

# FBC Kyle Children's Ministry Handbook



This handbook is thorough, but cannot possibly be all-inclusive. If questions or circumstances arise that are not addressed within this handbook, please contact your ministry leader.

**Kyle First Baptist Church**

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**Working Copy**

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# SECTION I - INTRODUCTION

## **Welcome**

Welcome to the Children's Ministry Team! FBC Kyle could not exist without the many people who give of their time in service to God and He has placed each of you here in children's ministry with the potential to change lives! We are thrilled you are joining with us to help families grow closer to Jesus. The contribution you will make is crucial to the mission of our church. You can play an instrumental role in kids and parents finding their way to God. God is honored by your commitment and we're confident he's going to do an amazing work through you!

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this handbook is to provide a general overview of procedures and guidelines that First Baptist Church in Kyle has established for its volunteers. Please read through it carefully. The handbook should serve as a guide for you as you begin or continue your service at the church. However, it's obviously not possible to anticipate all situations that could arise in ministry or provide information that answers every possible question. As a result, the church reserves the right to modify, supplement, rescind, or revise any policy or provision, with or without notice, as necessary or appropriate. However, at all times, the church will comply with all applicable laws. Nothing in this handbook creates a contract of employment. Both traditionally and biblically, churches have long relied on unpaid workers to fulfill their calls to service—not because of reward or remuneration—but out of love and obedience in personal relationship to God. Of course, different ministry roles require different skills and personality types, and neither the church nor the servant can always predict whether things will be a good fit. Therefore, while we hope that your service is both long-term and rewarding, either you or the church can terminate this relationship at any time. Finally, it's important that you read and understand the contents of this handbook. If you have any questions or need additional information, please talk with your designated ministry supervisor. If your supervisor doesn't know the answers, he or she will find the answers and get back to you in a timely manner.

## **Mission Statement**

Partnering with families to encourage and equip their children to KNOW God, LOVE God, and SHARE His Love with others.

## **Vision Statement**

Surrounding families with the love of God by nurturing and teaching their children from infancy through adolescence, encouraging them to mature in their relationship with Jesus, and equipping them to share the love of Christ with the world around them.

## Core Beliefs

- We believe the Bible is the perfect and inspired word of God. (2 Timothy 3:15-17)
- We believe there is one God and He is the creator of all. (Ephesians 4:4-6, Mark 12:29, Psalms 100:3)
- We believe that parents are the primary spiritual leaders of their homes. (Deuteronomy 11:19, Proverbs 22:6)
- We believe all children should be given the opportunity to hear the good news of Christ in a way that is relevant and receivable to them in an environment that is safe and secure. (2 Timothy 2:5, Ephesians 3:12, Proverbs 18:10)
- We believe that children should be encouraged to mature in their relationship with Christ. (Mark 12:29-31, Proverbs 4:13, Ephesians 4:12-14)
- We believe that children should be given the opportunity to serve and share within the body of Christ and in their community. (2 Timothy 4:12, 1 John 4:11, Matthew 28:19)

## Children's Ministry Values

The Children's Ministry also has its own set of values.

**CHILDREN ARE IMPORTANT** – We know that children matter to God. All leaders and servers working in children's ministry know that God loves each and every child; therefore, each child matters to them.

**SAFE** – We believe that spiritual growth happens best in an atmosphere of emotional and physical safety. We are committed to exceptional standards in these areas. (See additional section on safety policies and procedures.)

**TRUTH-BASED** – We believe that God's word is foundational and it is our heart to train every child to use it as their guide and authority in everything.

**CHILD-CENTERED** – Adults working with children should strive to gain a child's perspective. Whether adults are working with two year olds or fifth graders, their perspective needs to be age specific. By understanding the world in which children live, adults are able to relate to whom they are ministering. Thus FBC Kyle strives to make sure that each classroom area is designed and decorated to appeal to its respective age level. In addition, all children are to be accepted, not alienated.

**RELATIONAL** – We believe that life change happens best in the context of relationship. Passionate adults who exhibit Christ to children, their families, and each other will show kids how to do the same and impact generations to come. In addition, we will respect the privacy of the children and their families (or other servers) by holding in confidence any information obtained in the course of serving.

**ADVENTUROUS** – We believe that children should have fun! This means that as adults, we must be creative, innovative, and adventurous in reaching them and holding their attention. We believe that children are more receptive to the lessons when they are presented in a creative way. And we know that when children are having fun, they are actively engaged in the lesson; when they are actively engaged in the lesson, they are learning; and when they are learning, they are growing.

## **Open Door Policy**

FBC Kyle encourages all volunteers to provide input and suggestions concerning the ministry area in which they serve, as well as the overall operation and programs of the church. Your input and suggestions will likely receive the timeliest attention and action if you initially bring your comments to the individual you report to—your supervisor/team leader. This first step of providing input is especially vital in situations where you have a problem with your supervisor/team leader. However, if for some reason that results in inaction or you don't receive a response, you should approach any church leader to discuss your concern or suggestion. This open door policy is important to increasing the quality of the church's ministries, as well as for correcting problems that may exist in processes or relationships within areas of ministry. The church welcomes all input by volunteers, who should sense the freedom to voice any comments or concerns without fear of retribution or reprisal. We know it can seem difficult to initiate such conversations, but Jesus told us directly (see, for example, Matthew 18:15) that we should take the initiative to resolve such things.

## **General Guidelines**

As a volunteer serving FBC Kyle and reaching out to those beyond the church, you agree to seek a careful, exemplary Christian lifestyle to encourage other believers and strengthen the church.

## SECTION II – ORIENTATION

### **Invitation & Placement**

First Baptist Church of Kyle generally follows these guidelines when it comes to inviting volunteers to service in the ministries and programs of the church.

1. Potential volunteers must be a member of FBC Kyle before they can serve as a leader with children. In some cases, as determined by ministry or program leaders, potential volunteers may serve with an already approved volunteer leader.
2. Potential volunteers will be interviewed informally and a ministry position that matches the volunteer will be found. The church desires to place volunteers according to their skills, talents, experiences, and spiritual gifts so that volunteers find meaningful ministry opportunities that enrich their lives.
3. First Serve Opportunity – Every volunteer is given a “first serve” opportunity to try an area to determine if that area is a good fit for the volunteer. After this first encounter, a coordinator or team leader will contact the volunteer to discuss the experience.
4. Potential volunteers who desire to work with children will be required to undergo a background check. All information related to background checks will be held in strictest confidence. Potential volunteers should strive to attend all training opportunities offered by the church.

### **Ministry Descriptions**

FBC Kyle uses ministry descriptions so that both volunteers and the church know what is mutually expected, and so that the volunteer can be held accountable to fulfill the responsibilities of the ministry position. A ministry position description summarizes your duties and responsibilities and gives you important information about your area of service. Your ministry position description is included in this packet. Please read and study it carefully and discuss it with your team leader if you have any questions. Please note that the church reserves the right to revise and update ministry descriptions from time to time, as it deems necessary and appropriate. Of course, if you're currently in a position, you'll certainly be informed about any changes; your team leader may also ask you to help evaluate revisions and improvements to your ministry position.

### **Volunteer Files**

FBC Kyle does keep files on volunteers. Your file is considered to be confidential information and only the ministry area staff member (if different from your team leader), and the senior pastor of the church have access to your file. Even that access is limited—only on a need-to-know basis. Of course, you may request to view your own file at any time. Volunteer files typically contain the following types of personal information:



- Application for volunteer service. (“get to know you” form)
- Spiritual gifts testing and inventories.
- Copies of completion-of-training certificates.
- Ministry position descriptions.
- Letters and other records of affirmation/appreciation.
- Documentation required by local, state, federal, and/or private regulatory agencies, including items such as background checks (such as for volunteers who work with children or teenagers).

## **Change of Personal Information**

It’s important that the church has up-to-date, complete, and accurate information about each of the people who serve in our ministry. Please notify your team leader and the church office immediately if there is a change involving your name, address, phone number, marital status, etc. Keeping your personal information updated serves several purposes. In a most practical sense, it allows the church and/or your team leader to contact you to notify or remind you of meetings and to let you know about changes in schedules. It also allows other servers to contact you if they are ill or injured and need to find a substitute to temporarily fill their ministry position.

## **Feedback and Appraisal**

It might be called an appraisal, evaluation, or review. No matter what it’s called, the purpose of a performance evaluation is to let you know how you’re doing. Of course, you don’t need to wait for these appraisal times to ask questions about your ministry or your performance. (Remember our Open Door policy.) Your team leader or area staff member should schedule an appraisal with you at least once a year. Unlike a job performance review, a review for a volunteer ministry position is intended to provide support for you; to determine if you’re serving in the right ministry position; to improve your performance by providing meaningful, constructive feedback; and to assist in your development and fulfillment of personal goals for growth. In addition, the review will help determine if the ministry position fits into the overall ministry plan of the congregation. In addition, evaluations help the church make important decisions about creating additional volunteer and staff positions and about providing training and development opportunities.

## **Background Checks**

Volunteers at FBC who work with children and youth (and other vulnerable groups) must submit to various screening procedures. The primary type of background check includes a U.S. Criminal Record Indicator database search and a Social Security number search. This check searches electronic criminal files and record databases of government agencies, including sexual offenders’ registries. Manual records of some records may also be needed in states or counties that don’t keep electronic records. A

Social Security number search verifies an individual's name, state, and previous addresses; this prevents people from providing false identification. Other screening procedures by the church might include a motor vehicle report or a local police record check. Any screening may be repeated as frequently as annually at our discretion. The results of all screening procedures are kept in strictest confidence. Individuals who have been arrested for, charged with, are on probation for, or have been convicted of sexually oriented or sex related crimes cannot serve in any area of children's ministry. PCC will screen and rely upon the truthful answers of its reference checks and volunteers (based on the background check form) for this information.

## **Equal Opportunity**

FBC Kyle is strongly committed to recruit and equip volunteers for all levels of ministry positions according to their skills, abilities, talents, experiences, and spiritual gifts. Our church follows the guidelines established by federal Equal Employment Opportunity laws. We treat all volunteers equally without regard to race, color, gender, national origin, veteran status, or mental or physical disability. This is important even if you have no concerns about your own opportunities, because as a volunteer you need to remain alert to avoid words or actions that could be seen as racially, sexually, ethnically, or disability based. All workers are entitled to be treated with respect, and the church won't tolerate disrespect for personal dignity. Of course, this policy isn't simply motivated by legal or policy guidelines. The Bible clearly says that every Christian can do ministry in some way! Each person has important work to do in the church, regardless of age, gender, education, or any other perceived "difference." Consider these verses:

"For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."—Ephesians 2:10

"If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully." —Romans 12:7-8

Clearly, all Christians have God-given abilities, skills, passions, and gifts that God desires us to use to build up the body of Christ and to glorify God. Whether you serve in front of crowds or complete your duties with no one else around, God has a place where he wants you to serve. And he has built the church so that others also have places to serve as well. Every position and every person carrying out a ministry deserves your respect.

## SECTION III – BEHAVIOR

### **Smoking**

For the health of all who attend or visit FBC Kyle, the facility is considered a smoke-free environment. No smoking is allowed inside the building.

### **Drugs and Alcohol**

It would seem to be common sense that a church environment is not the place for any kind of consumption of alcohol or controlled substances. So why do we need a policy? The goal of FBC's guidelines regarding drugs and alcohol is to protect and help two individuals: (1) the volunteer, and (2) the individuals the volunteer serves. Of course, this general guideline can't cover every possible circumstance. All cases involving alcohol abuse, drug abuse, or related problems will be handled discretely and confidentially.

1. All volunteers are unequivocally prohibited from manufacturing, distributing, dispensing, possessing, or using controlled substances. Any volunteer violating this guideline is subject to discipline, including termination.
2. Alcohol abuse is equally serious in nature because of the danger it can pose to both the drinker and to others. Thus, any volunteer who is convicted of driving while intoxicated/driving under the influence (DWI/DUI) or of violating a criminal drug statute must inform the church within five days. The church may take various actions after such a conviction, depending on the nature of the volunteer's ministry, and the individual's desire to battle and overcome the drug problem.
3. Out of a spirit of Christ-centered love for all people, including those who volunteer at the church, the church will work to help those who have a desire to combat their struggles with drug or alcohol abuse problems. This may include information provided during volunteer training regarding the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse. In addition, the church may offer (or refer a volunteer to seek) rehabilitative assistance.

### **Sexual Harassment**

FBC Kyle is committed to providing an environment free of sexual harassment, as well as harassment based on factors such as race, physical or mental disability, marital status, age, and sex. We disapprove of any such harassment and will not tolerate it on the part of staff, volunteers, children, or youth in ministry programs.

Definition - Harassment includes verbal, physical, and visual conduct that creates an offensive or hostile environment. Such conduct constitutes harassment when:

1. Submission to the conduct is a stated or implied condition for continued employment or ministry involvement.
2. Submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as the basis for an employment or volunteer position.
3. The harassment interferes with work or volunteer performance or creates an offensive, intimidating work environment.
4. Threatening reprisals result after a negative response to sexual advances.

Prohibited unlawful harassment includes, but is not limited to:

- a. Verbal conduct such as epithets, derogatory jokes or comments, slurs or unwanted sexual advances, invitations, or comments.
- b. Visual conduct such as derogatory and or sexually oriented posters, photography, cartoons, drawings, or gestures.
- c. Physical conduct such as assault, unwanted touching, bra snapping.
- d. Threats and demands to submit to sexual requests.
- e. Retaliation for having reported or threatened to report harassment.

## **Process**

If at any time you feel harassed at church or at a church-sponsored event, report the incident in writing immediately to the staff member you feel most comfortable reporting to. If the accusation concerns this person, report it to another staff member. Every reported complaint will be investigated thoroughly, promptly, and in a confidential manner.

## **Discipline**

If the investigation establishes harassment, the violator of this policy will be disciplined. Discipline can range from verbal or written warnings, a meeting with a pastor and a governing board member, or termination, depending upon the circumstances.

## **Violent Behavior**

FBC Kyle has an absolutely zero tolerance for violence. This includes even talking or joking about violence. If a volunteer threatens or displays violence, he or she will be subject to immediate disciplinary action, including verbal or written warnings, a meeting with a staff member, or termination,

depending upon the circumstances. In addition, the volunteer may be subject to criminal proceedings, as appropriate.

What is considered violence? Like many other areas, there's no way to anticipate every possible situation concerning violence. However, it generally includes physically or verbally harming another, including things like pushing, shoving, coercion, or intimidation. The church reserves the right to broaden this definition based on actual incidents or additional information. In addition, no weapons are ever allowed on church property.

Thankfully, while instances of violent behavior are rare, volunteers can help prevent violence by reporting any incidents to your supervisor/team leader or leaders of the church that could hint that a fellow volunteer (or someone your church serves) is in trouble. The church will investigate all such reports.

## **Confidentiality**

Volunteers will, to the best of their ability, ensure confidentiality and privacy when it comes to the history, records, and conversations about the people FBC Kyle serves. The best advice regarding the release of information about the people you serve is don't! This is true whether you're simply talking to a friend or family member or to a member of the news media. If anyone requests information from you, your wisest answer is, "Church policy doesn't allow me to give out that information." If someone continues to question you for information, suggest that he or she talk to a staff member or inquire at the church office. The only exceptions to this policy are described below; generally, these exceptions relate to legal information and fulfillment of the church's ministry and mission. Again, these exceptions are provided more for your information. Rather than determining if a valid reason exists for releasing information, you should refer the request to your supervising staff member who will seek additional advice from the Pastor about whether the request is legitimate.

- No information requested by an individual outside the church will be provided over the telephone or via email. Again, volunteers should reply, "Church policy doesn't permit me to provide that information." Refer the request to your supervising staff member.
- Release-of-information forms should be explained and completed in the presence of the person whose information may be released—before it is released.
- Any release of information or inspection of records must be specifically authorized by the Pastor and/or a staff member. Even in these cases, there should be no taking of notes, photocopying, or removal of records from the church property.
- Volunteers agree not to discuss any individual's circumstances or records with unauthorized individuals, whether you're in the process of serving or not.

## SECTION IV - SAFETY AND SECURITY

### GENERAL STANDARDS

FBC Kyle strives to ensure an environment where members and visitors of all ages feel safe and secure. Just as the employees in a place of business are on the frontlines of ensuring the safety of customers, the volunteers of the church serve on the frontlines of ensuring the safety of those we minister to.

In general, as a volunteer, you should strive to:

- Serve using good common-sense safety practices
- Refrain from unsafe acts that might endanger yourself, the people you serve, or those who minister with you.
- Use any safety devices provided for your protection
- Report any unsafe situations or acts immediately to your supervisor or team leader

### SAFETY AND SECURITY OF CHILDREN

Our desire at FBC Kyle is to lead people to Jesus. This includes even the youngest children who attend our church. We take our responsibility to care for children very seriously. These guidelines are intended to provide a safe and nurturing environment where children can come to a growing relationship with Jesus Christ.

It's important for volunteers who work with children to see themselves as partners with parents that seek to provide quality care and instruction in the ministries and programs of our church. Our guidelines are designed to protect and promote faith formation for each child (and each adult volunteer) involved in children's ministry.

Everyone who teaches, helps, or cares for children must agree to follow these guidelines. They represent the minimum requirements; leaders of individual programs may develop additional guidelines as appropriate to the ministry setting.

## **Check In Policy**

Children will be signed in to the appropriate age group and escorted by volunteer to the appropriate area. Children should never be dropped off without a volunteer/teacher present.

## **Check Out Policy**

Parents must pick up children from the designated area. Please make sure that the children stay in their classroom and do not roam. A child is NOT allowed to leave with another adult unless a provision has been made prior to pick up or event and pre-approved by team leader or staff member.

## **Bathroom Policy**

An adult must accompany a child to the restroom. While the child waits outside the restroom, the adult must check the restroom prior to the child using the facility. While the child is using the facility, the adult must wait outside for the child. OR a teacher can take a group (3 or more) to the bathroom at the same time. Again, the teacher must check the restroom prior to the children using the facilities. If children are using a public bathroom that other adults may also be using, the teacher should stand at the door and prop the door open with a hand or foot to be able to listen in case assistance is needed by the child. Volunteers should help a child use the restroom only if the child is three years or younger and the door can be propped open and/or another unrelated adult is present.

*Please note: Never be alone with a child in the stall of a restroom with the door closed.*

## **Transfer of Children (from one ministry area to another)**

Children should be taken to another program or classroom in an orderly fashion with two adults (or one adult if passing through a public area with other adults present). Children should be counted prior to leaving one area as well as upon arrival at the new area.

## **Two Teachers in Each Room**

At least two adults (or one adult and one youth) should remain in a classroom at all times. If a volunteer needs to leave the classroom, the team leader, hall monitor, volunteer, or a security team member must be notified to maintain the policy.

## **Appropriate Touch**

Appropriate touch is a part of a healthy ministry. The following are the guidelines for when, where, and how to use appropriate touch.

- An arm around a shoulder
- Walking hand in hand
- Carrying small children (or having them sit on a lap)
- Short congratulatory or greeting hugs
- Brief, assuring pat on the back or shoulder
- Handshake and high-fives

## **Inappropriate Touch**

Never do the following:

- Touch a child in anger or disgust
- Touch a child in a manner that may be construed as sexually suggestive
- Touch a child between the bellybutton and the knee
- Touch a child's private parts (except during diaper changes)

## **Class Size/Ratio**

FBC Kyle strives to maintain a certain ratio of children to adults:

For infants – 1 volunteer to every 3 infants.

For toddlers – 1 volunteer to every 4 toddlers.

For two and three year olds – 1 volunteer for every 5 children.

For four and five year olds and kindergarten – 1 volunteer for every 7 children.

For elementary aged children – 1 volunteer for every 10 children.

Doors should be open whenever possible to allow for easy viewing of the classroom. In no case should windows of classrooms be covered. Supervisory leaders will routinely check on classrooms. Parents are



also welcome to check on their children's classes, but should try to do so in a discrete way so the flow of the class isn't disrupted.

## **Parent/Teacher Written Communications**

In order to preserve unified doctrine, policies and communication, any written communication to parents from the classroom must be previewed and approved by ministry area supervisor/team leader.

## **Special Events**

While we encourage staff and volunteers to develop relationships with the children, for legal reasons, any event outside of the FBC Kyle program, i.e., outside regular meeting and class time, must have prior written (email can serve as written) approval by the parents of the children in your care.

## **Strangers**

Only parents, siblings, children's ministry volunteers, church staff, and children are allowed in the children's areas. All other adults should be asked to leave the area. If there are questions or concerns associated with a stranger in the area, a staff member or member of the Security Team should be notified immediately. The radios can be used to contact someone, or there is a list of cell phone numbers attached to the radio.

## **Child Custody Issues**

Due to the nature of child custody laws, volunteers must act diligently in making sure the correct people are picking up their children. If there is a concern with a particular child, volunteers/teachers will contact a team leader or staff member for further assistance. Pertinent information in regards to this issue should be kept on file with the church office and briefed to all volunteers/teachers. If there are questions regarding this procedure, please notify a team leader or staff member.

## **Emergency Procedures**

In case of an emergency, do the following:

1. Medical Concerns – Immediately report (via radio) any medical needs or concerns to a hall monitor, security team member, team leader, or staff member. The notified person will decide if 911 should be called. The teacher should remain calm and divert the attention of the other children. Another adult teacher should stay with the victim to keep them quiet and lying down (if appropriate).
2. Weather alert – If there is a fear of dangerous weather, volunteers should wait for a coordinator, hall monitor, security team member, or staff member to instruct them what to do. This instruction may come in person or via the radio. In no way should a volunteer act in such a way as to incite panic among the children or other volunteers. In the event that the children need to be taken to a more secure inside location, the team leader or security team member will notify the group immediately.
3. Fire – The first priority in any case of a fire is that all children and volunteer's safety is maintained. Any attempt by volunteers to put out a fire is absolutely forbidden unless judgment to do so is unquestionable and presents no possible danger to anyone present. In the event of a fire, an alarm will sound. Teachers are asked to lead the children from the building through the nearest marked exit. Please stress the following rules: absolutely no talking, absolutely no running, follow the teacher's lead. When evacuating, make sure to take the class roster to be able to account for all children.
4. Missing Child – In the event that a child is missing, the director/team leader should be notified. The director should then notify (either via radio or in person) other coordinators and staff members to continue the search, notify parents, or increase church awareness. All should remain calm and rational while moving in as timely a manner as possible.
5. Media response – In the event of a severe accident, incident or death, it is likely that the media will be on site to cover the incident. It is important that all volunteers and servers not say anything that could be mistaken or misquoted by the interviewer. An appropriate FBC Kyle staff member or their designee shall be the only person to make any statement. If asked or called by a media member for a statement, please direct them to any team leader or staff member.

6. In the event that the children need to be moved to a safe room, each classroom will be notified via radio or by a hall monitor, security team member, coordinator, or staff member. Take the class attendance sheet with you!

## **Parent Involvement**

When should a parent be called? A parent should be called from the auditorium only by the area director or staff member (or the team leader if they are absent). If a server has a difficult time consoling a child, notify the ministry director for further help.

Discipline issue – In the event of a teacher initiated discipline situation (beyond time out), the teacher should contact the director or a children’s ministry staff member to discuss the incident. The director/staff member will decide if the parent needs to be notified and any other appropriate actions. It is left to the director’s/staff member’s judgment to bring in the teacher to further discuss the incident with the parents. You may talk with the director/staff member about this option, but do not address the parent directly unless you have the director/staff member’s approval.

## **Discipline Policy**

The goal of our church’s children ministry is to foster a sense of both fun and learning. Often, discipline can be handled by redirecting the child to a more constructive use of time and energy. Keeping the learning environment active and fun will usually eliminate the need for a lot of discipline. However, children must also understand that sometimes it is necessary to listen to lessons, instructions for an activity, etc. It’s important not to disrupt classroom times because that takes away from the fun and learning of fellow students. When “discipline” is necessary, all interaction will carefully consider a child’s integrity and fragility. All children will be treated with gentleness, respect, and understanding. Physical punishment will never be used. Physical discipline, such as spanking, is never permitted. Using physical restraint to prevent a child from doing something disruptive or dangerous is permitted and may, in some instances, be necessary. Affirmation and encouragement should always be used first. The director shall advise servers on the best age appropriate discipline methods. Follow these rules for discipline:

1. Consistency – Maintain consistency in handling discipline problems. Discipline must be consistent to be effective. Do not threaten consequences unless you intend to follow through. At the beginning of class, remind your class of the guidelines.
2. Response – Make a prompt response to inappropriate behavior. Correct a behavior the first time and every time.
3. Resolution – Seek both a resolution and reconciliation.
4. Reward – Acknowledge and reward positive behavior! Encourage children who are behaving and following the rules. Servers can always, at their discretion, offer a treat/prize for good behavior.
5. Plan – Plan lessons thoroughly. Often the best deterrent to a discipline issue is a well-planned class.
6. Pray – Servers are encouraged to pray for the children and the patience of all the volunteers as well as ask God for guidance throughout the class.
7. Discipline Steps – If discipline is warranted, it is appropriate for a server to place the child in “time out” away from the center of class activity (but still in the classroom). The rule is one minute per year of age. Then discuss the infraction with the child and remind the child that he/she needs to be obedient. Servers are encouraged to pray about the issue/incident with the child.

## **Area Specifics:**

### **Nursery**

Communication – Each classroom contains two way radios that are pre-set to a channel and can communicate with every other classroom, hall monitor, and area coordinator. Servers are to keep this radio on or within hearing range at all times.

Diapering policy – any child wearing a diaper or pull-up is to be checked and/or changed during each service. Volunteers must use a different set of gloves with each diaper change or hand sanitizer.

Food – Due to food allergies, no outside food or drink is allowed in the classrooms except baby food, bottles, and formula in the youngest age classrooms.

Medication – No medication will be administered to a child under our care unless it is a medical emergency such as epinephrine pen or ambulance personnel called for an emergency.

First aid kits – There is at least one first aid kit available in each classroom area.

Accident/Injury report – If there is an accident or injury to a child or adult, notify the team leader or Children’s Ministry staff and fill out an accident/injury report.

Bathroom Policy – (see section under safety procedures).

*Please note: Never be alone with a child in the stall of a restroom with the door closed.*

## **Illness and Infectious Disease Among Children**

In order to try to protect individuals from infectious diseases, FBC Kyle will follow these guidelines: As representatives of Christ, we commit ourselves to obey Jesus’ command to love all persons and welcome all persons into the church. However, we also need to take reasonable care not to jeopardize the health of others.

### **Definition**

A communicable disease will be defined as an illness, a departure from health; a particular destructive process in an organism, with a specific cause and characteristic symptoms that may be transmitted to others with the threat of jeopardy to their health. This may range from a common cold to the HIV/AIDS virus.

### **Policy and Procedure**

No child will be allowed into the children’s program when he or she has any of the following symptoms:

- Acute cold
- Fever
- Excessive sneezing & runny nose
- Excessive coughing

- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Sore throat
- Earache
- Red or discharging eyes
- Unexplained skin rash

In addition, anyone who has a known communicable disease won't be admitted into activities, programs, or child care where the disease could be communicated to others who aren't infected. If a child is admitted to the children's programs and is later determined to be ill, the parent will be notified to take the child out of the children's program until the child is well. If an individual suspects that a child has an infectious disease, or if it comes to the attention of another individual, the informed person should bring this information to the Children's Minister or Team Leader in a confidential manner. Children who test positive for HIV and who are toilet trained are welcome to attend all church functions, and are encouraged to participate fully. HIV-positive children who lack control over bodily functions, who have open sores or cuts, or who display behavior such as biting, may be screened and temporarily excluded, or provided an alternative activity. Parents of all children who attend the services will be asked to keep their children at home if they have any contagious illness.

## **Control Methods**

The children's classrooms will follow these precautions in order to keep workers and children as safe as possible from any unknown infection:

1. Junior servers will not change diapers under any circumstances.
2. The server should use a new pair of gloves for each changing.
3. Unless the medical community finds evidence that a diaper needs to be disposed of in any other manner, used diapers should be placed in bags provided in the trash can and taken to the trash dumpster at the end of the shift/services.

4. Nursery toys should be disinfected at the end of each shift. Toys should also be disinfected sooner if mouthed. In addition, all surfaces should be wiped down and disinfected at the end of each shift.
5. Servers should also practice frequent hand washing, especially when they arrive in the nursery area, before serving food, and after diapering a child, wiping noses, or cleaning up a mess. Be sure to use soap and running water, rub your hands vigorously as you wash them, wash all skin surfaces including wrists and between fingers, rinse hands well, and dry your hands with a single use towel.

## **Policy Against Child Abuse**

FBC Kyle supports and maintains an environment free of child abuse and neglect. Child abuse and neglect include physical or mental injury, sexual abuse, negligent treatment, or maltreatment. Sexual abuse is defined as the use, persuasion, or coercion of any child for the purpose of producing any visual depiction of such conduct or rape, molestation, prostitution or incest with children. It is against the law and against FBC Kyle's policy for any volunteer or employed staff, male or female, to physically, sexually, or mentally abuse or neglect any child. FBC Kyle reserves the right to exclude from affiliation with FBC Kyle Children's Ministry any person who is or has been convicted of child abuse or neglect of any child.

FBC Kyle will neither condone nor tolerate:

- Infliction of bodily injury upon any child or physically abusive behavior towards a child.
- Physical neglect of children, including failure to provide adequate safety measures, care and supervision in relation to church activities.
- Emotional mistreatment of children, including verbal abuse and/or verbal attacks.

## **Reporting & Investigating Child Abuse**

Child abuse is a serious crime and as a volunteer you are under the following obligations:

1. Reporting – All volunteers and employees shall immediately report and document any incident of abuse or violation of the two-adult or open door policy of which they have knowledge or which they have observed. Any person making such a report shall keep the information strictly confidential.

2. Incident of abuse defined – An “incident of abuse” means any occurrence in which any person:

- has threatened to inflict or has inflicted physical injury upon a child, youth, or vulnerable adult other than by accidental means, or is reasonably suspected to have done so.
- commits or allows to be committed any sexual offence against a child, youth, vulnerable adult, or is reasonably suspected to have done so.
- with respect to a child, youth, or vulnerable adult, makes any kind of sexual advance, or makes a request for sexual favors, or engages in sexually motivated physical contact or is reasonably suspected to have done so.
- exposes a child, youth, or vulnerable adult to verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature, or is reasonably suspected to have done so.

3. Imminent Threat – in all cases where an imminent threat of continued or actual abuse or neglect exists, any witness shall immediately contact the children’s minister or staff member to request that immediate steps be taken to ensure the safety of the alleged victim. After the safety of the alleged victim has been secured, the person witnessing or with knowledge of the incident shall complete a written report and submit it to the Children’s Minister (or in his/her absence the Pastor or church staff member).

4. Obligation to report to law enforcement – In all cases where any volunteer or staff person has reasonable cause to believe that a child or youth, known to the volunteer or staff in a professional capacity, has been or may be abused or neglected (inside or outside of FBC Kyle) the person shall make a report to the local law enforcement agency’s child abuse investigators. If the volunteer or staff member is in doubt regarding where a report would be made, he or she shall telephone the agency anonymously and discuss the situation with an investigator to determine whether the report should be made. The volunteer or staff member shall make a written record of the name and title of the investigator with whom he or she spoke and the recommendation made by the investigator and submit a copy of the written record to the Children’s Minister (or in his/her absence the Pastor or church staff member).

5. Internal Reporting Procedure – The person reporting an incident of abuse shall contact the Children’s Minister (or in his/her absence the Pastor or church staff member). The report shall provide information regarding all relevant facts with respect to the incident. Upon receiving a report, the person receiving the report, together with the reporter, shall complete a written report of the incident and submit a copy to the



church office. In a case where the alleged wrongdoer is the person to whom the report should be made, he or she shall be considered absent for the purposes of this reporting procedure and the report should be submitted to another appropriate FBC Kyle representative (Pastor or staff member).

6. Responding to the report – When someone receives a report of an incident, he or she shall immediately take steps to ensure the safety of the alleged victim. After the safety of the alleged victim has been secured, and after the report has been appropriately documented, the person receiving the report shall:

- a. Immediately contact the Children’s Minister (or in his/her absence the Pastor or church staff member).
- b. The leadership of FBC Kyle will take all reasonable steps necessary to ensure that the alleged wrongdoer has no contact with the alleged victim pending an investigation.
- c. The leadership of FBC Kyle will take all steps necessary to ensure that the alleged wrongdoer is barred from further work with children pending the investigation.

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## SECTION V – SERVICE ENVIRONMENT

### **Dress Code/Appearance**

As a representative of the church and God, volunteers should exhibit a neat and wellgroomed appearance. Of course, guidelines of this type are very subjective. However, the church generally expects you to take pride in your appearance and to strive to project a positive image when representing the church and the Lord.

One biblical guideline to follow is 1 Corinthians 10:23-24:

“ ‘Everything is permissible’—but not everything is beneficial. ‘Everything is permissible’—but not everything is constructive. Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others.”

### **Training, Resources, & Development**

FBC Kyle desires that volunteers be equipped to fulfill the duties described in their ministry position descriptions. In addition to training you'll receive as a volunteer of the church, it may also be appropriate for the church to provide additional in-service training.

Outside training will be subject to these conditions:

- Attendance at conferences, educational meetings, and workshops outside of FBC Kyle (that require payment by the church) will need to be approved by your supervisor and/or the pastoral staff member responsible for the area of ministry where you're serving.
- Volunteers can attend conferences as funds allow, including registration and reimbursement for lodging, meals, and travel. If you're interesting in attending a conference related to your area of ministry, submit an estimated cost to your supervisor/team leader who (along with guidance from the pastoral staff member responsible for that area of ministry) will determine the value of the conference and how much of the cost the church can cover.
- Volunteers who attend conferences, seminars, or other outside training should be prepared to share highlights of what they learned with other volunteers serving in their ministry area during training or team meetings.

## **Use of Personal Property**

In church service, it's not uncommon to use personal belongings to supplement the supplies you use to fulfill your ministry. For example, you might bring items to decorate ministry spaces such as classrooms and common areas. Please make sure that all such items are prominently marked to prove your ownership. While your work as a volunteer may require that you use personal property in your area of ministry, FBC Kyle suggests that you not bring large sums of money, jewelry, or other valuables with you during your times of service. The church cannot be responsible for personal property that is stolen, lost, damaged, or destroyed. If you find personal belongings that another person has lost on church property, please turn them in to your supervisor/team leader or to the church office.

## **Personal Use of Church Property**

While it's very likely that you'll be using church property, supplies, materials, etc., during your volunteer ministry, it's wise to take care not to use these items for your personal use. Why? After all, for example, does it really hurt to make a few photocopies? Most of us don't realize that if everyone in the church just makes a few copies each week, the expense for paper, toner, and service calls on the photocopier can easily add up fast. The same is true of other items around the church. It's easy to think that if you're a faithful financial giver to the ministry of the church it won't hurt to consume these items for personal use. But this practice can lead to poor stewardship both on the part of the volunteer and for the church. Instead, carefully walk that fine line between ministry use and personal use. If it helps, keep a log of what materials you're using. Certainly, make use of logs and inventory restocking lists around the church (for photocopying or in the supply room, for example). Similarly, if you purchase something for ministry use with personal funds, and you wish to submit to be reimbursed, remember that reimbursements need prior approval by the ministry leader.

## **Grievance Procedures**

While FBC Kyle hopes that every ministry experience is a positive one, we also recognize that volunteers may become dissatisfied. This can occur because of strained relationships with fellow volunteers, your relationship with your supervisor, disagreement with the church's practices and policies, or other conditions related to your ministry. The church encourages you to work toward quick resolution of these kinds of situations, which usually don't go away with time. In fact, these kinds of difficulties typically get worse, eventually deteriorating to a degree you might feel that your only option is to resign.

The following steps are based on Matthew 18:15-16:

“If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.” —Matthew 18:15-16, NIV

## Grievance Process

1. With an attitude of love and care, speak directly to the person who has offended you. Try to explain the facts as well as your feelings about the situation in a calm manner that is free from accusation or blame. Often, you can diffuse the situation and clear up conflicts during this step because you communicate to the other party that you truly desire to work out the situation.
2. However, if the other person doesn't agree regarding the offense, or you can't work out your differences privately, bring the matter to your supervisor's/team leader's attention. Make sure the supervisor understands that the problem is affecting your service. The supervisor/team leader should arrange a meeting between you and the other party.
3. If you don't feel satisfied with the answers that your supervisor/team leader provides (or if you feel uncomfortable discussing the problem with your supervisor, for example, because the problem is with your supervisor/team leader) you can approach another church leader—such as a staff member—to accompany you to discuss the problem with the other party involved.
4. If the grievance remains unresolved, you should put your concern in writing and present it to the Pastor who will convene a meeting with all of the parties to discuss the grievance and work toward a resolution.

## SECTION VI – ENDING YOUR SERVICE

### **Resignation**

Volunteers who desire to leave their ministry positions should attempt to give at least two weeks notice (preferably verbally and in writing) of their intent to resign. This allows team leaders time to recruit new volunteers. If you are experiencing some dissatisfaction or discontentment in your ministry position that is leading you to resign, be sure to discuss your concerns with your team leader. Ideally, talk with your team leader before circumstances reach the point that you feel that resigning is your only option. Your team leader may be able to change conditions in the ministry or program you're serving in, rearrange ministry teams so you're not forced to serve with a difficult co-worker, or work with you to change your ministry description to make the duties more enjoyable. If you're convinced that changes in your current position won't help, perhaps an entirely different position would be better suited to your gifts, abilities, and passions. Before you give up on volunteer ministry, be sure to give it another chance. Finding the right fit in ministry can bring you a great sense of personal satisfaction, and it can be very fulfilling and rewarding to fulfill the purpose for which God created and gifted you.

### **Termination/Dismissal**

Dismissal from volunteer ministry positions at FBCKyle is a rare occurrence. However, it may occur if a volunteer commits a serious offense. As with other serious violations of a moral or spiritual nature, the church wants to help those who are struggling with problems and who express a sincere desire to change. Out of a spirit of Christ-centered love for all people, including those who volunteer at the church, the church may refer the volunteer to seek assistance through a program or counseling. Some offenses may warrant dismissal, particularly if the volunteer doesn't express remorse or a willingness to change.

### **Exit Interviews**

FBC Kyle is committed to helping every Christian find, and be equipped for, the ministry for which God called them. So if you decide to leave an area of ministry, the church strongly desires to evaluate the circumstances surrounding why you're ending your term of service, whether the separation is voluntary or involuntary. Exploring your reasons for resigning or the factors resulting in termination enables us to evaluate how that ministry area can be improved to make volunteer service more satisfactory.

### **Guidelines**

Your immediate team leader or staff leader may conduct an exit interview in a private area near the end of your term of service. If you prefer, the exit interview can be conducted by another church leader or a member of the pastoral staff. Information you share will be kept in confidence by the church. Some of the items that may be discussed include:

- The reasons for the separation.
- Plans for the future service and updating your contact information.
- Equipment/key return.
- Your interest in serving in another area of ministry.
- Your suggestions and comments to improve the area of ministry you're leaving.

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## Confidentiality Agreement

I agree to respect the privacy of the people First Baptist Church of Kyle serves, and I agree to hold in confidence any information I obtain in the course of service, whether I obtain that information through written records or daily interaction with an individual. I agree not to disclose an individual's confidences to anyone, except in the following circumstances:

- (1) As mandated by law.
- (2) To prevent a clear and immediate danger to individuals.
- (3) Where I am compelled to do so by a court or pursuant to the rules of a court.

I agree to abide by the church's policies to store or dispose of records in ways that maintain confidentiality.

I agree to uphold confidentiality toward the people the church serves, colleagues, applicants, and any sensitive situations arising within the church.

I agree that when my term of volunteer service ends, to maintain client and coworker confidentiality, to continue holding in confidence any information about sensitive situations within the church.

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Volunteer Signature

Date

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Team Leader/Staff Member Signature

Date

## Volunteer's Handbook Acknowledgment

I have read and agree to support FBC Kyle's and the Children's Ministry Mission/Vision and Core Values and essential beliefs.

This Children's Ministry Handbook/Policy and Procedure Manual contains important information about First Baptist Church of Kyle and the children's ministry. I understand that I should consult a Pastor or Children's Ministry staff person for clarification and guidance, or if I have any questions that are not answered in the handbook.

I also acknowledge that revisions to the handbook may occur at any time.

I recognize that, as a condition to my service, any references may be contacted, a background check may be made and a criminal history check may be conducted, and I willingly consent to all such checks. I further authorize my references to give you any information they may have regarding my character and fitness for working with children.

I release First Baptist Church of Kyle and all such references from any and all liability for any damage that may result from furnishing such evaluations to you, and I waive any right that I have to inspect references provided on my behalf.

My signature below acknowledges that I have received and read this entire handbook, that I have carefully read the foregoing release, and know and understand the contents.

I also acknowledge that all of the information I have provided is true and complete.

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Volunteer's name (please print)

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Volunteer's Signature

Date

Volunteer's Statement of Commitment

I agree, as a volunteer serving First Baptist Church of Kyle and the Children's Ministry, and reaching out to those beyond the church, to seek a careful, exemplary Christian lifestyle as to encourage other believers and strengthen the church.

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Volunteer's Signature

Date