

FBC ROGERS CHILD AND VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION POLICY

Revised 9/2021

First Baptist Church of Rogers (“FBC Rogers”) seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for children and vulnerable adults who participate in programs and activities at FBC Rogers. The goal of FBC Rogers is to protect children and vulnerable adults from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also protecting our staff and volunteers from false accusations.

Definitions

For purposes of this policy, the terms “child” or “children” include all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years. The term “vulnerable adult” refers to all persons eighteen (18) years of age or older, who are unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation due to a mental or physical disability. The term “worker” includes both paid and volunteer persons who work with children and vulnerable adults in the church discipleship ministry programs at FBC Rogers. “Discipleship ministry programs” is defined as any and all programs or events supervised by the pastors or directors of FBC Rogers.

Selection of Workers

FBC Rogers will screen all persons who desire to volunteer with the children and vulnerable adults participating in our ongoing church discipleship ministry programs. This policy does not apply to the school, First Academy, which has its own policy governing the protection of children. This policy does not apply to volunteers at large or family targeted community outreach events at which volunteers will not be in isolated contact with children or vulnerable adults.

Screening shall include the following:

a. **Membership Rule**

FBC Rogers shall not consider a prospective worker for a position within the discipleship ministry programs at FBC Rogers that involves contact with children or vulnerable adults until the prospective worker has become a member of FBC Rogers. Workers for sports programs and other ministry opportunities that are less than 10 consecutive weeks in duration and consist solely of supervised group activities shall be exempt from the Membership Rule.

b. **Volunteer Application**

All prospective workers shall complete and sign an application provided by FBC Rogers. The application shall consist of the following at a minimum:

1. A request for information necessary to perform a background check.
2. Information regarding any criminal history, past alcohol or substance abuse, governmental child welfare agency investigations, and the like.
3. Affirmation by the prospective worker to abide by this policy and all other policies of FBC Rogers intended to prevent abuse and protect workers.
4. Authorization for FBC Rogers to conduct a background check. FBC Rogers will keep all applications that it receives secure and confidential.

c. **Background Check**

FBC Rogers shall conduct a background check for all prospective workers using a third-party data collection and/or background check provider to obtain pertinent information about any prospective worker's history that may reveal that the prospective worker may not be suitable to volunteer with children or vulnerable adults. Prospective workers must authorize FBC Rogers to conduct a background check before FBC Rogers conducts said background check. Any prospective worker who refuses to authorize a background check shall be prohibited from volunteering with children or vulnerable adults.

d. **Optional Additional Screening**

Ministry leaders should consider the following optional additional screening measures for workers if they believe such additional measures would be beneficial to the particular ministry that the worker is applying for:

1. Request for information on past experience in ministry with minors.
2. Request for information on previous churches where the worker has attended.
3. Request for character references.
4. Personal interview to discuss the worker's suitability for the position being applied for.

FBC Rogers will determine what constitutes a disqualifying problem indicated on a prospective worker's written application or background check that will keep the prospective worker from working with children or vulnerable adults on a case-by-case basis in light of all the surrounding circumstances. Generally, any incident involving children or vulnerable adults, violence, dishonesty, illegal substances, indecency, or any conduct contrary to the mission of FBC Rogers will preclude a prospective worker from working with children or vulnerable adults. If a prospective worker provides any false information on his or her written application, FBC Rogers shall prohibit the prospective worker from serving with children or vulnerable adults at FBC Rogers.

FBC Rogers shall keep the background check authorization and results secure and confidential.

FBC Rogers shall deem any background check expired two years after its date of completion. FBC Rogers shall conduct renewal background checks every 2 years on all workers, and all workers must authorize FBC Rogers to conduct said background checks consistent with the terms of this policy.

FBC Rogers has complete discretion in the selection of its workers and may prohibit any person from serving with minors or vulnerable adults for any or no reason.

Adverse Action

In the event FBC Rogers receives a background check which contains a disqualifying offense on it, the department head shall contact the prospective worker to discuss the disqualifying offense after discussing the matter with the Executive Pastor of Operations. The Executive Pastor of Operations or his delegate shall send a "Pre-Adverse Action Disclosure" to the address listed on the prospective worker's application with a copy of the report and a summary of consumer rights

under the Fair Credit Reporting Act. The prospective worker shall have five (5) days to contact FBC Rogers and describe any inaccurate information on the report, and sixty (60) days to dispute the report with the consumer reporting agency from which it was obtained and provide proof that the disqualifying offense has been removed from the report. If the prospective worker misses any of the above deadlines, the Executive Pastor of Operations or his delegate shall send an “Adverse Action Notice” to the address listed on the prospective worker’s application with a summary of consumer rights under the Fair Credit Reporting Act.

Barriers to Maltreatment

Two Adult Rule

No worker shall be alone with a child or vulnerable adult at FBC Rogers, except for a parent or legal guardian. A worker is not considered alone with a child or vulnerable adult if he or she is in a room with a window in plain view of the hallway and another adult is monitoring the hallway.

FBC Rogers staff and volunteer directors will supervise on an ongoing basis and make unannounced visits into classes or other program sites from time to time. Classroom or meeting room doors without windows shall remain open at all times when children or vulnerable adults are present, unless two or more adult leaders are present in the room.

FBC Rogers and all workers shall welcome parents or legal guardians to observe at any time. FBC Rogers shall not require adult parents or legal guardians of participants who may be present at programs and events in their capacity as parent or legal guardian to undergo the screening process set forth above. However, unscreened parents or legal guardians do not count as one adult in the “two adult” rule. Unscreended parents or legal guardians must adhere to all other policies and procedures regarding children or vulnerable adults at FBC Rogers.

Discipline Policy

No worker or staff member of FBC Rogers shall administer corporal punishment, even if parents or legal guardians have suggested or given permission for it. There shall be no spanking, hitting, or other physical discipline at FBC Rogers. Workers shall consult with FBC Rogers staff if assistance is needed with disciplinary issues.

Student Workers

FBC Rogers recognizes that there may be times when it is necessary or desirable for those who are themselves under the age of 18 to volunteer for programs or activities. The following policies apply to volunteers under the age of 18:

- a. Must have completed the fifth grade.
- b. Must meet the following criteria:
 - Obtain written parent permission, and
 - Obtain approval from the Pastor or Director overseeing the ministry where the student is volunteering.
- c. Student workers shall always be under the supervision of an adult worker and subject to the two adult rule.
- d. Student workers shall not change diapers or pick up a child.

Restrooms

Children five years of age and younger shall use a classroom bathroom if one is available. If a classroom bathroom is not available, workers shall escort a group of children to the hallway bathroom. Children shall always go in a group and workers shall never take a child to the bathroom alone. The workers shall check the bathroom first to make sure that it is empty, and then allow the children inside. The workers shall then remain outside the bathroom door and escort the children back to the classroom. If a child is taking longer than seems necessary, the worker shall open the bathroom door and call the child's name. If a child requires assistance, the workers shall prop open the bathroom door and leave the stall door open as they assist the child.

Older children may go to the hallway bathroom. At least one worker shall monitor hallway bathrooms. For the protection of all, workers shall *never* be alone with a child in a bathroom with the door closed and never be in a closed bathroom stall with a child.

Training

All paid staff and workers who volunteer with children on a weekly basis shall undergo child safety training. Parents who serve in parent rotation and volunteers for sports programs and other ministry opportunities that are less than 10 consecutive weeks in duration and consist of supervised group activities shall not be required to undergo child safety training.

Responding to Allegations of Maltreatment

Definitions

For purposes of this policy, select terms are defined as follows:

1. "Maltreatment" means abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, sexual exploitation, or abandonment.
2. "Abuse" means any of the following acts or omissions by any person:
 - a. extreme or repeated cruelty to a child or vulnerable adult;
 - b. engaging in conduct creating a realistic and serious threat of death, permanent or temporary disfigurement, or impairment of any bodily organ;
 - c. injury to a child or vulnerable adult's intellectual, emotional, or psychological development as evidenced by observable and substantial impairment of the ability to function within the normal range of performance and behavior;
 - d. any injury that is at variance with the history given;
 - e. any non-accidental physical injury;
 - f. throwing, kicking, burning, biting, or cutting a child or vulnerable adult;
 - g. striking a child or vulnerable adult with a closed fist;
 - h. shaking a child or vulnerable adult;
 - i. striking a child or vulnerable adult on the face or head;
 - j. interfering with a child or vulnerable adult's breathing;
 - k. pinching, biting, or striking a child or vulnerable adult in the genital area;
 - l. tying a child or vulnerable adult to a fixed or heavy object or binding limbs together;

- m. giving, exposing, or permitting a child or vulnerable adult to consume or inhale any substance not prescribed by a physician that has the capacity to alter the mood or normal physiological functions of the child;
 - n. exploiting a child or vulnerable adult financially through misuse or theft of property, funds, or assets.
 - o. This list is illustrative of unreasonable action and is not intended to be exclusive.
3. “Sexual abuse” means:
- a. Sexual intercourse;
 - b. Penetration, however slight, of the anus or mouth of one person by the penis of another person, or of the labia majora or anus of one person by any body member or foreign instrument manipulated by another person;
 - c. touching or requesting to touch, directly or through clothing, the sex organs, buttocks, or anus of a person or the breasts of a female;
 - d. Encouraging a child or vulnerable adult to touch an adult in a sexual manner;
 - e. Indecent exposure;
 - f. Forcing the watching of pornography or live sexual activity;
 - g. Forcing the listening to a phone sex line;
 - h. Voyeurism; or
 - i. The attempt to engage in any of the above-mentioned conduct.
4. “Neglect” means any act or omission by any person responsible for a child or vulnerable adult constituting:
- a. Failure or refusal to prevent abuse;
 - b. Failure or refusal to provide necessary food, clothing, shelter, or medical treatment necessary for the child or vulnerable adult’s well-being;
 - c. Failure to take reasonable action to protect the child or vulnerable adult from abandonment, abuse, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, neglect, or parental unfitness;
 - d. Failure or irremediable inability to provide for the essential and necessary physical, mental, or emotional needs of the child or vulnerable adult;
 - e. Failure to assume responsibility for the care and custody of the child or vulnerable adult;
 - f. Failure to appropriately supervise the child or vulnerable adult that results in the child or vulnerable adult being left alone in inappropriate circumstances that create a dangerous situation or places the child or vulnerable adult at risk of harm; or
 - g. Failure to ensure that a child between ages 6 and 17 is enrolled in school or is being home schooled.
5. “Sexual exploitation” means allowing, permitting, or encouraging participation or depiction of the child or vulnerable adult in prostitution or pornography.
6. “Abandonment” means the failure of a parent to provide reasonable support and to maintain regular contact with a child with the intention to permit that condition to

continue for an indefinite period in the future, failure to maintain regular contact with a child without just cause, or an articulated intent to forego parental responsibility.

7. "Mandated reporter" means a childcare worker, day care center worker, teacher, clergy member, minister, pastor, other FBC Rogers employee, or any person separately required to report under Arkansas law as a mandated reporter. Pastoral and ministerial staff engaging in biblical or pastoral counseling shall notify the counselee before counseling commences that the pastor or minister is a mandated reporter and will not hold evidence of maltreatment confidential.
8. "Reasonable cause" means a basis for belief in the existence of facts which give rise to more than a bare, imaginary, or purely conjectural suspicion. If another person with similar education, training, and experience would come to the same conclusion based on what a person observes or is told, it is likely reasonable. Certainty, proof, or evidence is not required.

Policy

Upon the first suspicion of an instance of child or vulnerable adult maltreatment, either by a worker or by someone else, the following steps shall immediately be taken:

1. Worker shall treat the suspicion with care and not as frivolous.
2. Worker shall secure the immediate safety of children and vulnerable adults in church programs by removing any suspected workers while the suspicion is investigated.
3. Worker shall inform the supervising church staff member immediately and provide information requested by supervising church staff member.
4. Worker shall obey the law.
 - a. The law requires all mandated reporters with reasonable cause of maltreatment to report it to state authorities. Nothing in this document shall be understood to amend or change any individual's spiritual, ethical, or legal responsibility to report the reasonable cause of maltreatment to state authorities. Further, no internal process should be understood to delay the reporting of maltreatment to state authorities as required by law.
 - b. Immediately notify state authorities of the reasonable cause of child maltreatment at the Child Abuse Hotline, 1-800-482-5964. Immediately notify state authorities of the reasonable cause of adult maltreatment at the Adult Maltreatment Hotline, 1-800-482-8049. Reports cannot be made anonymously, but information on the identity of the reporter is only accessible by the Arkansas Department of Human Services, the prosecuting attorney, and law enforcement, unless a judge determines after reviewing the report that a reporter may have knowingly made a false report. Failure to report is a crime punishable by large fines and incarceration.
 - c. Those reporting a reasonable cause of maltreatment to FBC Rogers who are mandated reporters shall report their reasonable cause of maltreatment to state

authorities separate from any actions taken by FBC Rogers unless such actions are taken with FBC Rogers involvement. Those reporting a suspicion of maltreatment who are not mandated reporters can also make a report to state authorities separate from the actions taken by the FBC Rogers.

- d. Cooperate fully with law enforcement officials.
5. The supervising church staff member shall inform the Senior Pastor and Executive Pastor of Operations of suspicion or reports of suspicion of maltreatment immediately.

Steps 6-9 are only required if suspicion or reports of such relate to alleged maltreatment by a worker, during an FBC Rogers event, or on FBC Rogers property.

6. In consultation with the Senior Pastor and Executive Pastor of Operations, the supervising church staff member will investigate the suspicion of maltreatment within church programs or events. Said investigation shall be limited to the following:
 - a. The name of the worker observing or receiving disclosure of maltreatment;
 - b. The name, age, and date of birth of the alleged victim;
 - c. The date, time, and location of the initial conversation with the alleged victim, observed maltreatment, or observed signs of maltreatment;
 - d. A summary of the alleged victim's statements without interrogating the alleged victim, if any;
 - e. The name and date of birth of the person accused of maltreatment;
 - f. The relationship of the alleged offender to the alleged victim;
 - g. If the alleged offender is a worker governed by this policy, a summary of the alleged offender's statements, if any;
 - h. If the maltreatment was observed to have occurred at FBC Rogers by an adult, a summary of the witness's statements, if any;
 - i. The relationship of the reporting worker to the alleged victim; and
 - j. A list of all persons with knowledge of the incident, including each person's address, phone number, and other contact information.

Under no circumstances shall any worker governed by this policy interrogate or take photographs of injuries sustained by the child or vulnerable adult.

7. If the alleged offender is not the parent/guardian of the child or vulnerable adult, the supervising church staff member shall notify the parents/guardians and respond to their questions and concerns.
8. Worker shall maintain confidentiality of the investigation when possible and emphasize confidentiality of all involved parties.
9. FBC Rogers shall immediately suspend any worker reasonably suspected of any maltreatment from working with children or vulnerable adults pending completion of all state and internal investigations. In instances where maltreatment is confirmed, FBC Rogers shall immediately dismiss the accused worker from his/her position.

[END OF POLICY]