

First Baptist Church of Charlotte, MI

Children/Youth Workers Policy

Revised: June 2026

PURPOSE

Recognizing God's love and concern for children we believe it is our responsibility to do all that is reasonably possible to protect the children of this church from being physically or sexually abused while under our care. It is also our responsibility to guard our workers from being suspected or falsely accused of wrongful behavior toward a child. Therefore, we have adopted the following guidelines for screening and supervising children/youth workers.

PROCEDURE

1. SCREENING CHILDREN/YOUTH WORKERS

- "Children/Youth Workers" are individuals who regularly supervise or have custody of minors, whether through pastoral ministry, in the nursery, Sunday school, or other children and youth activities. All applicants for children/youth work shall complete the following screening process to be approved for children/youth work.
- Member / Six Month Rule —All teachers and leaders of children/youth must be members of First Baptist Church who have been in regular attendance for at least six months. Exceptions may be granted by the Senior Pastor or his designee. While it is not necessary to be a member of First Baptist Church to serve as a "helper" or "assistant", a helper/assistant must also be in regular attendance for at least six months. Exceptions may be granted by the Senior Pastor or his designee.
- Application and Release Forms: All applicants must complete an "Application for Children/Youth Work" and "Consent to Release Confidential Information" form; minors should have a parent or guardian witness these forms. Minors must have completed 6th grade to apply to be Capped. Minors must be in 9th grade to work in the nursery. Exceptions may be granted by the KidMin Director, the Care and Protection (hereby known as CAP) trainer, or the Senior Pastor on a case-by-case basis with consent from parent/guardian of the minor.
- Reference for Children/Youth Worker Form: Applicants must provide references from at least three individuals who are not relatives and who are over the age of 21. If possible, one reference should be the applicant's most recent former pastor. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that their references have access to the digital reference form. Printed copies are available upon request or, if needed, references may be interviewed by phone, but this may delay the approval process.
- Background Investigation: A background investigation shall be conducted on all applicants (18yrs and older) for paid and volunteer positions utilizing Protect My

Ministry electronic database. To ensure the safety and wellbeing of our children and youth, a new background investigation will be conducted every 3 years.

- After reviewing the required documentation final approval to work with children/youth shall be granted by the CAP trainer, the Senior Pastor, or the Senior Pastor's designee.

- American Heritage Girls (AHG): AHG volunteers will complete all AHG Essential Trainings as required by AHG, Inc. At a minimum, required trainings include KEYS to Child Safety for all AHG volunteers. Additional AHG unit trainings may be required depending on the role of the volunteer. AHG leadership will ensure that AHG volunteers complete appropriate trainings as applicable. AHG volunteers will also complete an AHG application including reference check, personal interview and permission for AHG to complete a background check via MDHHS Central Registry. Annually, by October 31, AHG leadership will provide the FBC Care and Protection trainer with a copy of AHG Volunteer Training log and Central Registry background check results for all AHG volunteers involved in AHG ministry.
 1. AHG leadership will attend FBC Children's Ministry Team Meetings 2x per year as well as attend FBC's Kid's Ministry appreciation event
 2. AHG leadership will participate in at least one FBC Core Training which will be held 3x per year (September, January, April).
 3. AHG leadership will meet with FBC Facilities Director in September and January each year to review AHG facility Use Agreement, review AHG schedule and the FBC building expectations and identify AHG leaders with access to FBC facility.
 4. AHG leadership will be invited to share a testimony regarding AHG Ministry during FBC Praise Night events (twice per year/dates TBD).

- All Information acquired during the screening process, for FBC and AHG volunteers, will be treated as confidential and will not be disclosed unless the Senior Pastor deems the limited disclosure necessary to protect a child from potential harm. FBC Children/Youth Worker confidential information will be maintained in an electronic data system. Access to the electronic system will be password protected and available to the CAP trainer, the Senior Pastor and other administrative staff as deemed appropriate by the Senior Pastor. AHG confidential information will be scanned to a limited access file on FBC's network.

2. MAINTAINING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

- All Children/youth workers must watch the CAP training video and complete the quiz which will be emailed to them by Protect My Ministry upon submission of their background check. Or they must attend a CAP training session arranged with the CAP trainer.

- All children/youth workers should pray regularly for the children of our church, thanking God for the privilege of ministering to them and asking God

to protect them from harm. Workers should also pray for wisdom and discernment to effectively minister to the children placed in our care.

- All children/youth workers will work together in teams of at least two people in rooms which have clear window panels in the entry doors. It is preferred that the team members do not belong to the same family.
- Annual review of the Children/Youth Worker Policy will be required of all children/youth workers focusing particularly on information regarding child abuse and neglect and the worker's responsibility to report inappropriate behavior. Verification of such review will be documented via a signed statement from the worker.

3. ADMONISHING AND REPORTING INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR

- There are two problems that children/youth workers should watch for:
 - a. Behavior by anyone in the church, especially a children/youth worker, that indicates that he/she may be inclined to abuse, molest, or otherwise harm a child, especially one under the care of the church.
 - b. Indications that a child under the care of this church is being abused, molested, neglected, or otherwise harmed, whether by someone in this church or outside the church..
- If you observe a children/youth worker (or another member of the church) talking or acting in a manner that seems innocent, but might appear inappropriate to others, you should privately admonish that person and encourage him/her to exercise greater care in words and actions (Matthew 18:15).
- If you observe a children/youth worker or another member of the church talking or acting in a manner that gives rise to a reasonable suspicion of improper involvement with a child, or of potential involvement with a child, you should promptly report your concern to the CAP Trainer, Security Team Lead, or the Senior Pastor.
- Behaviors to watch for
 - a. Inappropriate comments about sexual matters, especially about or in the presence of children.
 - b. Use of pornography, including inclination toward sexually explicit television shows, movies, books or magazines.
 - c. Excessive and inappropriate attention to a particular child, especially if it involves an effort to be alone with the child.

- Reporting Actual or Suspected Abuse or Neglect of a Child
 - a. State law does not require volunteer children/youth workers in a church setting to report actual or suspected child abuse or neglect. Should a children/youth worker voluntarily make a report to civil authorities, however, the law provides that he/she will be immune to civil or criminal liability, provided the report was made in good faith and without malicious purpose.
 - b. No single indicator of abuse or neglect is necessarily cause for alarm, but it may provide cause to observe a given person or situation more closely. When multiple indicators appear together, however, it is appropriate to discuss the situation with the CAP trainer, the Security Team Leader, or the Senior Pastor. In urgent cases, making an actual report to the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) Child Protective Services Department may be necessary. MDHHS Child Protective Services can be reached at 1-855-444-3911.
 - c. Indications of Physical Abuse: child reports injury by others; unexplained bruises, welts, lacerations, burns, fractures, abdominal injuries, or human bites; child is unusually wary of physical contact with adults, demonstrates extremes in behavior, or seems frightened of parents or caretakers.
 - d. Indications of Sexual Abuse: child reports abuse by others; has difficulty walking or sitting; torn, stained, or bloody underclothing; complaints of pain or itching in genital area; bruises or bleeding in external genitalia, vaginal or anal area; unusual interest in or knowledge of sexual matters; or other unusual and excessive behaviors inappropriate for a child of that age.
 - e. Reporting abuse can precipitate severe consequences to a family, so it should never be done casually or thoughtlessly, and certainly not for malicious purposes. At the same time, failing to report abuse can have severe consequences to a child at risk. Therefore, if reasonable cause to suspect abuse exists, the concerned person should talk with the CAP trainer, Security Team Leader, or the Senior Pastor to see what steps should be taken to protect the child and help the family.