

Child Abuse Prevention Policy

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Purpose

In order to assure the safety of the children and students in our care, we have developed this policy and procedure manual.

We also seek to achieve accreditation through the Evangelical Council on Abuse Prevention. More information about ECAP can be found at abuseprevention.org

This policy and procedure manual comes out of a theology related to the loving care of our heavenly father toward us and to everyone around us. We believe these things:

God values children

Psalms 127:3

Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward.

Matthew 18:1-6

At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, 'Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?' And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them and said, 'Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.'

Matthew 19:13-15

Then children were brought to him that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples rebuked the people, but Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.' And he laid his hands on them and went away.

We will defend the vulnerable

Psalms 82:3-4

Give justice to the weak and the fatherless; maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.

Isaiah 1:17

Learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause.

Wicked acts have consequences

Ephesians 5:3

But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints.

Galatians 5: 19-21

Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Revelation 21:8

But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.

Staffing and Screening

Volunteer application

Potential volunteers will be required to complete a volunteer application. The application collects basic demographics information, spiritual condition, character condition, availability, and references. Separate versions of the volunteer application will be made available for adults and teenagers.

Adult volunteer applications can be submitted via fcbc.life/nextgen and clicking on the button titled Adult Volunteer Application.

Teenager volunteer applications can be submitted via fcbc.life/nextgen and clicking on the button titled Student Volunteer Application.

Once the application is returned, the potential volunteer will wait for 6 months before they can be placed in a small group room. The purpose for this policy is

- To give the potential volunteer time to complete the FCBC membership process.
- To give time for a proper background screening to be completed (FDLE & BackgroundChecks.com).
- To give time for reference checks to be completed.
- To give time for Child Abuse Prevention training to be completed.
- To give time for an in-person interview to be conducted with an FCBC staff member.
- To dissuade sexual predators from gaining access to children in a small group setting.
- To offer potential volunteers who have transferred from another church to rest and strengthen themselves through regular worship, group, and spiritual disciplines.

All of the above conditions must be completed satisfactorily before the volunteer may be placed in a small group with children.

College students will not need to become members of FCBC as long as they are members of their home church and one of the references included in their application is from a pastor or ministry leader from their home church.

For potential volunteers who want to serve prior to the completion of all the above steps, visit fcbc.life/volunteer and choose an opportunity NOT involving children.

Approved volunteers will be placed in one of these roles: Small Group Leader, Large Group Leader, Hall Host.

Volunteer Staffing

All areas (small group room, large group room, playground) must maintain at least 2 approved volunteers. An adult (not a high school student) over the age of 18 must be one of the approved volunteers. A high school teenager may serve as one of the 2 approved volunteers. We will not allow teenagers to be the only volunteers in any area.

Preschool age areas must maintain a 4:1 volunteer to child ratio with a minimum of 2 approved volunteers. Elementary age areas must maintain a 10:1 volunteer to child ratio with a minimum of 2 approved volunteers. Student age areas must maintain a 20:1 adult to teen ratio with a minimum of 2 approved adult volunteers.

Teenagers in middle school may serve in the preschool or elementary large group environments only.

Teenagers in high school will be allowed to serve in any area of the ministry (large group, small group, playground) but must be approved by their parent/guardian or small group leader and also sponsored by an adult in the ministry not their family member. The sponsor will be responsible for the teenager while they are serving in the ministry so they will need to be on the same team. Teenagers must be paired in an area with an adult volunteer. The purpose of this relationship is to provide an additional adult (not their parent nor their small group leader) who has influence in the life of the teenager. They will coach the teenager, providing guidance on how to lead well and invest in the life of another person. This relationship is a critical component in discipleship for both the adult and the teenager as they learn from each other and together learn to lead like Christ.

Background Screening

Background checks are done on all potential adult volunteers (18 years of age and older). FCBC must receive a favorable response to the background check. Any concern from results of the background check will result in a conversation with the NextGen Pastor and one of the following: the Campus Pastor, Executive Pastor, or Lead Pastor.

A Background check will also be rerun on every volunteer still actively serving every 5 years.

All volunteers must notify the church office if there are changes in their life that might be captured on a background check screening regardless of when the last time their background check was done.

Training

Approved volunteers (teenagers or adults) will be required to complete the 'Abuse Prevention for Children and Youth Workers' training course once every 24 months. This training is offered through an online resource and is an online course that takes less than an hour to complete. Topics for this training include:

- Introduction to Child Abuse Prevention in Churches
- Sobering Statistics About Abuse
- Minors in Churches Face Unique Risks
- Types of Child Abuse
- Supervision
- Check-in and Restroom Policy
- Discipline
- Background Checks
- Responding To Abuse

While the class is offered online, accommodations can be made to help those who are technologically limited or who need extra coaching. In person classes using the course videos from 'Abuse Prevention for Children and Youth Workers' may be available.

Facilities / Behaviors

Our facilities are designed with safety in mind. Mechanical and storage closets should remain locked when not in use. Minors should never be taken into a locked mechanical or storage closet.

Every small group room has a glass panel that must not be covered.

The double glass doors entering the preschool and elementary wings are locked during services but may be opened by the Welcome Center Team, the Safety Team, a preschool or elementary area coach, team leader or pastor.

Check In / Check Out Process

When entering Building D, families will be directed to either the Check In desk in the Welcome Center or to a check in kiosk found near the entrances of each wing.

For preschool and elementary age groups, only parents should use the kiosks to check in their child. New children can only be added to the system at the Check In desk in the Welcome Center.

When a child is checked into the system, a name badge will print with the child's name, location, emergency contact information, and allergies or special needs. Also on the name badge is a security code that changes every 24 hours.

A corresponding security badge is automatically printed for the parent. The security badge will have a security code that matches the child name badge security code.

When checking a child out of their room, preschool and elementary parents or teenage siblings will be required to show the security badge to the volunteer in the room prior to picking up their child. Parents may show either the paper security badge or a picture of the badge from their phone.

If a different person is picking up the child other than the person who received the security badge they only need to show the picture of the security badge. If a parent wants to ensure that they are the only person who picks up their child, they should not share the security badge.

Middle School and High School teenagers will check themselves both into and out of their room.

Taking of Pictures and Video

When taking pictures or video on our campus or during an offsite event, it is our intention to safeguard and protect children and teenagers. The following practices must be followed:

- Photography or video recording should focus on the activity or on a small group not on a particular child or teenager.
- If a child or teen is named or their name badge is visible avoid using their photograph or video recording without first scrubbing their name from the name badge.
- Do not photograph or video record anyone who had asked not to be photographed or who is under court order (where it is known).
- All children and teenagers must be appropriately dressed when photographed or video recorded.
- All people taking photographs or video recording footage for official use at the event should register with the event organizer. They also must have a list of persons who have asked not to be photographed and abide by that request.
- All concerns regarding inappropriate behavior or intrusive photography or video recording should be reported to the ministry leader or Executive Pastor.

Bathrooms / Diaper Changing

Female adults are only the ones who should be changing a diaper on a child. Neither teenagers nor men are allowed to change a diaper.

Adult volunteers may enter the bathroom with a preschool child but only to help the child if they need assistance. The bathroom door must be held open. Teenagers are not allowed to help a child in the bathroom.

Never enter the bathroom with an elementary age child. An adult volunteer must escort the child to the bathroom and may stand at the doorway entrance.

Elementary age children with special needs who need to have diapers changed will require calling the parent to facilitate changing their own child's diaper.

Access to internet enabled devices

Various internet enabled devices exist in our ministries from personal computers, to laptops, tablets, and phones. Any device that accesses the internet through the church's WIFI is subject to monitoring. Users are not permitted to author, send, read, or receive data that contains content that could be considered discriminatory, offensive, obscene, threatening, harassing, intimidating, or disruptive.

Fort Caroline Baptist Church does not allow the unauthorized use, installation, copying, or distribution of copyrighted, trademarked, or patented material on the internet.

Touching of minors

No roughhousing with minors. No swinging children by their arms or legs. No tickling. No touching anywhere a bathing suit would cover. Minors should not sit in the laps of any males.

Do not physically discipline a child. Do not bite a child. Do not grab a child's arm or shake a child. Do not verbally discipline a child in anger. Always be calm and redirect their attention if at all possible. When discipline is needed, reach out to a ministry coach and let them handle the situation by calling the child's parent/guardian.

Response and Reporting

"Any person who knows, or has reasonable cause to suspect, that a child is abused, abandoned, or neglected by a parent, legal custodian, caregiver, or other person responsible for the child's welfare is a mandatory reporter" - §39.201(1)(a), Florida Statutes.

Every adult volunteer when they suspect abuse is required to report it. Report the suspected abuse to the ministry director or pastor in your area. The ministry director or pastor will file the report with the state of Florida on the same day as they are notified and send copies of the completed report to the NextGen Pastor, Executive Pastor, and Lead Pastor. The website to file a report is: <https://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/abuse-hotline/report-online.shtml>

A few things to note:

- Do not interview the child regarding the suspected abuse.
- Do not discuss the suspected abuse with other volunteers, parents, etc.

Care for Accused and Victim

We want to care for both the abused and the abuser. The accused abuser will be removed from the NextGen ministry immediately. Following the result from the Department of Children and Families, we have several options for the accused abuser.

1. They may be restored back to their place of service in the NextGen ministry only after a conversation with the NextGen Pastor and either the Executive or Lead Pastor.
2. They may be removed from serving in our NextGen ministry. If they are removed from serving we will follow one of two paths.
 - a. They may be referred to our 'Faithful and True' ministry.
 - b. They may be considered for campus limitations and restrictions.

All local media requests for comment should be handled by only the Executive and/or Lead Pastors. Any other staff or volunteers should only reply with "No Comment".

Campus Limitations and Restrictions for Sexual Predators/Offenders

- Individuals that are Sexual Predators/Offenders that attend services and functions at the Church itself or, at another location "sponsored" by the Church may not ride with or drive a child (under age 18) to or from any church activity period.
- Under no circumstances may the Predator/Offender ever take a child to the bathroom (regardless of familial relationship).
- The Predator/Offender should be assigned one bathroom for his or her personal use and instructed that he or she is never to enter another restroom on the property. No exceptions.
- The Predator/Offender should never enter the assigned bathroom without having an adult escort. No exceptions.
- The Predator/Offender should never initiate physical touch with anyone under 18 years old. This includes hugs and handshakes. They should never discuss the physical appearance of anyone under 18 years old. If someone under 18 years of age attempts to hug them – they should make it a handshake and take a step backwards to distance themselves from the child.
- The Predator/Offender should limit campus movement to the adult B & C buildings only. They are not allowed in the A or D buildings, especially during the church service. They are to remember they are in church to take in the message and participate in the worship service with the congregation. Any additional participation including the Fellowship Hall will require written permission from either the NextGen Pastor and either the Executive Pastor or the Lead Pastor.
- The Predator/Offender will not be in a position of authority and trust over any person under 18 years old. They may not participate in any way in any of the NextGen programs including LifeGroups, worship, camps, Summer Jam VBS, or counseling programs.
- If the Predator/Offender should come to church with their family, they shall stay with their family during the entire church experience. If they attend church alone, they may not sit next to children or teenagers.
- The Predator/Offender must be very careful and vigilant at any church functions whether they are at someone's house or in the church building. If they are invited to a church function at a private home, they must first inquire whether any children will be present in the home and if so, the Predator/Offender may not participate or attend the event. There are no exceptions to this guideline.
- The Predator/Offender needs to pair up with an adult accountability partner that will agree to meet them at the Church when upon arrival for an event and stay with them for the entire time they are on Church Property or at a Church event. If your accountability partner is not able to meet you at the Church at the designated time, do not come. No exceptions.

Definitions

Definitions provide the context to communicate ideal standards for child protection. For purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply.

- **Accused:** An individual who has been identified as the alleged perpetrator of an incident.
- **Advanced Screening Techniques:** Methods by which staff and volunteers are thoroughly vetted to identify perpetrator patterns and detect red flags or indicators to exclude individuals who will create an unacceptable risk if placed in positions that offer access to vulnerable people.
- **Child:** A person who is under eighteen years old, and sometimes also known as a “minor”; the plural is children.
- **Child Emotional Abuse:** Child emotional abuse “is a repeated pattern of parental or caregiver behavior that communicates to the child that he or she is worthless, unloved, unwanted, or endangered. This behavior can impair a child’s emotional development or sense of self-worth. It may include constant criticism, threats, rejection, or the withholding of love, support, or guidance.”
- **Child Neglect:** Child neglect “is usually defined by omissions in care that may result in significant harm or the risk of significant harm and is characterized by the failure of a parent or caregiver to provide for the child’s basic needs. Examples of neglect include physical neglect such as the failure to provide necessary food, shelter, or supervision; medical neglect such as the failure to provide necessary medical or mental health treatment; educational neglect such as the failure to educate a child or attend to his or her special education needs; and emotional neglect such as inattention to a child’s emotional needs or psychological care or letting the child use alcohol or drugs.”
- **Child Physical Abuse:** “Child physical abuse is non-accidental physical injury that is inflicted by a parent, caregiver, or other person who has responsibility for the child. Such injury is considered abuse regardless of whether or not the caregiver intended to hurt the child and can result from severe discipline or physical punishment that is inappropriate to the child’s age or condition. Physical abuse may occur as the result of a single episode or of repeated episodes and can range in severity from minor marks and bruising to death.” (2) A non-accidental physical injury does not include appropriate medical care, appropriate restraints, or appropriate discipline.
- **Child Sexual Abuse:** “Child sexual abuse generally refers to sexual acts, sexual exploitation, or sexually motivated behaviors involving children. It includes both touching offenses, such as fondling or sexual intercourse, and non-touching offenses, such as exposing a child to pornographic materials. It can also involve varying degrees of violence and emotional trauma.” (3) State laws typically define this term similarly.
- **Defamation.** A false statement of fact (not opinion) that injures another person, and it may be written (libel) or spoken (slander), which is actionable as a civil tort (wrong). Truth is a defense.
- **Defendant:** An individual or organization accused of wrongdoing in a court of law in a criminal or civil case.
- **Founded:** A report of child abuse where there has been a judicial adjudication finding that a subject child has been abused, or Child Protective Services determines that there has been abuse. See also “substantiated” below.
- **Interview:** A discussion with an individual to gather information and evidence regarding an allegation. If a child is interviewed, the interview should be carried out by a trained child welfare professional who specializes in gathering information from children as part of a larger investigative process and potentially for use in a legal setting. This is called a forensic interview.
- **Mandated Reporter:** A person who is legally obligated to report suspected or known child abuse, as provided by state or other applicable laws, and typically arising out of the person’s professional training or specific responsibilities (e.g., a nurse, doctor, social worker, or more broadly as identified in some state laws).

- **Perpetrator, Offender:** An individual who is determined to have carried out a harmful act (often by means of a criminal act).
- **Plaintiff:** A person who brings a civil case against another individual or organization in a court of law.
- **Reporter, Complainant:** A person who makes a report about an allegation.
- **Rule of Two:** Generally, there should be at least two unrelated persons (an adult and another adult or a responsible teenager) with one child.
- **Sexual Abuse:** According to federal law, the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), sexual abuse is defined as the “employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any child to engage in, or assist any other person to engage in, any sexually explicit conduct or simulation of such conduct for the purpose of producing a visual depiction of such conduct” and the “rape, and in cases of caretaker or inter-familial relationships, statutory rape, molestation, prostitution, or other form of sexual exploitation of children, or incest with children.”
- **Substantiated:** It is determined to be more likely than not that abuse has occurred (preponderance of the evidence). This is an evidentiary standard commonly used in private investigations and civil negligence/tort court actions. The term “founded” may be used by some government authorities as synonymous with “substantiated” or otherwise in reference to such evidentiary standards.
- **Unsubstantiated:** Means not supported or proven by enough evidence or failed to meet the “preponderance of the evidence” standard (the allegations are more likely true than not true). Does not mean the allegation was a lie, only that there was not enough evidence to prove it based on a greater than fifty percent chance that the allegations were true. The term “non-substantiated” may be used as synonymous with “unsubstantiated.” Some government authorities may use the term “unfounded” as synonymous with “unsubstantiated” or otherwise in reference to such evidentiary standards.
- **Victim, Survivor:** A person harmed or injured as a result of a crime, accident, or other event or action; an individual who has overcome a difficult experience that left the individual harmed or injured in some way. The term “V/S” may be used as synonymous with either “victim” or “survivor.”
- **Victim Advocate:** A victim advocate provides emotional support, information about the criminal justice system, and resources and referrals to victims of crime. Victim advocates are generally employed by, or volunteer for a governmental agency or a non-profit organization with the mission of assisting and advocating for victims of crime.

Abuse Prevention Policy and Procedures Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that I have received and carefully read the Abuse Prevention Policy and Procedures document and understand my responsibilities as stated herein.

Printed Name:

Signature:

Date: