES POLICY

Initiated 9/1/95

Revised 7/02

PURPOSE:

To protect children and the liability of the church. This policy is meant to be used, along with its included practices, to improve our ministry with our children and help our leaders to work in concert with the parents of the children.

PROCEDURE:

*This policy book will be given to every children's worker. * ALL children's workers will sign the application/agreement form and return it to church office before they begin working. *The workers application/agreement form will be signed on a yearly basis. Nothing in this policy will be changed without the knowledge of the pastoral staff and Deacon Board.*

Nursery staff, Awana staff, or someone else accountable should be on site each time there is childcare going on. The only time that this need not occur is when the child's parent is present.

Mission and Goals

Mission: It is our earnest desire to provide a safe, secure learning and worship center for children and youth. In today's world where even homes may no longer be safe and secure, we want to be the place where those who come feel loved and cared for.

As our children grow physically, so do we want them to grow spiritually. From toddlers through high school graduation and beyond, we want to present the Gospel of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ in a clear, precise, understandable manner.

Goals:

1. The salvation of our children and youth through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
2. The Bible taught as the inerrant Word of God. The Scriptures are to be used as the standard of measurement as we evaluate growth.
3. Utilize those who are gifted or led by God to teach and provide tools and support in this important task.

Requirements for those who serve as Teachers, Leaders, & Helpers

1. Be a member in good standing of FBC of Lowell.
2. Lead a life that testifies of your Christianity.
3. Spend ample time in devotion and prayer on a regular, daily basis.
4. Study lessons with the desire to be the best you can be in utilizing you gifts.
5. Strive to maintain a vigor and freshness through the Holy Spirit and Bible study.
6. Seek and practice patience and understanding in all activities with children and youth.

Classroom Policies

1. In all classrooms one of the Teachers, Leaders, or Helpers must be at least 18 years of age. The number of workers should be appropriate to the number of children.
2. Classrooms are to remain unlocked when in use and easily accessible.
3. If concerns for health, safety, or welfare of a child/youth arises, the Pastoral Staff should be notified immediately (Refer to Child Abuse Section).
4. When married couples or immediate family members are working alone with children or youth the classroom door shall remain ajar. The director of the program should also make frequent and random inspections of the classrooms during session time.

Special Circumstances (outing)

1. One-on-one outings or meetings: There are times when one-on-one outings or meetings are beneficial to a child. In the interest of the protection for all parties involved it is necessary that written permission be obtained from the child's parent or guardian up through 6th grade. Phone calls will be acceptable at the Jr./Sr. High level.
2. At no time should a male or female leader undertake one-on-one outing with members of the opposite gender. (Accept in the case of Pastoral Staff or Youth Sponsors or visits in the school lunch room).
3. At no time should a member of the staff or a leader be alone in a vehicle with a member of the opposite gender. Other arrangements must be made for providing transportation.

For Safety's Sake

In case of injury, First Aid Kits are located in the kitchen, the Welcome Desk, and in the Awana office by the game circle. Always follow these procedures:

1. For open wounds, obtain plastic gloves from the First Aid Kit, and carefully wash wound.
2. Avoid direct contact with blood, vomit, or excrement.
3. Report all minor injuries to parents as soon as possible after class. Fill out a "Notice of Injury" form and turn into office.
4. In case of illness or severe injury, contact the parents immediately.

Posted in every classroom are First Aid procedures. Please become familiar with these. If someone has removed these procedures from your classroom, please contact the church office for a new copy.

Notice of Injury

1. Workers who become aware of any injury connected with any ministry activity will immediately inform their coordinator/supervisor or ministry leader of such injury.
2. Any coordinator/supervisor who becomes aware of any injury connected with any ministry activity will immediately inform a ministry leader of such injury and will complete a "Notice of Injury" form.

**First Baptist Church of Lowell
Notice of Injury**

Date of Injury: _____ Time: _____ AM ___ PM ___

Where did it occur? _____

Name of injured: _____ Age: _____

Address: _____ Telephone: _____

Name of
Parents/Guardian: _____

Injuries Sustained: _____

Where injured was taken: _____

Relationship to organization: ___ Member ___ Visitor ___ Volunteer ___ Employee

___ Student ___ Other: _____

If injury occurred on insured's premises, for what purpose was the injured on the
premises? _____

Who was responsible for supervision at the time of injury? _____

If injury occurred elsewhere, what connection did it have with the insured's operations or
activities? _____

Does the injured party have personal medical insurance? _____

Name of medical insurance company: _____

Full Description of Injury: _____

**First Baptist Church of Lowell
Notice of Injury
(continued)**

Witnesses:

Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Address: _____

Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Address: _____

Signature of reporting supervisor: _____

Restroom Policy

Parents have been encouraged (and should be reminded from time to time) to take their own children to the restroom before class begins. However, if it is necessary to take young children to the restroom during class time the following rules must be followed at all times.

1. Children who need to be taken to the restroom will be assisted by women attendants only. Two workers (non-related) will remain with the child at all times.
2. In no instances are men of any age allowed to take children (other than their own) to the restroom or change diapers.
3. As much as possible children are to be directed to undo their own clothing and clean themselves. If a child needs assistance in this the leader is to make sure they are visible to the other leader in the restroom.
4. If enough workers are not available assistance should be sought from the program director, church staff member or a deacon.

These restroom rules are designed for the safety of our children, the protection of our workers and the security of our parents. There are no exceptions to this policy.

Child Abuse Policy

What to look for

(These are not always indicative of child abuse, but may be WARNING SIGNALS)

- The child has to go to the bathroom frequently and urgently.
- Repeated rubbing and scratching of private area.
- Child is very edgy; sudden noises or movements cause him to flinch.
- Small bruises and blisters on arms, legs, back, face or buttocks.
- Child tells you someone is or has been hurting him or her.
- A distinct and sudden change in personality.
- Burn marks on the body.
- Seemingly unwarranted fear of certain people.

Steps when you suspect child abuse

1. When you notice or suspect abuse and/or when the child first comes to you, be sure to take his word seriously. Don't deny the problem, but stay calm and listen to the child. Give emotional support by reminding the child that he is not at fault for what an older person has done and that the child was right in telling you about the problem. Do not promise the child that you will not tell anyone.
2. Immediately report such a case to one of the pastoral staff. At this point, a determination will be made as to whether more information is needed or whether Child Protective Services will be contacted.
3. At all times, keep the information confidential. If other workers or leaders ask you about it, tell them that you have already spoken to the pastoral staff and it is being handled. **DO NOT TALK TO ANYONE ELSE!** If someone from the news media approaches you, refer them to the pastoral staff. Do not answer their questions, even if they persist.
4. Within 24 hours, an assessment of the information will be made by the proper authority. Appropriate action should be taken within the same time period. Any delay could pose further risk to the victim.

Discipline Policy

1. At no time is corporal punishment or **physical contact to be used as a method of discipline.
**(However, a person within the scope of their responsibilities may follow the guidelines of the MCL#380.1312).
2. State the rules clearly at the beginning of the session. State the consequences for breaking the rules as outlined below.
3. If a child breaks a rule, immediately give a warning to the child.
4. If the child breaks the rule again, separate the child from the rest of the group by leading them to a “time out” chair away from the group but within the realm of your supervision.
5. If the child continues to disrupt the session, contact the program director to remove the child from the room. He must stay with the program director or be taken to the parents.
6. Should the child have to be removed from the room again the program director will contact the parents to discuss the issue.

This procedure must be carried out in a loving manner with the best interest of the child in mind.

At no time should a child be singled out for discipline in front of their peers or made an example of for rest of the class.

The classroom should be a loving and safe haven for children to learn in and where discipline is dealt with quietly and lovingly. Thus, it is considered inappropriate to shout, demean, or unreasonably intimidate the child. (Reference Introduction of Corporal Punishment Policy on next page).

Corporal Punishment Policy
(Michigan Law)

While recognizing that children may require disciplinary action in various forms, the church cannot condone the use of unreasonable force and fear as an appropriate procedure in student discipline.

Volunteers and staff should not find it necessary to resort to physical force or violence to compel obedience. If all means fail, volunteers and staff members may always resort to removal of the student from the classroom or the church.

Volunteers and staff, within scope of their employment, may use and apply reasonable force and restraint to quell a disturbance threatening physical injury to oneself or others, to obtain possession of weapons or other dangerous objects upon or within control of the student, in self defense, or for protection of persons property.

In accordance with state law, corporal punishment shall not be permitted. If any volunteer or staff member threatens to inflict, inflicts, or cause to inflict unnecessary, unreasonable, irrational, or inappropriate force upon a child, he may be subject to discipline by this church. Furthermore, both he and the church may be subject to criminal and/or civil assault charges as well. This prohibition applies to all staff members and volunteers and those with whom the church contracts for service.

This corporal punishment policy derives from the School Code of 1976 promulgated at MCLA 380.1312 and is attached to this policy for reference.

380.1312 Corporal punishment; employees, volunteers, or contractors of school board; use of reasonable force; civil liability discipline; list of alternative actions; rules, bylaws, etc.

Sec. 1312

1. As used in this section, "corporal punishment " means the deliberate inflection of physical pain by any means upon the whole or any part of a pupil's body as a penalty or punishment for a pupil's offense.
2. Board shall not threaten to inflict, inflict, or cause to be inflicted, corporal punishment upon any pupil. However, the person within the scope of his or her responsibilities may use such reasonable physical force as may be necessary to:
 - a. Protect himself or others from immediate physical injury.
 - b. Obtain possession of a weapon or other dangerous object upon or within the control of a pupil.
 - c. Protect property from physical damage.
3. A person employed or engaged as a volunteer or contractor by a local or intermediate school board, who exercises necessary reasonable physical force upon a pupil as described in subsection "2" shall not be liable in a civil action for damages arising from the use of that physical force as provided in Act No. 170 of the Public Acts of 1964 being sections 691.1415 of the Michigan Compiled Laws.
4. A person who violates subsection (2) may be appropriately disciplined by his or her school board.
5. A local or intermediate school board shall approve and cause to be distributed to each employee, volunteer and contractor a list of alternatives to the use of corporal punishment. Upon request, the department of education shall approve assistance to

schools in the development and adoption of such a list.

6. Any resolution, bylaws, rule, policy, ordinance or other authority permitting corporal punishment is void.

Amended by P.A. 1988, No 521 & 1, Effective March 30, 1989

Violation of Policy or Procedures

1. Workers must promptly notify their coordinator/supervisor of any activity undertaken on their own behalf or by others which violates this policy or procedures.
2. Any coordinator/supervisor or ministry leader who becomes aware of a violation of the policy and procedures will take all necessary steps to ensure future compliance with the policy and procedures by all workers; and will remove workers from their position if such removal is warranted, or if the worker poses a potential threat to others.

First Baptist Church of Lowell
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Lowell, MI 49331
(616) 897-7168

Children / Youth Ministries Workers
Application and Agreement Form

Upon request to serve as a teacher, leader, assistant, or helper that involves working with children and youth, you have been given a brief packet or handbook to read that will present our Mission, Goals, and Guidelines.

If you are in agreement with same, and wish to serve in this way at FBC, return this form to the department head or church office with the information below completely filled out. If you desire, you may set up an appointment with pastoral staff and bring it with you at that time.

NAME:

ADDRESS:

TELEPHONE:

QUESTION: Are there any past abuse / molestation / or felony convictions that would disqualify or complicate your working in Children's or Youth Ministries?

Yes _____ (Comment on situation if so desired)

An opportunity to discuss with a Pastor where desired or deemed necessary is possible.

No _____

Signed _____

Date _____