

**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH BANGS, TX
CHILD SAFETY POLICY
GUIDELINES FOR NURSERY, PRESCHOOL, CHILDREN, AND YOUTH WORKERS**

Jesus said, "Whoever welcomes a child...welcomes me." (Matthew 18:5). Jesus also said, "If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones..., it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea." (Matthew 18:6) Our Christian faith calls us to nurture and protect our children.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

As a church, we believe that the spiritual, emotional, and physical well being of children is vital. The primary purpose of this policy is to demonstrate our absolute and unwavering commitment to the physical safety and spiritual growth of our children and youth, as well as our teachers responsible for them.

ACTIVITIES ON CHURCH PREMISES COVERED BY THESE POLICIES

All classes and activities on Bangs FBC premises that require church workers to care for/teach/supervise persons less than eighteen years of age shall follow these policies. This will include the Nursery, Pre-school, Children's, and Youth Ministries. For special events outside of regular activities (includes but not limited to retreats, discipleship events, evangelistic events, revivals, etc.) primary caregivers will be FBC workers who have completed the application and screening process. Other paid or volunteer staff may assist with a letter of recommendation from their church.

WORKER SELECTION AND SUPERVISION

The following guidelines are minimum standards that are used as Bangs FBC reviews applicants for positions in Children's and Youth Ministries. Each department may adopt higher standards as necessary.

The first and foremost criteria for volunteers or employees serving in any capacity with our children and youth is that they be called of God to serve. All volunteers will complete an application process and meet with the ministry head of the department where they will be serving along with two members of the nominating committee before being placed into a position of responsibility.

MINIMUM AGE

All primary care workers must be 18 years of age or older. Youth workers age 14 and older may assist adults, but they may not take the place of adult workers.

SIX MONTH RULE

Volunteers are required to be members of Bangs FBC a minimum of 6 months before they may begin working in a supervising capacity with children or youth. Following the interview/screening process, volunteers may serve as an assistant prior to being a member of FBC for six months.

APPLICATION/SCREENING PROCESS

Applicants must complete an application and sign a background check consent form. Background checks will be completed by the Child Safety Policy Director. The Ministry head of the department and two members of the nominating committee will meet with the applicant/volunteer to review and discuss the Application, any areas of concern from the reference and background checks, and the Child Safety Policy guidelines.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION AND INTERVIEWS

All information received in the application process will be kept confidential. This information will be filed in a secured area with limited access afforded only to the Child Safety Policy Director and Church Ministry staff. Department directors will be informed on a need to know basis.

BACKGROUND CHECK

A background check is required for all volunteers/paid workers. Bangs FBC will pay for this check. Information received from this background check is confidential and seen only by the Child Safety Policy Director and ministry staff. All background information will be destroyed within 30 days of receipt as required by law. By agreement with the agency providing these checks, we are not allowed to copy these documents, although an individual has the right to examine their history before it is destroyed. If a person believes their history is inaccurate, they have a right to appeal and we will assist them in that process through the Texas Department of Public Safety. Updating background checks may be required as deemed necessary by church ministry heads.

OBSERVABILITY RULE

There should be at least **two workers present** at all times in a nursery, pre-school, or children's department. When working with the children or youth, workers should avoid one-on-one situations with students. Curtains and shades will be left open for easy observation. No classroom doors will be locked while rooms are in use.

WHEN CAN THE APPLICANT BEGIN WORK?

The applicant may begin work in the nursery, children's or youth ministries when their application and interview is complete and they are working directly with staff/workers that have a completed and approved background check on file. **The applicant may assume the lead caregiver position only when the entire application process has been completed.**

TRAINING FOR WORKERS

Opportunities for training in the prevention and recognition of physical and sexual abuse of children as well as First Aid will be provided by the various ministries of our church. Paid and volunteer workers in the nursery, children, and youth departments are expected to participate in these sessions.

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

Texas Law requires that any person who has cause to believe that a child has been abused or neglected must report to the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services or local law enforcement. That person should immediately advise the Pastor, Youth Minister, Music Minister or Nursery/Children's Director that the report has been made. The person who reported the abuse along with the Pastor, Youth Minister, or Music Minister must fill out the Suspected Incident of Child Abuse form and file it in the church office.

REVIEW

There should be a review of this policy every three years or as needed. The Church must make any revision to this policy.