

Staff Handbook and Protection Policies First Baptist Church, Muncie

Edited and Adopted May 2023

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Prologue

First Baptist Church's *Constitution and Bylaws* are the primary authority identifying the offices of the church and how the church will be governed on a *general* basis. The *Constitution and Bylaws* are edited and adopted by a congregational vote and upheld by all members of the church.

This *Staff Handbook and Protection Policies* is a separate document adopted, maintained, and enforced by the Church Coordination Team (CCT). Unlike the *Constitution and Bylaws*, the protection policies below outline *specific* action steps to be taken by staff and the CCT to ensure that all the church's ministries are safe and ethical.

These policies were drafted by Kendall Ellis (Co-Pastor) in Fall 2022 & Spring 2023. They were adopted by the Church Coordination Team during a monthly CCT Meeting on Monday, May 15, 2023. Any revisions or additions made to these protection policies will need to be proposed to the CCT and passed in a vote during one of CCT's regularly scheduled monthly meetings.

Anti-Harassment Policy for Staff

Section A. Purpose and Responsibility

All professional and support staff of First Baptist Church, Muncie have the right to work in an environment free from all forms of illegal discrimination and conduct which can be considered harassing, coercive, or disruptive, including sexual harassment and racial discrimination. The position of the church is that harassment and discrimination are forms of misconduct that undermine the integrity of the employment relationship. It is the responsibility of the Church Coordination Team and each staff member to ensure full compliance with this policy.

Section B. Definitions

Sexual harassment is when unwanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal and physical conduct of a sexual nature occur. Examples of sexual harassment include when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment;
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Racial harassment is when racial slurs, offensive or derogatory remarks about a person's race or color, the display of racially-offensive symbols, or discriminatory work conditions occur due to one's racial identity or skin color. Examples of racial harassment include when:

1. Hostile or harassing comments—such as macroaggressions or microaggressions—which are spoken directly to or about any staff member of color;
2. discriminatory staffing decisions—such as hiring, promoting, pay rates, or termination—are made outside of FBCM's established theological convictions.
3. a staff member is treated unfavorably because they are married to (or associated with) a person of a certain race or color.

Section C. Anti-Harassment Statement

First Baptist Church, Muncie condemns all forms of harassment. No professional or support staff member—paid or unpaid—shall be subject to unsolicited and unwelcome sexual overtures or conduct, either verbal or physical. Racism and racial discrimination will not be tolerated. Such behavior may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Section D. Complaints Procedure

In the event that harassment has been alleged at First Baptist Church, the following steps should be taken to report and investigate the complaint:

1. Any staff member who experienced or witnessed harassment is invited to file a complaint. Complaints can be brought directly to any supervisory personnel or to the Church Coordination Team.
2. Supervisory personnel receiving a complaint of harassment shall immediately contact the Church Coordination Team.
3. After notification of the staff member's complaint, an investigation will be initiated immediately by the Church Coordination Team. At the discretion of the Church Coordination Team or by request from an employee, the church may hire an independent investigator.
4. During the investigation, the Church Coordination Team will make appropriate accommodations and care plans to promote healing and a safe environment for the staff member who brought the complaint.
5. After the investigation has been completed, a determination will be made regarding the resolution of the complaint by the Church Coordination Team.
6. The church will cooperate fully with law enforcement officials in a criminal investigation.

Section E. Non-Retaliation

This policy prohibits retaliation against employees who bring, in good faith, harassment charges or assist in the investigation of such charges. Any such employee shall not be adversely affected in terms and conditions of employment, nor discriminated against or discharged because of such activity.

Staff Holidays & Leave Policies

Section A. Purpose

First Baptist Church affirms Scripture's command to honor the sabbath. As such, the church commits to providing professional staff with the following paid holidays and personal leave opportunities.

Section B. Holidays

Church offices will be closed and professional staff will receive paid time off for federal holidays and select religious holidays which *do not fall on a Sunday*. In the years that the below holidays fall on Sundays, First Baptist will have worship as usual and the professional staff will be allowed to observe the holiday the following Monday. Paid holidays are as follows:

1. New Years Day (January)
2. MLK, Jr. Day (January)
3. Easter Monday
4. Memorial Day (May)
5. Juneteenth (June 19)
6. Independence Day (July 4)
7. Labor Day (September)
8. Veterans Day (November)
9. Thanksgiving (November)
10. Christmas (December 25)

Section C. Parental Leave

All professional employees—regardless of gender—will receive 12 consecutive weeks of paid parental leave in the event of childbirth and/or adoption. This parental leave is a benefit given by the church and should be counted separately from sick leave and/or vacation days.

If a family has more than one adult employed by FBCM, both adults will have 12 weeks of family leave. Both adults may have 8 weeks of leave simultaneously and the remaining four weeks may be taken by each person non-simultaneously.

During parental leave, the Church Coordination Team will appoint an interim or volunteer to handle the job duties during the professional staff's absence.

Employees who need to extend their leave beyond 12 weeks of parental leave should discuss this with the Church Coordination Team, who will have the authority to determine how much additional leave and under what conditions can be allotted.

Section D. Sick Leave and Family Leave

Sick leave will apply only in the case of illness or injury of the professional staff or a member of their immediate family (spouse, child, or parent). All professional staff will receive sick leave benefits as follows:

1. Employees will accrue sick leave at the rate of 4 hours per month up to a total of six days per year.
2. Unused sick leave may be accumulated from one year to the next up to a total of fifteen days.
3. To use sick leave, professional staff will communicate regarding their illness and the number of sick days being taken to the Pastor and the Moderator, who will record these dates in the appropriate file.
4. After maximum illness benefits have been paid, accrued vacation time may be applied.
5. In the event of a serious illness or injury that consumes all accrued sick leave and vacation time, employees may be granted additional sick leave at the discretion of the Church Coordination Team. The CCT can require submission of a doctor's statement if they feel it is necessary.
6. Unused sick leave will have no cash benefit at termination of employment.

Section E. Vacation

All professional staff will receive four weeks (28 days) of paid vacation per year, to be used within the following guidelines:

1. Of the 28 days, only four days can be used to miss Sunday worship.
2. When professional staff plan to miss Sunday worship or other previously scheduled church programs, it is their responsibility to arrange volunteers and/or supply preachers to lead worship in their absence.
3. To use vacation days, professional staff will communicate the dates and number of days being taken to the Pastor and the Moderator, who will record these dates in the appropriate file.
4. In accordance with the pastoral duties outlined in Bylaw Article III, Section B, Number 5, and to strongly encourage *all Professional Staff* to use their vacation time each year, no unused vacation may be carried over from one year to the next without special permission from the CCT.
5. Unused vacation days will have no cash benefit at termination.

Preventing and Responding to Clergy Sexual Abuse

Section A. Definitions

Clergy Sexual Abuse happens when a person with religious authority uses their role, position, and power to sexually harass, exploit or engage in sexual activity with a minor, vulnerable adult, or person in their care. Clergy Sexual Abuse is about the misuse of power by the perpetrator and the inability of the victim to provide consent because of that power differential. Even if an individual nominally agrees to some form of sexual activity, contact, or relationship, that agreement does not constitute consent due to the unequal power dynamics between the clergy and the individual.

This sexual activity can include, but is not limited to: sexualizing conversations (via telephone, social media, text, or email); asking for or transmitting unwanted sexual images / texts; touching or hugging people who do not want to be touched; pushing for sexual involvement; creating hostility when the person being targeted attempts to set boundaries; using sexual language and jokes; pressing or rubbing against a person; invading personal space; touching sexual organs (over or under clothing); kissing; oral sex; masturbation; intercourse; and/or rape.

Section B. Prevention of Clergy Sexual Abuse

The following steps should be taken by the church to prevent clergy sexual abuse:

1. During all pastoral searches, the Pastoral Search Team will conduct extensive screening of applicants. This screening should include running a background check; diligent follow-up with all references; review of any ministerial databases held at the denominational level; and interview questions about any sexual impropriety or views regarding clergy sexual misconduct.
2. Upon hiring, new ministers should attend a training session regarding clergy sexual abuse and sign a covenant of clergy sexual ethics.
3. Clergypersons will follow appropriate boundaries within pastoral counseling and home visits, including but not limited to: having two clergy present when meeting with an individual, meeting one-on-one with an individual in a public or generally visible space (such as a room with a window), or meeting one-on-one with an individual with the door open.
4. All Church Coordination Team members will attend a training session regarding clergy sexual abuse within the first year of their term. This training should be given by a third party organization who specializes in this area.
5. The Church Coordination Team will provide accountability to all ministers through periodic evaluations (as outlined in Bylaws Article IV, Section D) and re-running background checks every three years.

6. All clergypersons will be required to report to the Church Coordination Team within 24 hours if they have been interviewed by police, arrested, or charged with any crime related to sexual abuse, sexual assault, or rape. They shall also report any allegation of sexual abuse made about them in any other venue (e.g. civil lawsuit, report to a former employer, etc.)

Section C. Responding to Clergy Sexual Abuse

The church's first responsibility following an allegation of clergy sexual abuse is to ensure the physical, emotional, and spiritual safety of the person being abused. After safety is confirmed, the following steps should be taken by the church to respond to clergy sexual abuse:

1. All disclosures of clergy abuse should be responded to as plausible until or unless found otherwise, upon following all required procedures.
2. All allegations of clergy abuse will follow local mandatory reporting requirements, such as child abuse or elder abuse.
3. All allegations of clergy abuse will be brought immediately to the Church Coordination Team.
4. The Church Coordination Team will designate two representatives to meet with the complainant. During this meeting, the Church Coordination Team representatives will inform the complainant of the church response process and inquire if they desire to continue with the report and response process. With an affirmative response, the Church Coordination Team representatives will return to the Church Coordination Team to continue to step 4. With a negative response, the allegation should be noted and stored by the Clerk in an appropriate file for future reference, if necessary.
5. The Church Coordination Team will notify the accused clergyperson of the allegation and place the clergy on paid leave or appropriately restrictive duty for the duration of the investigation. A clergyperson on leave will not be permitted to work in any capacity at or behalf of the church. A clergyperson on restrictive duty may be allowed to work on administrative tasks or worship planning, but they will not be permitted to do home visits, pastoral counseling, preaching, teaching, working alongside children or youth ministries, or any other relational ministry. In either case, the reported clergy will be forbidden to contact or communicate with the victim in any way or form.
6. The Church Coordination Team can reassign ministerial tasks to other staff and CCT members as needed. The Church Coordination Team can also make a recommendation to the congregation to hire an Interim Pastor during this time.
7. The Church Coordination Team will contract with an independent, third-party

organization to investigate and determine the facts of the alleged abuse.

8. The Moderator, Clerk, and At-Large Representative will work together to communicate to the congregation updates regarding the clergy abuse allegation, adjusted ministerial responsibilities, and investigation. During this communication, the victim's identity and particulars of the abuse should not be disclosed as a matter of privacy and protection during the ongoing investigation.
9. If they have not yet done so, the Moderator and Clerk may also wish to communicate the abuse disclosure to other relevant parties, such as the church's Regional Minister of the American Baptist Churches of Indiana & Kentucky, insurance carriers, and / or legal counsel.
10. The Member Care Coordinator will work alongside the Deacon Chair to ensure that the complainant and their family, along with the minister and their family, have adequate emotional and spiritual support throughout the process.
11. Once the investigation is completed, the third-party organization will submit a report of their findings to the Church Coordination Team. The investigation report should indicate the credibility of the allegation, establish the basic facts of the abuse, and make suggestions for employment and/or disciplinary actions.
12. The Church Coordination Team will call a special meeting to review the investigation report and use it to make a plan for addressing the disclosed abuse.
13. The Church Coordination Team will follow-through with their plan of action, including but not limited to: notifying the victim of the investigation's results, notifying the clergy person of the investigation's results and subsequent consequences, and communicating with the congregation at-large.

Minor & Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy

Section A. Purpose of Minor & Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy

First Baptist Church, Muncie is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for those participating in our ministry activities—children, youth, and vulnerable adults. We also seek to minimize any vulnerability to unwarranted accusations of improper behavior that our organization, staff, and volunteers may experience as they fulfill their ministerial duties. To fulfill these commitments as fully as possible, our congregation has adopted the following procedures.

Section B. Definitions

This policy is written to protect the following vulnerable populations:

- **Minor** – Any person between the ages of birth and 18 years. A minor may include any 18-year-old still enrolled in high school.
- **Child or Children** – Any minor from birth through fifth grade.
- **Youth** – Any minor from sixth through twelfth grade. A youth may include any 18-year-old still enrolled in high school.
- **Vulnerable Adult** – A person 18 years of age or older who is unable to legally consent, comprehend the nature of certain actions, or susceptible to coercion or abuse. This may include individuals who are mentally or physically disabled and the elderly.

Section C. Prevention of Minor & Vulnerable Adult Abuse

The following preventative measures will be implemented to prevent abuse from occurring within the church's ministries with minors and vulnerable adults:

1. All ministry volunteer candidates must be regularly involved in the congregation for six months or more before they will be considered for any position involving contact with children, youth, or vulnerable adults.
2. Prior to working with minors or vulnerable adults, all new volunteers and staff will be interviewed, background checked, and trained by the appropriate ministry coordinator. Training should include how to define and identify grooming processes of abusers, how to report suspected abuse, best supervision practices, and review of church-specific volunteer expectations.
3. All volunteer and staff background checks will expire after three years. It is the responsibility of the Moderator to make sure staff background checks are updated. It is the responsibility of the Children and Youth Ministry Coordinators to ensure that volunteers working with minors have updated background checks. One month prior to a background check expiring, the appropriate ministry coordinator should notify the volunteer of the requirement to re-run a background check. Should the volunteer or staff member desire to continue serving in ministry with minors or vulnerable adults, the ministry coordinator overseeing the volunteer will run and file a new background check.

4. Children's Ministry programs will abide by the following check-in procedures to account for all the children in the church's care:
 - a. All ministry staff and volunteers should arrive at least 10 minutes before a scheduled program. If a ministry staff or volunteer finds themselves alone in a classroom, it is their responsibility to immediately call the appropriate ministry coordinator to inform them that a second adult supervisor has not yet arrived.
 - b. Upon arriving at the church, parents / guardians will use the tablets available at one of the two "Welcome Stations" to check-in their children. Once checked-in, the iPad will print one name tag for each child, which will designate their assigned class and authorized pick-up person(s). Parents / guardians will place the appropriate name tag on each of their children
 - c. Parents / guardians will walk their child(ren) to their designated class(es).
 - d. Ministry staff and volunteers will welcome and receive children as they arrive. All ministry staff and volunteers are expected to remain in their classrooms until all the children in their care have been picked up by an authorized person. No children should be released to find their parents or wait unattended for transportation.

5. All children, youth, and vulnerable adult ministries should follow the following supervision rules:
 - a. **Two Adult Rule** – At least two screened adults must be present at every program involving minors or vulnerable adults. This includes each classroom or other enclosed area. One or more of these adults must be 21 years of age or older. The Two Adult Rule must be followed at all times for activities or events involving children under the age of five.
 - b. **Rule of Three** – In limited circumstances, when the Two Adult Rule cannot be implemented, at least three individuals must be present, with at least one being a screened adult staff or volunteer.
 - c. **Minor to Adult Ratio** – For larger groups, the number of adult supervisors must be increased in accordance with Indiana's supervision ratio requirements for licensed child care centers. As of 2022, the ratio requirements are as follows:
 - i. 4 Infants per 1 Supervisor
 - ii. 5 Toddlers (Ages 2 and 3) per 1 Supervisor
 - iii. 12 Preschoolers (Ages 4 and 5) per 1 Supervisor
 - iv. 20 Minors (1st Grade & Above) per 1 Supervisor
 - d. **Mentoring Youth & Vulnerable Adults** – While ministry staff and volunteers should avoid being alone with a minor or vulnerable adult, some limited exceptions may be permitted for spiritual counseling or mentoring of a youth student. Any one-on-one mentoring interaction must take place in a location where the adult mentor and youth are both visible to others. All one-on-one mentoring interactions must be planned in advance, approved by the appropriate ministry coordinator, and have

written approval from parents / guardians.

6. The Children's Ministry should abide by the following bathroom procedures:
 - a. **Children 6 years or older** – At least one adult should take children to the restroom. The adult should check to make sure the facility is safe and then wait outside the restroom for the children. If assistance is required, the presence of a second adult escort is required.
 - b. **Children 5 years or younger** – Young children can be assisted in the restroom as needed. Leave the bathroom door ajar with a second adult nearby for additional accountability. Never touch the private areas of a child, youth, or vulnerable adult except when necessary, as in the case of changing a diaper.
7. Ministry staff and volunteers are never to spank, hit, grab, shake, or otherwise physically discipline anyone. Physical restraint should only be used in a situation where it is reasonably necessary to prevent an individual from physically harming themselves or another individual.
8. Ministry staff and volunteers should avoid the appearance of impropriety—such as sitting older children on their lap, kissing, or prolonged or unwanted front hugs, especially those initiated by the ministry staff or volunteer himself or herself.
9. In the event of injury or illness, ministry staff and volunteers will administer basic first aid and notify emergency personnel and/or parents / guardians according to their best judgment.

Section D. Mandatory Reporting of Suspected Abuse

Indiana is a mandatory reporting state. This means that anyone who suspects a minor or vulnerable adult has been neglected or abused must make a report in accordance with state law. The following guidelines explain how ministry staff and volunteers report suspected neglect or abuse.

1. Ministry staff and volunteers who become aware of or have reason to suspect that a child or youth has been abused or neglected must immediately inform the appropriate ministry coordinator (unless the ministry coordinator is the suspected perpetrator).
2. In emergency situations where there is strong evidence that the minor or vulnerable adult is in immediate danger, the ministry coordinator will call the police while the ministry staff and volunteers continue providing for the person in their care.
3. Together with the ministry coordinator, the ministry staff or volunteer who suspects abuse will file a report with the state within 24 hours of the incident.
 - a. Abuse of minors can be reported by calling the Indiana Department of Child Services' Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline (1-800-800-5556).
 - b. Abuse of vulnerable adults can be reported by calling the Indiana

Department of Adult Protective Services Hotline (1-800-992-6978).

- c. The hotlines are available 24 hours / day, seven days a week, including weekends and holidays. For the report, the ministry staff or volunteer will need to know who was involved, what occurred, when and where it occurred, the extent of the injuries sustained, and any other relevant information (such as names, addresses, and phone numbers for the family involved).
 - d. The person making the report can choose to do so anonymously, if preferred.
4. After reporting to the appropriate Indiana State Department, the appropriate ministry coordinator will record and file a summary of the incident, including the date, when a report was made, and any follow-up plans.
 5. Should the perpetrator of suspected abuse be a ministry staff or volunteer, the allegation must also be brought to the Church Coordination Council. The Church Coordination Team will immediately suspend the staff or volunteer from their position while an investigation is performed by a third party organization.

Section D. Violation of Policy

Ministry staff and volunteers must promptly notify their ministry coordinator when they or others violate the procedures outlined in this minor and vulnerable adult policy. Ministry coordinators, with the support of the Church Coordination Team, are required to make notes of each violation and take the necessary steps to correct the issue. In the event that a ministry staff or volunteer has violated the protection policy four times, the Church Coordination Team will remove them from their position.