



**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH**  
TAYLOR

# Children & Youth Safety Policy

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# **CHILDREN & YOUTH SAFETY POLICY**

*Applies to both Bridge Kids [Kinder through 5th], and Bridge Youth [6th through 12th]*

## **1. Volunteer & Staff Requirements (Onboarding)**

Because we love children and are committed to their protection, all staff members and volunteers must complete several required steps before serving. These include annual sexual abuse awareness training, an annual background check, completion of a volunteer orientation with signed acknowledgment of all policies, and a designated shadowing process.

All staff and volunteers are expected to avoid any abusive or grooming behaviors. Grooming refers to the process by which an individual gains a child's trust, and often the trust of a parent, in order to manipulate the child. Any violation of policy must be reported immediately. FBC Taylor maintains a zero-tolerance policy for abuse.

## **2. Reporting & Response**

All staff members and volunteers share responsibility for reporting concerns. Any questionable behavior, suspicion, or policy violation must be reported immediately to an FBC Taylor staff member or directly to the appropriate authorities. No permission is required before making a report.

FBC Taylor reports all suspected abuse or neglect to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. The Abuse Hotline is 1-800-252-5400. While the church encourages a dual-reporting model for support, individuals may report independently at any time.

Any individual accused of misconduct will be immediately suspended during an investigation. If misconduct is confirmed, that individual will be permanently removed from participation in ministry. Failure to report known or suspected violations may also result in removal from service. When in doubt, report.

## **3. Supervision & Safety Standards**

At least two screened adults must be present during all programming. Staff and volunteers must avoid being alone with a child or student. One-on-one conversations should take place in visible, public settings or in the presence of another adult.

Children must never be left unattended. Only authorized individuals, including approved volunteers, staff, and parents are permitted in ministry areas. Any unfamiliar or unauthorized person should be addressed immediately.

## **4. Facility & Environment Safety**

Ministry leaders are responsible for ensuring that all environments are actively monitored. This includes classrooms, hallways, playgrounds, and restrooms. After each event or service, all areas must be checked before leaving.



During playground time, volunteers should actively circulate and pay attention to areas that are less visible. Children should be redirected away from hidden or isolated spaces.

## **5. Behavior & Discipline**

Physical discipline of any kind is strictly prohibited. This includes any form of hitting, grabbing, or forceful correction.

When addressing behavior, volunteers should begin with calm verbal correction and redirection. If behavior continues, the child may be briefly separated from the group in a visible and supervised setting. Continued issues should be referred to a ministry staff member. Staff and volunteers must never yell at, shame, threaten, or humiliate a child. All correction should be handled with patience, clarity, and respect.

## **6. Bathroom Guidelines (General)**

Staff and volunteers must never be alone with a child in a restroom stall. Assistance should be limited to what is necessary and should always occur in a visible and accountable manner.

## **7. Physical & Verbal Conduct**

All interactions with children and students must be respectful, encouraging, and appropriate. Physical contact should be limited to appropriate forms of affection, such as side hugs or pats on the back, and must always occur in observable settings. Physical contact must never be for the emotional benefit of the adult and must never be forced upon a child.

Verbal interactions should build up rather than tear down. Harsh, demeaning, or inappropriate language is not permitted and should be reported if observed.

## **8. Health, Safety & Conduct Policies**

Medication may only be administered with written parental consent. Transportation of minors must follow strict safety guidelines, including avoiding one-child situations and eliminating unnecessary stops. Drivers must not use phones while driving except in emergencies.

The use of alcohol, illegal drugs, or tobacco is prohibited while serving or while on church property. Staff and volunteers must not engage in sexually explicit conversations with minors or possess inappropriate materials. Nudity in the presence of minors is strictly prohibited.

## **9. Parent Partnership**

Parents will be contacted if their child becomes ill, injured, or experiences significant behavioral issues. Parents may observe ministry environments with prior approval from the staff member overseeing that specific program. If they wish to participate beyond observation, they must complete all required volunteer processes



# **APPENDIX A**

## **BRIDGE KIDS PROCEDURES**

*(Kinder through 5th Grade)*

### **1. Check-In Procedures**

Child must be checked in by a parent or guardian upon arrival. At check-in, the child will receive a name tag that must be worn throughout the duration of the program. Any child without a name tag should be reported immediately to a ministry supervisor.

### **2. Check-Out Procedures**

Children may only be released to a parent, legal guardian, or an individual authorized by the parent. It is generally presumed that the individual who drops off the child has authority to pick them up.

If there is ever uncertainty about releasing a child, the volunteer must pause and contact a ministry supervisor before proceeding. The child's name tag should be removed at the time of pickup.

### **3. Restroom Procedures**

If a volunteer needs to check on a child in the restroom, another worker must accompany them. Volunteers should knock and communicate with the child before entering. If assistance is required, only adult female workers may assist unless a parent is present. Only one child should be in a single restroom facility at a time. The door must remain unlocked and slightly open during assistance.

Volunteers should encourage children to do as much as possible independently, offering only minimal help. If a child repeatedly requests restroom use or remains inside for an extended time, the situation should be monitored and reported if necessary.

### **4. Discipline**

Behavior should be addressed calmly and individually whenever possible. Volunteers should avoid correcting children publicly in a way that may cause embarrassment. All discipline must remain visible and within the supervision of other adults. Continued behavioral concerns should be escalated to ministry staff.



# **APPENDIX B**

## **BRIDGE YOUTH PROCEDURES**

*(6th through 12th Grade)*

### **1. Supervision Expectations**

Youth ministry must maintain appropriate adult supervision at all times, with a goal of having at least two adults present. Leaders should avoid isolated one-on-one settings with students.

If a one-on-one conversation is necessary, it should occur in a visible setting or in the presence of another adult.

### **2. Movement & Facility Use**

While students are given more independence, leaders are responsible for maintaining awareness of their location and activity. Hallways, restrooms, and gathering areas should be monitored regularly.

Leaders should be attentive to students who isolate themselves, remain absent for extended periods, or create situations that lack visibility.

### **3. Check-In / Dismissal**

Check-in and dismissal procedures may vary depending on the event. However, leaders are responsible for ensuring that students leave safely and that any concerns regarding departure are addressed with ministry staff.

### **4. Relational Boundaries**

Because youth ministry is relational by nature, leaders must maintain clear and appropriate boundaries at all times. Volunteers should avoid favoritism, exclusive relationships, or any dynamic that could be perceived as secretive or emotionally dependent.

All communication, whether in person or digital, must remain appropriate and transparent. When possible, communication should include parents or occur in group settings.

### **5. Discipline & Conduct**

Behavior should be addressed directly, respectfully, and without harshness. Ongoing or serious concerns should be referred to ministry staff. Shaming, intimidating, or demeaning language is not permitted.



## **APPENDIX C**

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

All staff members and volunteers must confirm that they have completed the required training and onboarding steps. They must also acknowledge that they have read, understand, and agree to follow all policies outlined in this document. Failure to adhere to these policies may result in removal from service or termination.

I acknowledge that I have received and read the FBC Taylor Children & Youth Safety Policy. I understand the importance of these policies in protecting children, students, and vulnerable individuals entrusted to our care.

**I affirm the following:**

- I have completed or will complete all required onboarding steps, including training, background check, and orientation, as directed by FBC Taylor.
- I understand and agree to follow all policies, procedures, and expectations outlined in this document while serving in any ministry role involving children or students.
- I understand that I am responsible for helping maintain a safe and secure environment and that I must report any concerns, suspicions, or policy violations immediately.
- I acknowledge that FBC Taylor maintains a zero-tolerance policy for abuse and misconduct, and that failure to follow these policies may result in removal from service or further action.
- I understand that these policies may be updated or revised at any time, and I agree to adhere to the most current version.

### **VOLUNTEER INFORMATION**

**Full Name (Printed):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

*\*\*This email address will be used to send Ministry Safe Background Check and Abuse Training. It must be unique to you.\*\**

### **AGREEMENT**

By signing below, I confirm that I have read, understand, and agree to abide by the FBC Taylor Children & Youth Safety Policy.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_



# APPENDIX D

## CHILDREN & YOUTH SAFETY POLICY QUICK GUIDE

### Our Heart

We serve because we love kids and students and are committed to providing a safe, caring, and Christ-centered environment for every child.

### Top Safety Priorities

**Two-Adult Rule:** Never be alone with a child or student. Always ensure at least two screened adults are present.

**No 1-on-1 Isolation:** If a conversation is needed, stay in a visible, public space or include another adult. This includes digital conversations.

**Eyes on Kids at All Times:** Never leave children unattended. Actively monitor rooms, hallways, and playground areas.

**When in Doubt, Report:** If you see something concerning, say something immediately to a staff member.

### Check-In & Pick-Up (*Bridge Kids*)

- Every child must wear a name tag during programming.
- Only release children to approved adults.
- If unsure about pickup, pause and contact a staff member.

### Restroom Basics

- Never be alone with a child in a restroom.
- For younger children, use a two-adult approach when assistance is needed.
- Keep doors unlocked and slightly open if assistance is required.

### Behavior & Discipline

- Stay calm, clear, and kind.
- Redirect behavior first, then separate briefly if needed (within sight of others).
- Loop in staff if behavior continues.

*Never: yell, shame, threaten, or use physical discipline.*

### Appropriate Interaction

#### WHAT TO DO

- Encourage and speak positively
- Give side hugs or appropriate touch in public settings
- Be present, attentive, and engaged
- Keep conversations and materials appropriate

#### WHAT NOT TO DO

- Be alone with a child/student
- Show favoritism or build exclusive relationships
- Use harsh, inappropriate, or jokingly demeaning language
- No alcohol, drugs, or tobacco.

### Reporting Abuse or Concerns

*Report immediately to a staff member or directly to authorities.*

**Texas Abuse Hotline:** 1-800-252-5400

