



FBC BENBROOK

Child Protection Policies

Updated 8/18/24

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Texas Child Protection Definitions and Laws	page 3
Goal and Definition of Children.....	page 6
Reporting and Responding	page 7
Selection and Screening Process	page 12
Conduct Policies	page 16
Supervisory Requirements	page 19
Disciplinary Policies	page 27
Forms	
Acknowledgement of Policies.....	page 29
Volunteer Application.....	page 30
Youth Helper Guidelines.....	page 32

Texas Child Protection Definitions and Laws

Legal Definitions of Child Abuse or Neglect As Defined By the Texas Family Code Section 261.001:

“Abuse” includes the following acts or omissions by a person:

- Mental or emotional injury to a child that results in an observable and material impairment in the child’s growth, development, or psychological functioning.
- Causing or permitting the child to be in a situation in which the child sustains a mental or emotional injury that results in an observable and material impairment in the child’s growth, development, or psychological functioning.
- Physical injury that results in substantial harm to the child, or the genuine threat of substantial harm from physical injury to the child, including an injury that is at variance with the history or explanation given and excluding an accident or reasonable discipline by a parent, guardian, or managing or possessory conservator that does not expose the child to a substantial risk of harm.
- Failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent an action by another person that results in physical injury that results in substantial harm to the child.
- Sexual conduct harmful to a child’s mental, emotional, or physical welfare including conduct that constitutes the offense of indecency with a child under Section 21.11, Penal Code, sexual assault under Section 22.011, Penal Code, or aggravated sexual assault under Section 22.021, Penal Code.
- Failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct harmful to a child.
- Compelling or encouraging the child to engage in sexual conduct as defined by Section 43.01, Penal Code.
- Causing, permitting, encouraging, engaging in, or allowing the photographing, filming, or depicting of the child if the person knew or should have known that the resulting photograph, film, or depiction of the child is obscene as defined by Section 43.21, Penal Code, or pornographic.
- Causing, permitting, encouraging, engaging in, or allowing a sexual performance by a child as defined by Section 43.25, Penal Code.
- The current use by a person of a controlled substance as defined by Chapter 481, Health and Safety Code, in a manner or to the extent that the use results in physical, mental, or emotional injury to a child.
- Causing, expressly permitting, or encouraging a child to use a controlled substance as defined by Chapter 481, Health and Safety Code.

“Neglect” includes:

- Leaving of a child in a situation where the child would be exposed to a substantial risk of physical or mental harm, without arranging for necessary care for the child, and the demonstration of an intent not to return by a parent, guardian, or managing or possessory conservator of the child.
- The following acts or omissions by a person:
 - Placing a child in or failing to remove a child from a situation that a reasonable person would realize requires judgment or actions beyond the child’s level of maturity, physical condition, or mental abilities and that result in bodily injury or a substantial risk of immediate harm to the child.
 - Failing to seek, obtain, or follow through with medical care for a child, with the failure resulting in or presenting a substantial risk of death, disfigurement, or bodily injury or with the failure resulting in an observable and material impairment to the growth, development, or functioning of the child.
 - The failure to provide a child with food, clothing, or shelter necessary to sustain the life or health of the child, excluding failure caused primarily by financial inability unless relief services had been offered and refused.
 - Placing a child in or failing to remove the child from a situation in which the child would be exposed to a substantial risk of sexual conduct harmful to the child.
- The failure by the person responsible for a child’s care, custody, or welfare to permit the child to return to the child’s home without arranging for the necessary care for the child after the child has been absent from the home for any reason, including having been in residential placement or having run away.

Sexual Misconduct

Sexual misconduct claims include all crimes involving sexual conduct under the Texas Penal Code. They include indecent exposure, indecency with a child and sexual assault including rape. They also include conduct that may not violate a penal statute but is still sexually oriented such as sexual harassment and sexual suggestion. If this conduct is committed by agents of the church, either employed or volunteer, claims are often made against the individual and the church.

Duty to Report ... the Texas Reporting Statute

Texas law requires that any person suspecting that a child has been abused or neglected must immediately make a report. If there is an emergency, call 911 and then call the DFPS Texas Abuse Hotline at 1-800-252-5400. You can also make a

report online.

Any person who learns of or has cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect by any person must immediately report that belief to a local or state law enforcement agency or the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services.

A person commits an offense if, with the intent to deceive, the person knowingly makes a report that is false. An offense under this subsection is a state jail felony unless it is shown on the trial of the offense that the person has previously been convicted under this section, in which case the offense is a felony of the third degree.

Liability for Failure To Report

A person failing to report child abuse or neglect commits a Class A misdemeanor per Texas Family Code Sec. 261.109. Additionally, a person who is the victim of child abuse and his or her family may bring a civil claim against the church and/or its agent (the person who failed to report the crime) as required by law.

Immunity

A person acting in good faith who reports or assists in the investigation of a report of alleged child abuse or neglect or who testifies or otherwise participates in a judicial proceeding arising from a report, petition, or investigation of alleged child abuse or neglect is immune from civil or criminal liability that might otherwise be incurred or imposed.

Church Liability

A church is liable to civil action if, as an employer, it failed to make inquiries of past employers (where names and addresses have been disclosed) who employed the employee within the last five years, concerning the possible occurrence of sexual exploitation by the employee.

Goal of Policies

The goal of First Baptist Church Benbrook is to provide a safe environment for the physical and emotional well-being of all children participating in church programs, including participants in any daily or temporary childcare programs. The church's goal is to inform workers and enforce policies to ensure that all children are safe and well protected while attending scheduled activities.

Future revisions to this policy may be made with the authorization of the Pastor and Ministerial Staff.

Definition of "Children"

The term "child" or "children" shall include all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years.

Age Boundary between Children's Ministry and Student Ministry

The transition from Children's Ministry to Student Ministry marks a major milestone of change in a person's life, the change from a child to a young adult. The Student Ministry is a place where adult topics are discussed through a biblical lens that younger students are not ready to hear and discuss. While the Student Ministry is listed as accommodating 7th through 12th graders, here at FBC Benbrook we have a minimum age requirement for promotion into the Student Ministry. Regardless of "school grade" the student has to have turned 12 on or by September 1st before entering into Student Ministry for that calendar year's promotion Sunday. If the student turns 12 after September 1st they will be promoted into Student Ministry during the next calendar year's promotion Sunday.

Reporting and Responding to Alleged Child Abuse or Neglect

Child Safety Policy

First Baptist Church Benbrook has a zero tolerance for abuse in ministry programs and ministry activities. It is the responsibility of every staff member and volunteer at First Baptist Church Benbrook to act in the best interest of all children in every program.

In the event that staff or volunteers observe any inappropriate behaviors (i.e. policy violations, neglectful supervision, poor role-modeling, etc.) or suspected abuse (physical, emotional, or sexual) it is their responsibility to immediately report their observations to their immediate supervisor, the minister responsible for the division, or the Pastor.

Ministry Staff Contact List

For the purpose of reporting a safety issue or concern, or inquiring about matters concerning these policies, the following list should be contacted in the following order:

First Contact – Ministers in Charge of Age Divisions

Birth-6th Grade: Shera Errico – Minister to Children and Women
 Liz Justl – Childcare Coordinator
7th-12th Grade: Blake Theiss – Minister to Students and Families

Second Contact – Supervisors (Ministry staff will contact supervisors.)

Todd Pylant – Pastor
Gary Waller – Administrative Pastor

Persons working with children may have the opportunity to become aware of abuse or neglect of the children under our care. In the event that an individual involved in the care of children at First Baptist Church of Benbrook becomes aware of suspected abuse or neglect, they should report the abuse immediately to the minister in charge of the division for further action including reporting to authorities as mandated by Texas state law.

Reporting Obligation

First Baptist Church Benbrook is committed to providing a safe, secure environment for children and their families. To this end, any report of inappropriate behaviors or suspicions of abuse will be taken seriously and will be reported, in accordance with these policies and Texas state law, and the Police Department, Child Protective Services, or other appropriate agency.

An element of the safe environment referenced above includes the fostering of a culture of reporting relevant information to a supervisor or church minister. Because sexual abusers 'groom' children for abuse, it is possible a staff member or volunteer may witness behavior intended to 'groom' a child for sexual abuse. Staff members and volunteers are asked to report 'grooming' behavior, any policy violations, or any suspicious behaviors to a supervisor.

Any person having cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect *must* report the person's belief. Non-accusatory reports, that identify the victim whether or not the person responsible for the abuse is known, must be made to the local or state law enforcement agency or to the Texas Child Protective Services.

In the event that an incident of abuse or neglect is alleged to have occurred at the church or during scheduled church activities, the following procedures shall be followed:

1. A report must be made immediately on learning of the abuse or neglect to the supervisor, minister in charge of the division, or the pastor as quickly as possible.
2. All reports must contain:
 - a) The name and address of the child.
 - b) The name and address of the person responsible for the care, custody, or welfare of the child.
 - c) Any other pertinent information concerning the alleged or suspected abuse or neglect.
3. An oral report must be made within 48 hours and a written incident report must be made within five days to one of the following:
 - a) The Police Department
 - b) The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services Abuse Hot Line (1-800-252-5400 then press 4 for a case worker)

4. The pastor, or his agent, will notify the parents of the child (unless the parent is alleged as the person responsible for the abuse or neglect).
5. The pastor, or his agent, in consultation with the chairperson of the Personnel Committee and/or the chairman of the Deacons will notify the appropriate legal counsel.
6. The pastor, or his agent, will notify the church's insurance agent that an abuse report has been filed with the appropriate local or state agency.
7. Interviews shall be conducted only by authorized officials of the agency to whom the suspected crime has been reported or, when appropriate, by legal counsel or persons representing the church in an official capacity.
8. All employees and volunteers of the church shall fully cooperate with the official investigation as requested.

The oral and written reports are required by law. This entire reporting policy is required as a condition of employment for both paid and volunteer workers.

In the event that the pastor is the alleged as the person responsible for the abuse or neglect, the chairperson of the Personnel Committee and/or the chairman of the Deacons will assume the role of the pastor in the above procedures.

Investigation of Alleged Abuse or Neglect

No person shall attempt to conduct a detailed investigation either through examination or interrogation of the child, the accused person or a witness. It is acceptable to obtain a reasonable amount of information to have cause to believe a child has been abused or neglected.

Confidentiality

All reports of child abuse or neglect shall be held in absolute confidence. No person shall communicate any information concerning the alleged event to any person except as necessary to cooperate with any official investigation. Any breach of this confidentiality by an employee of the church shall be cause for immediate dismissal.

The pastor, in consultation with the official conducting the investigation may authorize limited additional disclosure if necessary to protect other children from

harm in the near future, particularly where the person responsible for the abuse cannot be identified, but in no case shall the identity of the victim or the accused person be disclosed except as required by law.

Suspension of Church Related Duties

A person accused of child abuse or neglect will be suspended from all church related duties involving children. This would include all childcare, teaching, transportation or sponsorship duties. The Personnel Committee is not authorized to conduct an investigation of the incident but is allowed to monitor any such investigation and receive confidential information concerning the incident as may be necessary to determine issues concerning continuation of employment and compensation.

The person accused should be suspended on 'paid leave' until the investigation is completed. This removal from duty should occur in such a way that an innocent person is not immediately deemed guilty. There are false claims made each year. If the allegation is determined to be unsubstantiated, the employee can be returned to their prior position.

Preservation of Records

Copies of all documents relating to an event of abuse or neglect occurred, including a list of all persons known to be present or in the vicinity shall be transferred to the pastor or his agent. They will review them to determine if the documents are complete in accordance with church policy. If any documents are missing, they shall make a written notation and transfer the documents to the church business administrator who shall retain them until advised that all criminal and civil investigations and actions have been completed.

Liaison with the Community

The pastor, or his appointed agent, will serve as the church's sole access to the media. The church should emphasize to the public its position on child abuse, its concern for the victim and the extensive steps being taken to address the safety of all children.

Ministerial Care

The ministerial staff shall encourage and assist the child and the parents in securing appropriate counseling, care and support. In the event the abuse or neglect involves a member or employee of the church, the staff shall encourage and assist the individual in securing appropriate pastoral care and support, including third party counseling, being mindful of the potential for a conflict of interest.

All persons shall act towards the child, the parents, and the accused in accordance with the principles of Christianity at all times.

Selection and Screening Process of Workers

Pre-Employment Procedures for Paid and Volunteer Workers

It is the goal of First Baptist Church of Benbrook (herein referred to as First Baptist Church Benbrook or as “the church”) to adequately screen the applications of persons desiring to work with children participating in all church programs, including participants in any daily or temporary childcare programs.

Classification of Workers

In order to screen workers appropriately to their responsibilities, the ministerial staff responsible for each division will categorize workers into two categories: primary and secondary. These terms refer to the relative levels of responsibility and risk, not to the ages of the children being served.

Primary Volunteer Workers: Includes all paid staff members plus those volunteers in roles with greater responsibility or risk are classified as primary workers.

Secondary Volunteer Workers: Persons who occasionally interact with children and/or do so in less risky circumstances. i.e.: volunteers who see children only in a group setting, on church premises, or who interact with children in the presence of an approved primary worker are classified as secondary workers. This category may also include parents of participants who help supervise activities. All volunteer workers under the age of eighteen (18) will be considered secondary workers.

Minimum Age

All primary volunteer workers must be 18 years of age or older. Younger persons may assist adults but may not take the place of adult workers. The church may employ responsible teens (under the age of 18) only in positions with and under the direct supervision of an approved adult worker.

A reasonable age gap will be maintained between youth volunteers and the children they are assisting.

For nursery care during weekly scheduled programming, only youth ages 16 and up may assist. If youth younger than 16 wish to serve they can do so only with a parent.

Youth volunteers are also required to read and sign the Youth Helpers Guidelines (form C) stating that they have read, understand, and will follow the guidelines.

Four Safety Steps

Because we love and value children and desire to protect them, First Baptist Church Benbrook requires all staff members and volunteers working with children or students to complete Four Safety Steps before ministry work or volunteer placements begin:

STEP ONE: Screening Process

STEP TWO: Sexual Abuse Awareness Training

STEP THREE: Criminal Background Check

STEP FOUR: Policies & Procedures

Screening Process

Staff members and volunteers are required to complete First Baptist Church Benbrook's Screening Process, which requires a staff member or volunteer to:

- complete an Employment Application (employees only)
- complete a Volunteer Application (volunteers only)
- complete a face-to-face interview (employees and volunteers)
- provide references to be checked (employees and volunteers)
- have actively attended the church for 6 months minimum (volunteers)

a) Volunteer Applications

Volunteer applicants must complete and sign an *Application For Volunteer Workers Who Will Work With Children*, (Form B). Applications will be submitted to the church office. The minister in charge of the division in which the volunteer will work, will be responsible for the interview process and reference checks.

Applications can be waived with the authorization of the minister in charge, as in the case for a specific planned event for a secondary volunteer worker or of a long-term church member with considerable rapport within the church body.

If an applicant needs additional confidentiality, they may choose to submit their application to the minister in charge of their division or directly to the pastor.

The church keeps confidential all information received in the applicant selection

process. Such information will be stored with access afforded only to appropriate church staff on a need-to-know basis.

If the church learns of false, misleading or amended information on an application that could cause potential danger to children or liability to the church, that person will be terminated.

b) References

The minister in charge of the division in which the person will work must check at least three references for each primary worker applicant and must conduct a reasonable inquiry into the character of secondary worker applicants. References may be checked by phone, mail or in person. Whenever possible, the three references should include:

- ... a person who has known the applicant for an extended period.
- ... a former supervisor.
- ... a member of the applicant's immediate family

c) Six-Month Rule

All volunteers who work with children must first be active participants of First Baptist Church Benbrook. No volunteer will be allowed to work with children in any capacity until they have been active and participating in church for a minimum of six months. The applicant must have been a regular attendee and involved in church activities for that period of time. This time of interaction between our leadership and the applicant allows for better evaluation and suitability of the applicant for working with children.

Under certain circumstances, an exception to this rule for a specific planned event may be authorized by the minister in charge of the division. If waived, the minister in charge of the division must take additional steps to screen the applicant. The six-month rule may also be waived with the authorization of the Personnel Committee, as in the case of a new staff member.

Sexual Abuse Awareness Training

Sexual abuse awareness training shall be required for all children's worker positions, both employee and volunteer workers, including youth workers. This training is meant to equip and educate volunteers and paid workers on how to identify and prevent sexual abuse.

First Baptist Church Benbrook requires that staff members and volunteers avoid abusive behavior of any kind. Staff members and volunteers are required to report any policy violations to their immediate supervisor. Staff members and volunteers should have a basic understanding of the characteristics of sexual abusers and their behaviors in 'grooming' a child for sexual abuse. Grooming is the process used by an abuser to select a child, win the child's trust (and the trust of the child's parent or 'gatekeeper'), manipulate the child into sexual activity and keep the child from disclosing the abuse.

A full training must be completed in addition to a training quiz with a certificate of completion with a score higher than 75. If a training has been completed with an outside organization then a certificate from that training can be submitted for review in place of the training provided by the church.

Sexual Abuse Awareness Trainings will be updated biennially. The minister in charge of the division will conduct the assignment of trainings. The church shall assume the cost of the trainings for church related events and programs.

Criminal Background Check

First Baptist Church Benbrook requires that all staff members and volunteers working or volunteering in children's or student activities or programming, who are 18 years of age and older, undergo a criminal background check. Depending upon position, differing levels or intensity of background check may be required.

Individuals who have committed sexually-oriented or sex-related crimes may not serve in any area providing services to children or minors. In addition, certain other past criminal acts *may* preclude an applicant from serving minors.

Background checks will be updated biennially. The minister in charge of the division will conduct the assignment of trainings. The church shall assume the cost of the trainings for church related events and programs. Background checks will be kept confidential with access afforded only to appropriate church staff on a need-to-know basis.

Acknowledgement of Church Policies

Staff members and volunteers, both new and old, are required to review the policies once a year as contained in this manual and sign the Acknowledgement of Receipt (form A) indicating that he or she has read and understood the material and agrees to comply with policy requirements.

Conduct Policies

Because First Baptist Church Benbrook is committed to providing the best possible experience for children emotionally, physically, mentally, and spiritually, all staff and volunteer workers are expected to act in accordance with the principles of Christianity at all times. Workers are expected to set the example with their actions and words, have a positive attitude despite current feelings or circumstances and to be respectful of boundaries. Every worker should be in a growing relationship with Christ so that they are able to share His light with others while serving.

The following regulations are applicable to all primary and secondary workers having contact with children participating in all church programs:

Identification of Workers

Certain church programs, such as Awana or VBS, may require a uniform or name badge to be worn during the program by all employees or volunteers. The purpose of the uniform or name badge is to identify each person as an approved worker by the church for both other workers and other persons attending the program whether children or adults.

Verbal Interactions with Children

Verbal interactions between staff members or volunteers and children should be positive and uplifting. First Baptist Church Benbrook staff members and volunteers should strive to keep verbal interactions encouraging, constructive, and mindful of their mission of aiding parents in the spiritual growth and development of children.

To this end, staff members and volunteers should not talk to children in a way that is or could be construed by any reasonable observer as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. In addition, staff members and volunteers are expected to refrain from swearing in the presence of children.

Physical Contact

First Baptist Church Benbrook is committed to protecting children in its care. To this end, the 'physical contact policy' shall be followed to promote a positive,

nurturing environment for our Children's Ministries while protecting children. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by anyone working in church programs:

- Hugging, pats on the back and other forms of appropriate physical affection between staff members or volunteers and children are important for children's development and are generally suitable in the church setting.
- Inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection are forbidden.
- Physical contact should be for the benefit of the child, and never be based upon the emotional needs of a staff member or volunteer.
- Physical contact and affection should be given only in observable places or when in the presence of other children or children's staff members and volunteers.
- Physical contact in any form should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing. The personal behavior of staff members or volunteers with children must foster trust at all times. Personal conduct must be above reproach.
- Do not force physical contact, touch, or affection on a reluctant child. A child's preference not to be touched must be respected.
- Staff members and volunteers are responsible for protecting children under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by others.
- Any inappropriate physical contact, touching or displays of affection, behavior, or suspected abuse by a staff member or volunteer must be reported immediately to an immediate supervisor, the minister in charge of the division, or the Pastor.

Intoxicants and Tobacco Use

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drugs while in any First Baptist Church Benbrook facility, while traveling with children, or while working with or supervising children.

First Baptist Church Benbrook requires staff members and volunteers to abstain from the use or possession of tobacco products in church facilities, while in the presence of children or their parents, or during church activities or programs. First Baptist Church Benbrook is a tobacco-free facility.

Sexually Oriented Conversations/Material

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from engaging in any sexually oriented conversations with children and are not permitted to discuss any

inappropriate or explicit information about their own personal relationships, dating or sexual activities with any child in the program.

Staff members and volunteers in children's ministries at First Baptist Church Benbrook are prohibited from possessing any sexually oriented materials (magazines, cards, images, videos, films, etc.) on church property or in the presence of children.

Staff members and volunteers in First Baptist Church Benbrook's children's ministries should never be nude in the presence of children in their care.

Posting to Social Media

Parents will be asked on registration forms for permission to use photos of their child on social media or promotional material.

Volunteers should refrain from posting pictures/personal information of children from church programs on their personal social media accounts unless they receive permission from the parent of the child.

Pictures from church programming and events can be shared from the church through closed/private social media accounts or groups run by the minister in charge of the division. The minister in charge of the division will be responsible for monitoring said accounts or groups to ensure that only parents, guardians, students, and approved volunteer workers have access.

Supervisory Requirements

Every ministry supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the ministry program area is monitored during programming serving children. This includes unobserved monitoring of staff members, volunteers, and children. No child will ever be left unattended in a ministry area or on a playground during regular programming, classes, or activities.

The following regulations are applicable to all primary and secondary workers having contact with children participating in all church programs:

Safety of Children

It is the responsibility of all persons having contact with children participating in church programs to promote the emotional and physical safety of the participants giving regard to all factors and circumstances known to them. If in their opinion an unsafe condition exists, such persons shall immediately take appropriate precautions under the circumstances to protect all children. Nothing contained in any other church policy, procedure or instruction shall be construed to relieve persons having contact with children from this responsibility.

Ministerial and Staff Oversight

The minister in charge of the division is responsible to coordinate with the respective ministry coordinators to ensure ongoing supervision of all workers. This should include regular unannounced visits to classes and other program sites and periodically walking the facility to check on classes and raise the level of visibility.

Two Workers Rule

The church will have in place a minimum of two workers in attendance at all times when children are being supervised during a church activity regardless of the number of participants, location or activity. At least one of these must be a primary worker.

Some Youth Sunday School classes (7th-12th Grade) may have only one adult in attendance as the teacher while the class is in session. In these instances, doors to the classrooms will remain open and window blinds or curtains shall remain open.

At no time should a worker ever be in a room or an enclosed area alone with a child.

Observation of Children

Church activities for children should be scheduled in areas visible from adjoining areas. Such visibility will be maintained by leaving curtains and blinds open and, wherever possible, by leaving the door to the room open. Reasonable exceptions to this rule may be made by the minister in charge of the division where seclusion is necessary for rest provided two unrelated workers are present in the room at all times. At no time will an adult meet alone with a child in any room where the door is closed or in an area where they cannot be seen.

If you need to talk with a child alone, do it in the hallway or a highly visible area, or have another leader with you.

If an unusual circumstance occurs and you find yourself alone with a single child, take the child to a room or building occupied by others, or to a location easily observed by others. (Example: if a child is the last in a class to be picked up by a parent, move to an adjoining room where other staff members or volunteers are present.) Children in 6th grade and under who are not picked up at the end of a program by a reasonable time will be brought to the Children's desk to await pickup and have their parents contacted.

Playground or Outdoor Observation

On the playground or outdoors, workers should remember to circulate, watching children during play periods, giving particular attention to areas not easily seen from all viewpoints. (Example: under slides, in corners, behind structures).

Any two children together in an unseen or less easily viewed area should be redirected to another (more open) area of the playground.

Ratio of Workers to Children

The minister in charge of the division shall be primarily responsible for setting and maintaining a reasonable ratio of workers to children giving due regard to all factors present, including the number and age of the participants, the nature of the activities and the location where the activities are taking place.

Accordingly, the following worker to child ratios will be observed:

Program	Workers	Children
Nursery	2	8
Preschool, 2 & 3 years old	2	12
Preschool, 4 & 5 years old	2	18
Elementary	2	20
VBS	2	20

If a worker is 'out of ratio' it is his or her responsibility to immediately notify the program supervisor. Supervisors will make diligent efforts to find substitute workers to immediately bring worker to children ratios into compliance with Church policies.

Children's Identification System for 6th Grade and Under

To reduce the possibility of kidnapping, the church will have in place an identification system so that only approved adults who drop off a child are the same adults who pick the child up.

Upon check-in, each child will receive a nametag and their parent or guardian will be given a claim tag. Volunteers must check each claim tag before releasing a child at pick up.

If a claim tag is lost, send the parent or guardian to the front desk supervisors or the minister in charge of the division where proper identification must be shown to a staff member before the child is released. The child shall stay in the classroom until the parent or guardian is cleared to pick up the child.

The minister in charge of the division shall maintain the system to identify persons authorized to pick up and take responsibility for children leaving a church activity. The identification system will not be necessary for children in regular weekly programming above the 4th grade unless a parent specifically requests it in writing.

Parental Contact

Parents who leave a child in the care of First Baptist Church Benbrook staff members and volunteers during church services or activities will be contacted if their child becomes ill, injured, or has a severe disciplinary problem while participating in church programs.

Children's Pickup

At any time that a child has been entrusted to First Baptist Church Benbrook staff members or volunteers, the Church incurs responsibility for the safety and well-being of the child. Staff members and volunteers must act to ensure the appropriate supervision and safety of children in their charge.

Children who are 6th grade and under are NOT permitted to leave the area of the church activity at the conclusion of the scheduled activity without further supervision of the workers until they are picked up by the parent or guardian.

If a child younger than 6th grade is not picked up by their parent or guardian on time, they will be kept by their teachers in the children's area where safe supervision can be continued until the parent or guardian is located.

Volunteers must check each claim tag or identification before releasing a child at pick up to an unfamiliar adult. It is presumed a person who drops off a child or student has authority to pick up the child.

Vehicle Safety

Persons who drive church owned or privately-owned vehicles for conducting church business or transporting children must maintain a current valid Texas driver's license, and may be asked to provide proof of insurance in such amounts as may be required by the church and comply with all other church transportation policies. Drivers must be over 21 years of age.

Children should be transported directly to their destination. Unauthorized stops to a non-public place should be avoided. Staff members and volunteers should avoid transportation circumstances that leave only one child in transport.

The driver and all passengers are required to use a seat belt.

The driver is responsible for a headcount of passengers at the beginning of each trip and following each stop that passengers exit from the vehicle.

Bathrooms

Adults should not use or occupy a bathroom in use by children. Adults should use a restroom separate and apart from restrooms used by children during church programming. No volunteer of any age should enter or occupy a bathroom while children are using it. When no child is present, adults (and young volunteers) are allowed in a bathroom (one at a time) so long as there is another adult at the doorway keeping any child from entering.

When possible, in children's bathrooms with stalls in place, the main door should remain propped open, provided there is adequate privacy.

Nursery Children Bathrooms

Because nursery children may require complete assistance with their bathroom activities, all staff members and volunteers will observe the following policies:

Diapering

- Only female nursery workers or the child's parent or legal guardian will undertake the diapering of children of either sex.
- Changing of diapers should be done in sight of other nursery workers.
- Children will never be left unattended on changing tables.
- Any special instructions given by parents leaving new children in nursery will be recorded on the registration cards ("Arlo Adams has a medicine in the bag for rash.")

- Children should be re-diapered and re-clothed immediately upon the completion of changing their soiled diaper.
- Children should be changed on changing stations only.

Toilet training

- No child will be forced to toilet train.
- Only female nursery workers or the child's parent or legal guardian will participate in toilet training efforts with children of either sex.
- When children are taken into bathrooms the door will be left partially open.
- Young children will never be left unattended in bathrooms.
- Parents should be consulted on each child's progress in the toilet training process before leaving the child with volunteers or staff members. Any special instructions given by parents leaving new children in the nursery will be recorded on the registration card ("Mabel can use the toilet, but she needs to be reminded – ask her if she needs to go.").
- Children should be assisted in straightening their clothing before returning to the room with other children.
- "Accidents" should be handled by reassuring the child and completing the changing of diapers or underwear and clothing. Extra clothing and diapers are available from the church in the children's kitchen area if the parent has not furnished a clothing change.

Grade School Bathrooms

If you must go into the restroom to check on an individual child, seek out another worker to accompany you. If another worker is not available, go to the exterior bathroom door, knock, and ask if the child needs assistance. Do not enter the restroom.

If a child requires immediate assistance, leave the exterior bathroom door open when entering the bathroom area and try to verbally assist the child in completing his or her toileting activities, while the child remains behind the door of the bathroom stall. Any assistance with the straightening or fastening of garments should be done in the presence of another staff member or volunteer.

If restroom use is required:

- Only *adult* female workers will assist children in the restroom, unless a parent is assisting their own child.
- When a worker is assisting a child, the door must not be locked, and must remain ajar. In general, children should receive the minimum amount of assistance needed based upon their individual capabilities. Encourage children to do all they can for themselves.
- Only one child in the restroom at a time, in a single toilet facility.

- Teachers should only send one child to the bathroom at a time if they are sending children during a class instead of a scheduled group bathroom time. (If separate bathrooms exist: one girl to the girl's bathroom and one boy to the boy's bathroom.) Other students must wait until the first student returns to go to the bathroom.
- Be aware if a student repeatedly asks to use the restroom and stays there for unusual periods of time. Report this behavior to a supervisor if it occurs.

Special Needs Bathrooms

Parents will offer instruction to staff members or volunteers to change the diapers of individuals with special needs. After the age of 4, parents or legal guardians will change the diapers of all individuals with special needs. If someone with special needs requires assistance using the restroom, a special needs volunteer may assist them in the restroom.

Missing Children

In the event that a child is discovered missing that has been checked into on campus church programming, the following procedure will be followed:

1. The worker who becomes aware a child is missing will communicate to their supervisor or the minister in charge of the division.
2. The supervisor or minister in charge of the division will immediately begin collecting and dispersing identifying characteristics of the child to staff and safety team members.
3. Safety team members, designated volunteers, and staff will disperse throughout the church campus to locate the missing child.
4. Once the child has been located and their safety ensured, the minister in charge of the division will communicate to the entire team to resume normal ministry procedures.
5. In the event that a missing child is not located after a reasonable amount of time, law enforcement will be called, and parents notified.

Endangered Children

Parents or guardians who are concerned that a non-custodial parent or person may pose a threat to a minor during ministry programming are urged to let the staff of First Baptist Church of Benbrook know immediately. In some cases, guardians may be asked not to leave their child in the care of the church. This is for the safety of other children in the care of the church, and all volunteers and workers.

In the event that an endangered child does participate in programs hosted by First Baptist Church of Benbrook, a picture may be requested of the person who poses a threat to the child. That picture will be shared with staff members, safety team members, and any pertinent volunteers.

If, at any time, a child under the care of the church is threatened by the presence of anyone in attendance, that person may be asked to leave by any staff member in accordance with safety team personnel.

Health Policy

First Baptist Church of Benbrook asks children who have had any of the below symptoms in the past 24 hours to stay home from church programming until symptoms resolve without medication to relieve symptoms.

- Fever – temperature 100.4 degrees or greater
- Cough
- Rash
- Sore throat/swollen glands
- Shortness of breath
- Runny nose or congestion
- Diarrhea
- Nausea or vomiting
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Muscle pain
- Lack of appetite
- Loss of taste or smell
- Red, itchy, watery eyes
- Persistent earache

We ask children who have taken any fever-reducing medications such as Tylenol or Ibuprofen in the past 24 hours to stay home until they are fever-free without the use of medication for 24 hours.

Children who develop infectious disease following a session at First Baptist Church of Benbrook will be encouraged to contact the church immediately.

Children who are observed to be sick by church staff or volunteers during church programming will be separated from the other minors and their parent/guardian will be contacted to pick the child up from the church.

Medication Policy

Children's workers will not administer prescription or non-prescription medications to children under the care of the church during regular weekly programming. Medications should be administered by caregivers at home. In the event that a child needs over the counter medications during church programming, the parent/guardian will first be contacted for

permission and instruction.

Exceptions to the medications policy are allowed for children with potentially life-threatening conditions (such as asthma or severe allergic reactions). Parents/guardians of such children should address their situation with the minister in charge of the division to develop a plan of action. Exceptions will also be made for overnight events such as camp or other retreats, wherein the minister in charge of the division will be responsible for communicating with parents and getting written instructions for medication.

Accidental Injuries to Children

In the event that a child is injured while under the care of First Baptist Church of Benbrook, the following steps should be followed:

- For minor injuries, scrapes, and bruises workers will provide First Aid (Band-Aids, Neosporin, cold compresses, etc.) as appropriate and will notify the child's parent or guardian of the injury either right away through phone contact or at the time the child is picked up from the church.
- For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple first aid, the parent or guardian will be summoned immediately in addition to ministry staff and volunteers with medical expertise. If warranted by circumstances, an ambulance will be called.
- Once the child has received appropriate medical attention, a written incident report will be completed for injury cases requiring treatment by a medical professional.

Disciplinary Policies

Discipline of Children

It is First Baptist Church Benbrook policy that staff members and volunteers are prohibited from using physical discipline in any manner for behavioral management of children. No form of physical discipline is acceptable. This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviors by children.

When a child is misbehaving, follow these steps:

1. Go to the child and calmly ask him or her to stop the behavior. (Most children respond immediately and correct the behavior.) Give a warning and remind the child of class expectations and redirect to a positive behavior. Do this individually when possible; try not to single out a specific child in a large group setting. *When working with younger children, some physical redirection may be necessary: for example, removing a toy from the hands of a child who is hitting another.
2. If the child repeats the action, guide them to a quiet place – separate from the other children – for a short but designated period of time. Stay within sight of others and avoid being alone (or unseen) with the child.
Provide the child with a simple, understandable reason for the separation, and a clear explanation of your expectations. (“Terry, you didn’t stop hitting Kelly when I asked you to, so it was necessary for me to separate you from the group.”)
3. After a 3rd time, refer to a staff member. A staff member may inform a parent or guardian, who may be asked to become involved in redirecting misbehavior.

Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported to a ministry supervisor.

NEVER...

- Never yell at a child.
- Never grab a child.
- Never threaten a child. Always follow through with your words.
- Never hit a child.
- Never confront a parent in front of others.
- Never openly humiliate a child in front of the class.

Bullying

The definition for bullying is as follows: The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power or strength.

Verbal, physical or emotional bullying is not acceptable in First Baptist Church Benbrook's ministry programs. At the first sign of bullying in any form, act decisively, and inform your ministry supervisor. There is no "harmless put-down" where bullying is concerned.

1. *First Offense:* Issue a warning to the child and a general reminder to the group that this kind of interaction is wrong. Try not to embarrass or chastise.
2. *Second Offense:* Pull the offending child(ren) from the group (in a seen or supervised location) and discuss the inappropriate interaction or behavior. Set clear parameters and behavioral goals. Let the child know that the next step is communication with a pastor and the child's parents. Notify an immediate supervisor of ANY signs of bullying or verbal abuse.

Privately, but with another adult present, confirm that a child who was the target of the bullying behaviors is not in danger of continued harassment and is physically and emotionally stable. Do not single a child out in front of the group ... be discreet.

3. *Third Offense:* Send the child to a pastor or ministry supervisor for a phone call (or communication onsite) with his or her parent(s) and possible removal from the activity or event.

Acknowledgement of
Texas Child Protection Definitions and Laws
and
First Baptist Church Benbrook Child Protection Policies

Statement (please initial)

_____ I have been given a copy of both the Texas child protection definitions and laws and First Baptist Church Benbrook Child Protection Policies.

_____ I will follow and comply with all policies as directed by First Baptist Church of Benbrook. I understand that my services as an employee of First Baptist Church Benbrook or as a volunteer worker who works with children at First Baptist Church Benbrook is dependent on my strict adherence to these policies.

_____ As a person entrusted with the care and safety of children by First Baptist Church of Benbrook, I will fully comply with any and all investigations.

Signature _____

Name _____

please print

Date _____

Because First Baptist Church Benbrook cares for our children and desires to protect them, we ask you to please answer the following questions. We understand they are personal and we will protect your privacy.

Have you ever been known by another name? Yes ___ No ___. If yes, please explain.

During your lifetime, have you ever been arrested for molesting or abusing a child, accused of physical assault or a sexual offense of any nature? Yes ___ No ___.

Have you ever been prosecuted for child abuse or molestation? Yes ___ No ___.

Are you willing to be photographed for the confidential church personnel records? Yes ___ No ___.

Are you willing to wear a pictured name tag whenever you are supervising children? Yes ___ No ___.

Applicant Statement

I hereby certify that I have read and completed the above application. My answers are true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

I give permission for the church to maintain my photograph on file and to conduct a criminal-court background check on me now and at regular intervals. If allowed to work with children I agree to be bound by the bylaws and policies of First Baptist Church Benbrook.

I hereby authorize all persons, schools, organizations and law enforcement agencies to supply First Baptist Church Benbrook with any information concerning my character or background in connection with working with children and I hereby release them from liability or damages which may occur as a result of their response to this request.

I authorize First Baptist Church Benbrook to supply my service record, in whole or part, to any prospective or future organization or agency with a legal and proper interest in them. I understand that if allowed to serve, that any misrepresentation made by me in this application shall be considered sufficient cause for my dismissal without advance notice. I have been appraised of and support the church's position regarding the problem of child abuse and neglect.

Signature _____ Date _____

Youth Helper Guidelines

I. Purpose of Youth Helpers in Children's Ministry

1. To lead children in age-appropriate discipleship that engages them on their level, guides them in their personal relationship with Christ, and equips them to live out their faith.
2. To assist and support adult leaders in their ministry and to maximize Kingdom influence.

This is not babysitting – this is discipleship!

II. Expectations of Youth Helpers

1. You are there to serve, not to play or hang out with friends.
2. You are under the leadership of the adults working in your station. This means you are there to help them with what they ask you to do. You are not in charge of the kids.
3. Participate in every aspect of your role (leading worship, paying attention to the Bible lesson, playing games with the kids, etc.)
4. Set the example with your actions and words.
5. Have a positive attitude even if you are not “feeling it.”
6. Be respectful of boundaries. Never force a hug on a child, no tickling, and no prolonged contact. Children may sit next to you if they want to but not in your lap. Brief side hugs, fist bumps, or high fives are all appropriate.
7. Be in a growing relationship with Christ so that you are able to share His love with others.

Youth helpers are exactly that – helpers! Your job is to assist the leaders in the room and help to maintain a calm and positive environment which is conducive for learning.

III. Purpose of Service

1. To give Youth the opportunity to serve their church.
2. To allow Youth to develop leadership skills.
3. To help Youth grow in their own faith by serving and sharing Christ's love.

This is not a time to hang out with friends or play on your phone – this is a time for service, leadership, and influencing someone's future.

Goal of Children's Ministry

Every child who attends should leave knowing:

1. They are loved by God and He desires a relationship with them.
2. They are created unique and for a purpose.
3. They are a part of a church family who loves and values them.

Ask yourself: Are my words, actions, and attitude showing this to the children in my classroom?

Acknowledgement of Guidelines

- I have read and understand the Youth Helper Guidelines.
- I will follow these guidelines and any other instructions given to me during my time of service.
- I understand that these guidelines are set to bring order and structure to the Children's Ministry which is relevant and crucial for a positive growth environment.
- I understand that these guidelines are for my own benefit and for the benefit of those I am serving, and I am in no way being "finessed" by being given boundaries.
- I understand that at any time I fail to listen or follow instructions I may be sent home and may lose future privileges to serve.
- I will do my best to set a good example and help meet the aforementioned goals.

Youth Signature: _____

Date: _____