



FRANCONIA BAPTIST CHURCH

Child Protection Policy

Introduction

It is our goal at Franconia Baptist Church (FBC) to create a safe and loving environment in which the children entrusted to our care are able to learn about the character of God, discover biblical truths and learn what it means to follow Jesus Christ. This handbook is designed to familiarize parents and caregivers with our childcare procedures and our child protection policy. The specifications contained in this handbook apply to official children's ministry occurring during the regularly scheduled meetings of the church. "Children's ministry" refers to classes and programs for children ages newborn through sixth grade. "Leadership" refers to the FBC Pastor, the Elder of the Children's Ministry and the Deaconess of the Children's Ministry. "Volunteers", "workers" and "caregivers" are used interchangeably throughout this document

If you have any questions or comments, please contact the office at office@franconiabaptist.org.

Mission

The Children's Ministry of Franconia Baptist Church exists to glorify God by:

- Supporting and encouraging parents who are primarily responsible for teaching biblical truths to their children (Ephesians 6:4)
- Making the whole counsel of Scriptures known to children with special emphasis on the Gospel (Deuteronomy 6:6-9; Romans 1:16-17)
- Praying for the children and relying on the Holy Spirit to regenerate their hearts through the faithful teaching of His Word (Romans 10:17; Ephesians 2:4-10)
- Living faithfully before the children and modeling for them how Christians are called to respond to God, interact with each other, and with the world around us (Matthew 5:16; I Corinthians 11:1)

Vision

It is our hope that our children, who are precious, being made in the image of God, and yet spiritually dead, are presented with the glory of God in Christ through the Bible and won by saving grace through faith in Jesus. Then, having received new life as young believers, grow and mature in their faith in Christ to the point of willingly and joyfully laying their own lives down for the sake of others, whether children or adults, whether across the street or around the world, so that all people everywhere will come to know and delight in God. This rugged, God-entranced, Bible-saturated, Christ-exalting faith of the child will hopefully fuel a passion for Jesus and a zeal for missions that will, Lord willing, be unquenchable and unending.

Psalm 78:5-7 English Standard Version (ESV)

He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers to teach to their children, that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children, so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandment.

All Children's Ministry volunteers share a particular responsibility for:

- Loving the children as Christ loves them.
- Setting an example of proper Christian conduct in the way we live our lives.
- Ministering to the children in love, patience, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self control.
- Understanding that the care of children is not a right, but a privilege; and this privilege embodies responsibilities to God for ministering to and caring for the children in love, grace, patience, and righteousness.

Child Protection Policy Overview

Our first concern is that the children be safe while they are in our care. To this end we:

- Screen all Children's Ministry workers
 - Train all Children's Ministry workers as needed to update policies and procedures.
- Parents/guardians with questions about childcare training are welcome to attend these classes.
- Utilize child sign-in/out policies for the Children's Ministry
 - Employ scheduling procedures and caregiver/child ratios that optimize safety
 - Equip each room with a first aid kit
 - Educate our workers about recognizing sexual misconduct and child abuse and instruct them to report any known or suspected abuse or misconduct to parents, church officials and to appropriate governmental authorities consistent with applicable laws.
 - Adhere to a healthy child policy for admittance into the Children's Ministry
 - Ensure that workers are not in isolated settings with children

I. Protecting the Children Before They Arrive

Ensuring a safe environment begins long before Sunday morning. Every applicant who wishes to serve in the Children's Ministry is required to go through a screening process and attend childcare training.

Screening Procedure

To ensure safe and quality care, FBC has established several criteria that all caregivers must meet in order to work with our children:

- All caregivers must be members in good standing of FBC for at least three months and affiliated with FBC for at least 3 months.
- All caregivers must be 18 years of age or older. Youth who are at least eight years of age are welcome to assist (subject to the approval and direction of Children's Ministry Leadership on a case by case basis), but they are always in addition to the minimum of two adult caregivers.
- All caregivers must have completed childcare training.
- All caregivers must have completed the caregiver application and been recommended by or in consultation with the elders.
- All reference checks must be satisfactorily completed. Criminal record checks and other appropriate screening checks may be completed, *subject to the discretion of the elders*.
- All completed records of screening procedures will be kept securely, along with the original application.
- Caregivers are to be approved by the Children's Ministry Deaconess in consultation with an elder.
- Safety Leads will be assigned to the 1st Floor and 3rd Floor each Sunday morning.

Training

All caregivers must attend childcare training before they are allowed to work with children. Additional training sessions will be scheduled for existing caregivers to update them on policies and procedures. Parents/guardians with questions about childcare training are welcome to attend these sessions. Ideally, the Children's Ministry Leadership will hold an annual teacher training session.

II. Protecting the Children as They Arrive and Depart

Arrival and Departure Times

Caregivers should be ready to accept children 15 minutes prior to the start of any session, so that parents/guardians have enough time to transition their children before the session begins. Parents/guardians are encouraged to pick up their children immediately after the conclusion of the session. In the event that a child is not picked up within 10 minutes of the end of the session, caregivers will ask a member of the Children's Ministry Leadership to contact the parents/guardians via cell phone or to physically locate them, if necessary.

Identification System

In order to protect the children under our care, each child must be signed in to his/her class by a parent or guardian. Upon signing the child in, the parent/guardian and the child will receive name tags and parent companion tags with matching names and/or numbers. The child must put on the tag immediately and wear it for the duration of the session. The identification system will be used for all childcare classes, and the parent/guardian must **present** their corresponding parent companion tag to sign out their child at the end of the session.

Signing a Child into Children's Ministry

Any parent/guardian who would like his/her child to participate in a Children's Ministry program will sign in the child using Lambslist to the appropriate classroom, nursery or activity when he/she arrives, granting permission for the child to participate in that FBC event or program. This will authorize FBC to secure medical services for the child in the event of an accident or injury if the parents or legal guardians are unavailable. The parent/guardian should also use this opportunity to note any allergies or special needs the child may have through the Lambslist sign-up. For more details on our procedure for caring for children with allergies, please see the "Snack and Food" section below.

Signing a Child out of Children's Ministry

At the end of the session when the parent/guardian comes to pick up the child:

1. The parent/guardian will give the companion tag to the Children's Ministry volunteer.
2. The Children's Ministry volunteer will bring the child to the door and remove the child's name tag before the child exits the room.

Ordinarily, only the parent/guardian who signed in the child and has the appropriate tag will be permitted to retrieve the child. There are two exceptions to this rule:

1. In the event of an emergency that would result in neither parent/guardian being available to sign out the child at the end of a session, the child will be released to the care of a Children's Ministry Deacon/Deaconess.
2. A parent/guardian may make prior arrangements with the Children's Ministry Leadership to allow for someone other than him/herself or his/her spouse to pick up the child at the end of a session. This designated person must turn in the companion tag to the Children's Ministry worker.

III. Protecting the Children While they are in our Care

Two Caregiver Rule

Two qualified, adult caregivers must be present in each classroom at all times. We consider adults to be age 18 and older. The only exception to this rule is when the female caregiver is temporarily away (i.e. taking some children to the restroom). In addition, we will not pair two caregivers with mobility difficulties.

Child-to-Caregiver Ratios

In addition to always having two caregivers present, the following ratios are maintained during the regularly scheduled meetings of the church:

- Children ages birth to 3 years, 1 worker for every 4 children
- Children ages 3 to 5 years, 1 worker for every 8 children
- Children ages 5 years to 3rd grade, 1 worker for every 10 children.

Children's Ministry Leadership should be notified if more caregivers are needed in order to maintain these ratios or the number of children allowed in the room needs to be changed. .

Restroom Procedure

Parents are asked to take their children to the restroom prior to signing them into a class.

Nursery

Only female workers in the nursery will change diapers.

Ages 18 months to start of Kindergarten

In the event that a child needs to use the restroom, only female caregivers will assist younger children to the restroom. The caregiver should wait outside the closed restroom stall door unless the child requires assistance. If no female caregiver is available, one from another childcare room will be found to assist the child. The child and the caregiver should wash their hands with soap and water before returning to the classroom.

Other Classes

For all other classes up to 3rd grade, any child needing to use the restroom will be accompanied by a female caregiver or allowed to enter a private bathroom while the teacher keeps watch on the door. The caregiver will wait outside the closed bathroom door until the children are finished. The children should wash their hands with soap and water and return with the caregiver to their classroom. If there is a bathroom attached to the classroom, children may be dismissed one at a time to use the restroom.

Appropriate Discipline

All Children's Ministry volunteers are responsible for providing a loving, respectful and orderly atmosphere in which children can learn, play and interact with others. This atmosphere should be maintained by preparing beforehand, proactively directing children towards acceptable activities, verbally encouraging positive behavior and correcting or redirecting inappropriate behavior when necessary.

Acceptable means of redirecting inappropriate behavior include correcting the child verbally, withholding a certain privilege or activity for a brief time, or separating a child from the group for a brief time (particularly if his/her behavior is endangering or upsetting other children).

Children's Ministry volunteers and staff members should never yell, spank or hit a child. If behavior is uncontrollable or the child does not respond to the discipline measures above, please call the parent using the number on the back of their nametag or contact a member of Children's Ministry Leadership team or security team to assist you in notifying the parent. For further information regarding discipline, please speak with a member of the Children's Ministry Leadership.

Accidents and First Aid

Safety Leads will be assigned to the 1st Floor and 3rd Floor each Sunday morning. All classrooms are equipped with basic first aid kits. Caregivers should be familiar with their contents and uses. In the event of a life-threatening injury or illness, emergency medical services will be called first and the parents will then be located and informed immediately. Workers will complete an Incident Report Form for all major injuries. Injury forms and first aid kits are located in the cabinets in each childcare room. Caregivers should communicate ANY incidents or injuries directly with parents at pickup. A two way radio is available in the Safety Lead Teacher's classroom if a security team member is needed.

Emergency/ Fire Evacuation Plan

- It is very important that the workers closely follow the instructions given by the Nursery/Children's Ministry Director
- Ministry Lead is responsible for grabbing two-way radio to communicate medical needs
- Each child should be signed in on the roster when their parents check them into their room
 - The child's name should be accounted for if they are checked out before the service ends so that an accurate record is kept of children in the room
 - In the event of an evacuation, the child accounting tool should be taken by the worker to the designated assembly area with the children
- Infants should be secured by the nursery workers for transporting to the designated evacuation area

- Portray a sense of calm, smile, encourage children
- Were any children away from the classroom? Restrooms?
- Have children hold hands and lead to evacuation area
- Help those with special needs
- Sweep room for hiding children (may be frightened by noises)
- Turn off lights and close door when room is confirmed empty
- Keep your children together
 - Use roll sheet to document time/person picking up child from evacuation site
- Consider having children sing to keep them busy
 - Reassure them of the sights and sounds they may experience
- At the evacuation assembly site, determine if anyone needs medical attention.
 - Report this by radio to Safety and Security Team to send first aid until ambulances arrive
- Stay with children until all are accounted for
- After all children are released to parents, turn in roll sheet to Children's Ministry Director
- Once outside, Children's Ministry Deaconess will report to the children's evacuation assembly site to help assist with check out.

Food Related Issues / Snack and Food

For children in younger age groups, church provided snacks and water may be offered during their Service Hour classes. As representatives of Franconia Baptist Church, teachers may provide their own snacks only with the prior approval of Children's Ministry Leadership. Snacks containing nuts will be kept separate from all other snacks.

If a child should not be given a specific snack, the parent should do the following:

- Verbally notify the team leader on duty
- Note the nature of the allergy and how to respond to a reaction in the appropriate field in the information form. Inform caregivers if parents should be notified based on severity of a reaction.

Ongoing Care for Children with Allergies

Parents of children with allergies who attend regularly should talk with a member of Children's Ministry Leadership about how to handle any unexpected allergic reactions. Upon parental request, allergy information about children of members may be posted in the child's classroom. For children not yet in kindergarten, no food except for the church-supplied snacks and water will be permitted in the classrooms. In rare cases, an exception to this policy can be considered. Parents wishing to provide an alternate snack for their child must make prior arrangements with a member of Children's Ministry Leadership to ensure that all known needs of the children in the class will be met.

Nursery-age children will be permitted to bring sippy cups with juice or water to class as long as the cups are clearly labeled with the child's name before they are taken into the classroom. The teachers should also be made aware.

Serving Snack

For children in kindergarten through 3rd grade, teachers will coordinate with parents to ensure that appropriate snacks are served. Allergies will be labeled on child's name tag.

Healthy Child Policy

In order to prevent the spread of communicable diseases among the children, four rules are in place concerning disease. Both parents and caregivers must be familiar with these policies.

1. Children with infectious diseases should be kept home until they are no longer contagious. If a child is exhibiting symptoms of illness such as fever, diarrhea, open skin lesions or blisters (as in chicken pox), or persistent nasal discharge, the parent should keep the child home.
2. Caregivers will use proper hygiene procedures to change diapers, wipe noses and handle blood spills. They will wash their hands with soap and water before and after each of these, and they will use latex gloves if necessary.
3. Hand washing or usage of anti-bacterial hand sanitizer must be a regular habit for both children and caregivers.
4. Toys and equipment will be washed and disinfected regularly Children's Ministry workers. FBC

is dedicated to preventing the spread of disease among the children. Caregivers and the Children's Ministry Leadership have the right to refuse a child on the basis of questionable symptoms.

To prevent the spread of illness, parents are asked to comply with the following guidelines: A child should not participate in a class if and when any of the following exist:

- Fever (Note: Children should be free of a fever for 24 hours after a contagious disease before coming back to church.)
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Any symptom of childhood diseases such as scarlet fever, German measles, mumps, chicken pox, or whooping cough
- Common cold – from onset through one week
- Sore throat
- Croup
- Any unexplained rash
- Any skin infection – boils, ringworm, impetigo, Hand, Foot & Mouth
- Pink eye or other eye infection
- Thick green, yellow or constant nasal discharge
- Any communicable disease

If children appear ill, parents will be notified.

Please inform the church office if your child appears to have contracted an illness while attending an FBC event so that other parents may be notified if necessary.

Neither caregivers nor church staff are allowed to give any medication to any child. Parents of children with special needs are encouraged to contact the Children's Ministry Leadership before signing the child into class.

Universal Precautions

Universal precautions are employed so that all human bodily fluids are treated as if they carried infectious diseases. Universal precautions are applicable in a nursery setting and should be utilized. The method is very effective for protecting both the children and caregivers in the nursery from illness. This is not to imply that any children or caregivers in the nursery are carrying infectious diseases. By treating all bodily fluids as if they are infected, any infections or contaminants can be avoided at all times, providing a safer and healthier environment for caregivers and children alike.

Important Points of Universal Precautions:

- Wash hands before and after any contact with bodily fluids, including wiping noses, changing diapers, cleaning vomit and treating a blood spill.
- Wear disposable gloves when dealing with bodily fluids.
- Treat all soiled linen (i.e. sheets, clothing) as potential infectious agents.
- Remove toys that children have mouthed from the general play area. Set them in the container by the sink and wash or spray with disinfectant spray.
- At the end of the session, disinfect the room with disinfectant spray.

Violation of Policy or Procedures

1. Children's Ministry workers must promptly notify the Children's Ministry Leadership when they or others violate the procedures mandated by this policy.
2. Children's Ministry Leadership who become aware of a violation of the procedures set by this policy are required to take all necessary steps to ensure future compliance with them. In the process of ensuring compliance with this policy, it may become necessary to remove Children's Ministry workers from their positions.

Internal and External Investigation

1. Franconia Baptist Church considers any allegation of abuse or sexual misconduct a serious matter. Any allegation will be immediately addressed in strict adherence to the Sexual Misconduct

- Policy, with full cooperation with and deference to civil authorities, and third party investigators.
2. Children's Ministry volunteers who are the subject of any investigation will be immediately removed from their positions pending completion of the investigation.
 3. FBC will remove volunteers from their ministerial duties with the organization if they are found guilty of abuse or sexual misconduct.

Liability

This childcare policy establishes policies, procedures and conditions that will be followed by the Franconia Baptist Church (FBC) Children's Ministry and the caretakers therein. These standards of conduct describe the expected actions and behaviors of caregivers while administering care. The policies and procedures outlined will be applied at the discretion of FBC. FBC reserves the right to deviate from the policies, procedures and conditions described herein. Furthermore, FBC reserves the right to withdraw or change the policies, procedures and conditions described at any time, for any reason, and without prior notice, based on the best interests of FBC.

The childcare policy is not a contract for care, nor is it intended to create contractual obligations of any kind for FBC. Additionally, this policy is not intended to create any civil liability for FBC or any FBC caregiver. Parents, guardians or other caretakers who choose to avail themselves of the childcare services provided are solely responsible for assuring the well being of their children by notifying FBC caretakers of any food allergies or other special needs any child may require while utilizing the childcare services at FBC.

*Policy modified from Grace Baptist Church of Arlington, Calvary Road Baptist Church and Capitol Hill Baptist Church.
*updated March 2019