

First Baptist

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF PATCHOGUE YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY

ADOPTED JANUARY 2017

PURPOSE & OBJECTIVE

The First Baptist Church of Patchogue (FBCP) Youth Ministries exists to:

1. reach our young people with the truth of the gospel of our Lord & Savior, Jesus Christ,
2. to help them grow in their knowledge of Christ, and
3. to nurture a burning desire to reach out to others in love with that knowledge.

The purpose for establishing a Youth Protection Policy is to demonstrate our clear commitment to the physical safety and spiritual growth of our youth. FBCP also recognizes the need to have a formal, written policy to:

1. prevent the occurrence and/or appearance of abuse of our youth,
2. protect our adults from false accusations and/or suspicions,
3. protect the reputation and financial and emotional well-being of the entire church.

CORE VALUES & EXPECTATIONS

Parents will take the primary responsibility for discipleship of children. (Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Ephesians 6:1-4)

The primary minister in a young person's life is his/her parents. While it is true that youth ministry is important, its role is not to assume the responsibility God has entrusted to the parents. Therefore, the staff of the Youth Ministry will seek to partner with parents to support them in accomplishing the task God has given them. We will not usurp the parents' role, but come along side to support, encourage and love them in this process.

The Word of God will be the foundation of all that we do. (2 Timothy 4:1-2; James 1:22-24; Psalm 119; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; John 17:17; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 4:12)

The Holy Spirit uses the Bible to transform lives. Without the centrality of Scripture, ministry loses its focus and, as a result, opportunities for lasting spiritual impact are diminished or lost. Therefore, from start to finish, Scripture will remain foundational and permeate all that we do.

The gospel of Christ will be the primary message. (John 14:1-6; Acts 4:12)

Games, events, and craziness of all kinds is great, but only when they work to accomplish the ultimate goal — *saving faith in Christ Jesus*. For this reason, all that we do will be designed with salvation and Christ-likeness in mind. Our goal is not to entertain our young people, but to remain true to the gospel, trusting that God can and will change lives. We will do this by never assuming that our young people already have a sufficient understanding of the gospel and never exhorting the students to obey God's word apart from the gospel.

The church is the body of Christ and the youth ministry will learn and submit to the overall purposes of the church. (1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4:1-16; Colossians 3:15; Titus 2:6-8; 1 Peter 5:1-5)

The youth ministry is not a separate church. Youth ministry exists under the umbrella of Christ as the head of the Church, and the Pastors & Deacons, who shepherd the local church. Accordingly, we will teach our youth what the Bible says about their responsibility to the church as a whole and encourage them to be involved in the local church.

Every young person will be encouraged to pursue accountability relationships where they can learn and grow alongside other believers. (Luke 6:12-13; Matthew 18:15-20;

Philippians 3:17; Hebrews 3:13)

There shouldn't be any "lone ranger" Christians. The Christian life is not to be lived in isolation. God has given believers the Body of Christ as a support system. For this reason, we seek to connect our young people to mature believers for the purpose of discipleship and accountability.

We will speak the truth in love while being patient with all believers in the process of spiritual growth. (1 Corinthians 3:5-8; Ephesians 5:17-24; Philippians 2:12-13; Romans 6:4; 2 Timothy 4:2).

There are differences between justification, sanctification and glorification. In justification God declares sinners righteous by crediting them with the perfect righteousness of Christ. This free gift is received by faith alone. Sanctification is the process by which the Holy Spirit of God works godliness into the hearts and lives of believers. Glorification comes when we see Jesus face to face and are transformed into His very image. Whereas justification and glorification are instantaneous, sanctification is an on-going process that will never be fully completed or fully realized in this life. As with all of us, no young person will ever be without sin on this earth. Therefore, we will seek to be patient with all young people in the process of spiritual growth, believing that "He who began a good work in them will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus (Philippians 1:6 – paraphrased).

VOLUNTEER & STAFF SCREENING PROCEDURES

All FBCP Youth department staff and volunteers are screened using the following procedures:

1. **Application** – All FBCP Youth volunteers must complete the Volunteer Application Form and consent to a Background Check. Volunteers must also be able to provide references upon request. To obtain the application or consent form, please contact the church office or the leader of the ministry in which you are interested.
2. **Interview** – Volunteers may be required to submit to an interview by the Senior Pastor or a member of the Deacon Board. Pastor has the final determination.
3. **Statement of Faith & Church Covenant** – Each volunteer must acknowledge and agree with FBCP's Statement of Faith (What We Believe) and Church Covenant.
4. **Criminal Background Check** – Each volunteer must submit to a Criminal Background Check. Individuals who have been convicted of sexually oriented or sex-related crimes relating to children or minors, misdemeanor or felony, cannot serve in any area of the FBCP Youth Ministries. FBCP will rely on the accuracy of the

Background and Criminal History Check for this information. As a body of believers we firmly believe in restoration of persons who have committed offenses. However, we do not condone or create environments that are harmful to children or put them at risk for injury.

5. **Revocation** – FBCP leadership reserves the right (with a Pastor’s approval) to revoke any volunteer’s ability to serve at FBCP.
6. **Continuing Education** – At the discretion of the Ministry Leader, volunteers are encouraged to attend training sessions annually.

VOLUNTEER ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance is one of the most important obligations and volunteers must abide by the following guidelines:

1. **Arrival Time** – Most FBCP Youth Ministry events begin receiving children as early as half an hour before the event or activity is scheduled to begin. Therefore, volunteers should arrive at least 15 minutes prior to the event at which they are serving.
2. **Departure** – Leaders must remain at the event or activity until the last child, in their respective area, has been picked up by a parent / guardian.
3. **Substitute Requirements** – Volunteers must make every attempt to find a sub from the provided list of FBCP Youth Ministry workers in each ministry. If he or she is unable to find a substitute, the volunteer must then contact the ministry team leader and notify them of their inability to attend and that a substitute has not been appointed.
4. **Notification** – Volunteers must contact their ministry team leader to inform them of their absence and the status of locating a replacement. We request that you call as soon you are aware that you are unable to serve.
5. **Attendance Issues** - In the event that a volunteer is habitually late or fails to appear on the day they are scheduled to serve more than twice in any 3-month period, the Ministry Leader will have a conference with the volunteer to convey the importance of adhering to the standard of excellence and help the volunteer in achieving such standards. If the absences or tardiness continues the volunteer will be removed from the schedule and given the option of being reassigned to another ministry at FBCP.

YOUTH PROTECTION POLICIES

This policy is applicable to all individuals having direct contact with the youth of FBCP, including but not limited to pastors, staff, teachers, volunteers, chaperones, and drivers.

Inappropriate Displays of Affection

- Any form of sexual contact or contact perceived as stimulating
- Intimate kissing
- Initiating full frontal hugs or “bear hugs”
- Massages
- Lying down or sleeping beside youth
- Tickling or wrestling
- Touching or hugging from behind
- Showing affection in isolated/inappropriate areas such as closed rooms, closets, restricted or private rooms
- Comments that relate to physique or body development
- Patting on the thigh, knee or leg
- Inappropriate or lengthy embraces
- Piggyback rides

Appropriate Displays of Affection

Use of appropriate physical contact in a public setting to show support, encouragement and healthy affection toward youth who are receptive to this form of emotional expression is acceptable. However, adults must exercise good judgment and never force any physical contact on any youth. Examples of appropriate displays of affection may include:

- Holding hands during prayers or when a person is upset
- Side-hugs
- Holding hands while walking with small children
- Hand-shakes
- High-fives, hand slaps and fist bumps
- Verbal praise
- Arms around shoulders
- Pats on the shoulder / back

Appropriate Correction

Adults will employ only positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourages and builds self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction. Examples of positive discipline include:

- Reminding youth of behavior expectations by using clear, positive statements
- Redirecting behavior using positive statements
- Using brief supervised separation or time out from the group, when appropriate for the youth's age and development
- Use praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior

Dress Code

Modesty is of supreme importance and all youth participants should consider their outfits prior to attending any event. Clothing with inappropriate messages or images are not permitted. When in doubt, don't wear it. Short shirts or skirts, low tops, etc., are best left at home. **It is imperative that the Ministry Leadership sets the example.**

GENERAL GUIDELINES

Adults involved in FBCP Youth Ministry activities (e.g. MUMS, Youth Group, AWANA, Nursery, etc.) must assume the full burden for setting and maintaining clear and appropriate physical and emotional boundaries in all youth ministry relationships.

1. **Two Adult Rule** – Two or more adults are to be present during any FBCP sponsored youth activities. If one-on-one interactions between adults and youth are unavoidable or absolutely necessary, the interaction should occur in an area that is visible to others and with the knowledge of another adult. No volunteers will have sole responsibility for, or be alone with, any youth. Where application of this rule is not possible or practical (e.g. emergencies) a “roaming adult” should be utilized. Youth activities that cannot meet requirements of the two-adult rule will be cancelled.
2. **Proportional Adult Coverage / Supervision** – It is recommended that there be a minimum of 1 adult per 10 youth for high school level activities, 1 Adult per 7 youth for middle school age activities. Per the two-adult rule, no activity will have less than two adults, preferably one male and one female if mixed gender youth are participating.
3. **Off-site Activities** – It is preferable that one or more of the accompanying adults be parents / guardians of participants.
4. **The Use of Proper Names** – All children must be referred to by their proper / birth names. This is necessary because we track children by the names that are listed in our database. Also, we want children / student to become accustomed to being called by their proper / birth names. In an effort to create a culture of respect, it is necessary that all children refer to volunteers using the title "Mr." or "Ms." and the volunteer's first name.
5. **Restroom Policy** – Parents are encouraged to take their children to the bathroom before they check into any FBCP Youth Ministry event or activity. In the event that a child needs to use the restroom, volunteers should only physically help a child use the restroom if the child is four years or younger. There should always be two volunteers accompanying children ages 10 and under to the bathroom.

In the event that a child is not toilet trained, we encourage parents to change their child's diaper before dropping the child off. In the event that a child's diaper must be changed, volunteers must wear disposable gloves while

changing diapers and must wear new gloves with each diaper change. Volunteers must disinfect the diaper-changing area after each change. Volunteers must wash their hands after the diaper change.

6. **Special Needs Children** – FBCP recognizes that all children and youth are precious in God’s sight and that He is no respecter of persons. All volunteers will be encouraged to be sensitive and attentive to any special needs children. Methods and strategies for serving such youth in a manner most beneficial to them (while maintaining the overall classroom) will be solicited from the parent or guardian upon their revelation of this “special needs” designation. Volunteers will not deride youth by publicly referring to them as such.
7. **Room Clean-up Policy** – Ensure that all material and debris is removed from the classroom after the room is used. Toys and other items that are repeatedly used by children must be disinfected regularly.
8. **Check In and Check Out Policy** – Because safety is one of our priorities and children in different age groups have varying needs, our check in and checkout policies for children and students differ by age group.

Ages 2-10 Years Old – Check In and Out Policy: Children will be checked in at the appropriate classroom; two security badges will be given: one for the child and one for the parent. No child will be released without the parent first showing their security badge. In the event a parent or guardian has lost their badge, they must show a valid State I.D. with picture to obtain the child. The FBCP Youth Ministry volunteer must then compare the name on the I.D. to the name in the registration system before the child is released.

First time visitors will be directed to the FBCP Youth Ministry Check In station. Parents would be assisted through the process of registering their child. Any child attending any FBCP event or activity must be registered for safety and security purposes.

Ages 11-17 Years Old

All tweens and teens must check into their appropriate classroom. Many students who attend FBCP come without a parent / guardian; therefore, it is not necessary for parents to check students in; however, each student attending must check in and out.

9. **Class Size Ratio**

Infants & Toddlers (under 2 years old)	1 Adult : 2 Infants
Children Ages 2-6	1 Adult : 5 Children
Children Ages 7-10	1 Adult : 10 Children
Tweens & Teens Ages 11-17	1 Adult : 12 Tweens / Teens

10. **Parent Notification Policy**

A parent / guardian should be notified under the following circumstances:

- A parent / guardian should be called by the Ministry Leader if the child is completely inconsolable (after ten minutes of care) or a danger to her / himself or other children.
- A parent / guardian should be called by the Ministry Leader if there is an emergency situation concerning the child.
- A parent / guardian should be called by the Ministry Leader in the event that a child's behavior becomes totally disruptive and the child refuses to cooperate. We do not promote inhibiting any child from participating in FBCP activities, however, there are instances where a child's behavior is so out of control that it disrupts learning for the entire group / classroom. In such instances, parents are welcomed to sit in class with their child, as we partner with them to teach their child boundaries.
- In the event that a parent needs to be contacted during service, a special announcement will be made.

11. **Transport**

All youth must ride in vehicles driven by authorized adults. Adult drivers must be on the approved van drivers list.

The driver:

- must never be alone in a vehicle with a youth person other than his / her own child. Therefore, no fewer than three persons, one of them an adult, may occupy a vehicle traveling to / from an activity.

- must ensure vehicles are not filled beyond capacity for their use, that seat belts are always secured, and that occupants behave.
- must understand emergency contact procedures and maintain contact with the Ministry Leader in charge by cell phone, two way radios, or texting.

12. **Overnight Events**

Care needs to be taken to ensure that there is a clean, safe environment provided for sleeping, showering, bathing, dressing and all other aspects of being away for a period of time. Adults must always respect the privacy of youth and each other. Likewise youth must respect the privacy of adults and each other.

When a Youth Ministry group includes both males and females, and stays overnight, both male and female adults must be present. The sleeping areas and access to bathroom facilities should be segregated between males and females. Every sleeping unit (hotel room, dorm room, cabin, tent, etc.) should have either two adults of the same gender as the youth, or no adults assigned to it. In the rarest of cases, when only one adult is available, the sleeping unit must have at least two youth of the same gender as the adult. Adults are not allowed to share a bed with a youth unless it is their own child. If absolutely necessary, beds may be shared by youth of the same gender. If separate bathroom facilities are not available, times for male and female and youth / adults use, should be scheduled and posted prominently. When one room is used for sleeping, youth and adults of the opposite gender will sleep an appropriate distance apart as determined by the adult in charge. Both youth and adults shall wear appropriate sleeping apparel.

In booking hotel rooms, reservations should be made, if possible, with all rooms on the same floor or location in the hotel. Adjacent rooms allow for enhanced supervision and safety. No youth should be allowed to leave the premises without authorized and appropriate adult supervision. Curfews must be established and adhered to by all participants.

13. **Exceptional Situations** – Only under the rarest and most unusual circumstances should an adult be alone in a car, room, or other accommodation with a youth. This might include a case where a youth is ill or in a bona fide medical emergency. In this case, the adult should make every effort to enlist the help of another youth or adult to be present and assist. Note however, the welfare of

the youth takes precedence and whatever action is necessary and appropriate must be taken.

If there is a unique need for an adult to talk with a youth in private, the adult should choose a quiet place that is in plain, public view. Examples of this may include open areas around the church (courtyards or hotel lobbies if on a trip), short walks down a sidewalk, a restaurant or other location where people are present in the area.

Adults need to acknowledge that there is potential for sexual abuse and/or harassment by outside parties and must take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure the safety and well-being of all youth.

14. **Counseling**

Bear in mind, Youth Ministry volunteers are not professional counselors. Consequently, this occasionally poses a significant boundary issue when working with young people. As they begin to trust the Youth Ministry volunteers, they will begin to confide in them. Problems arise when a young person confides in a volunteer, expecting them to maintain confidentiality. Unfortunately, not all counseling issues can remain confidential. Youth Ministry volunteers are required to report immediately to the Ministry Leader and Pastor(s) if:

- a young person is being abused sexually
- a young person is threatening to hurt him/herself (suicide, cutting, etc.)
- a young person is threatening to hurt someone else (homicide, revenge, etc.)
- a young person reveals a personal crisis/endangerment (pregnancy, drug abuse addictions, criminal activity, etc.).

If any of these situations arise, the Ministry Leader will take the appropriate course of action, including, but not limited to, the consulting of authorities and / or parents or pursuing professional counseling options. The Pastor(s) is available to give counsel and guidance on any issues or concerns that arise. Because we are dealing with minors, we will use the utmost discretion as to whom we involve in various issues. We desire to build trust with our young people, but not to the extent of keeping parents excluded from their child's life.

15. **Forms & Release / Care of Documents**

All information will be treated in a confidential manner, except as required by legal reporting requirements or legal process. Documents will be kept in secure storage available only to those charged in this policy with the responsibilities requiring direct access to information within their purview. This secure storage will house all Screening Forms, Applications, Volunteer Acknowledgement Forms and any other sensitive information related to youth protection.

Incident Reports, Parental Consent / Permission Slips, will be filed, maintained and secured in the church office. These forms are available for download from the church website (fbcpatchogue.com/forms).

16. **Injury & First Aid**

Volunteers may only administer band aids and ice packs. If a youth participant is injured while under our supervision, the volunteer in charge will immediately notify the Ministry Leader or a Pastor. The Ministry Leader in charge or a Pastor will be responsible for notifying the youth's parents. All injuries must be reported no matter how insignificant or minor they may seem. The volunteer in charge will complete an Incident Report as soon as possible.

17. **Reporting**

Any person, adult or youth, must be ready to safeguard and protect the trust and safety of children and youth. Anyone who has "reason to believe" or evidence that a child / youth is a victim of abuse or neglect has a duty to report. This duty to report is not limited to events or activities at FBCP or under our supervision. A failure to report can be considered a criminal offense and potentially subject to civil liability.

FBCP understands that appropriate government agencies must respond and investigate reports of abuse/neglect of a child/youth to the New York Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS). FBCP will at all times fully cooperate with such governmental agencies, and in no way attempt to interfere in or obstruct such agencies or their investigations.

If anyone is unsure whether an incident or condition should be reported, they should discuss the circumstances with the Ministry Leader, who will then communicate with the Pastor(s) and the Deacon Board.