

Please note: This online document is for informational purposes only. In order to work with minor children you must complete the online application form at [www.fbcswartz.org/safeplace.htm](http://www.fbcswartz.org/safeplace.htm).

**SWARTZ FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH**  
**“Safe Place” Child Safety & Protection Policy**



## Section A: DEFINITIONS

1. Church Name - The incorporated name of the organization is the First Baptist Church of Swartz, Louisiana (herein referred to as Swartz First Baptist Church or SFBC).
2. To assist in the understanding of this policy, it will be helpful to understand certain terms.
  - a. Child Abuse - Can refer to any physical, sexual or emotional harm rendered to a minor.
  - b. Parent or Guardian - These terms are used interchangeably. They refer to an adult who is the legally responsible party for the welfare of a minor.
  - c. Minor - Anyone under the age of 18. The term “child” may be used interchangeably.
  - d. Preschooler - A child age birth through completed kindergarten.
  - e. Children - A child in grade school, 1<sup>st</sup> thru 6<sup>th</sup> grades.
  - f. Youth - A minor in the 7<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grades (generally, 12 - 18 years of age).
  - g. Ministerial Staff - Persons employed in a ministerial position by Swartz First Baptist Church. This would include (but is not limited to) Pastor, Minister of Education, Minister of Youth and Minister of Music.
  - h. Volunteer Leaders - Lay leaders at Swartz First Baptist Church. May also be referred to as workers, leaders, or helpers. These are unpaid positions.
  - i. Other Paid Workers & Support Staff- These are persons employed by the church in non-ministerial positions. This category would include (but is not limited to) paid childcare workers, secretarial and janitorial staff.

## Section B: POLICY STATEMENT

1. Introduction - Swartz First Baptist Church (SFBC) is committed to providing a safe environment for all children and youth attending church or any SFBC sponsored program or activity. In addition, SFBC is committed to taking necessary precautions to protect its church leaders and workers from accusations and suspicions.
2. Purpose - The purpose of these policies and procedures is to protect the following:
  - a. The physical, mental, and emotional well being of children involved in the ministries at SFBC;
  - b. The adult workers (volunteers and staff) of SFBC from the risk of an unsubstantiated accusation of abuse;
  - c. The integrity of SFBC both internally and within the community.
3. Scope - These policies and procedures shall apply to all activities involving minors that are sponsored or supervised by SFBC. All workers assigned to such activities by SFBC are to comply with and conduct themselves according to these policies and procedures.
  - a. Waiver of Policies and Procedures - The goal of SFBC is to promote safety while maintaining practical flexibility. Policies may be waived only for circumstances or instances outside of its control (example - SFBC's affiliation with outside organizations, on mission projects, or denominational events).
  - b. Education & Training - It is important for all parents, leaders, and workers with minor children to know and understand the procedures that are in place to insure a safe environment for our children. With that in mind the following steps will be taken.
    - 1) Volunteer Leaders
      - a) All volunteer leaders will receive a copy of this policy & procedure guide.
      - b) Annual training will be given in the area of child safety. This training may be combined with other topics.
      - c) Leaders that are recruited and are awaiting the annual training will meet with the responsible staff person for a review of child safety issues and to have their questions answered.

2) Parents

- a) All parents will be given a copy of this policy & procedure guide.
- b) The information in this policy & procedure guide will be reviewed in appropriate parent meetings.

Section C: PREVENTION

1. Eligibility

- a. Generally speaking, anyone meeting the following criteria may apply for a volunteer leadership position with minors that meet the following criteria:
  - 1) Member of Swartz First Baptist Church for six months or more;
  - 2) Age 18 or older.
- b. All adults wishing to work in ministry to minors must be approved through the worker screening process. However, ministry leaders (including ministerial staff) may choose not to accept an approved volunteer.
- c. An approved worker who leaves their service position for more than twelve months and then wants to resume in that or another position with minors must be re-approved through the application process
- d. Exceptions
  - 1) Persons younger than 18 may fill a leadership role only if they are teamed with an approved adult worker 21 years old. These “student workers” would complete the application form.
  - 2) Persons who are not members of Swartz First Baptist Church may apply to work with minors using the approved process. Generally, non-members will be teamed with an approved worker who is a church member.

2. Worker Screening

- a. Application Procedure - All individuals coming into contact with minors will complete the appropriate application for the screening process. SFBC has a multi-level screening policy for persons within our church whose work requires contact with minors.
- b. This application and appropriate consent forms may be available through an online agent. If so, completing the online version will fulfill requirement #a above.
- c. Level 1 Screening - This is required for all non-paid personnel who are engaged in contact with minors. Examples of positions requiring Level 1 screening are (but are not limited to): Sunday School teachers, Awana workers, and Extended Teaching Session volunteers.
  - 1) Complete & sign the Volunteer Application Form (see appendix) with signed statement that they will abide by the SFBC Child Safety & Protection Policy.
  - 2) Criminal background check.
  - 3) Personal interview by appropriate supervisory staff.
- d. Level 2 Screening - This is required for all paid personnel (full and part-time), and volunteer personnel who will be engaged in unsupervised contact with minors, or who may be in charge of taking them off site. This includes all paid ministerial staff members over the age of 18 (full and part time), all paid child care workers over the age of 18, volunteers chaperoning camps, lock-in’s, and other overnight experiences and trips.
  - 1) Complete & sign the Volunteer Application Form (see appendix) with signed statement that they will abide by the SFBC Child Safety & Protection Policy.
  - 2) Criminal background check.
  - 3) Personal interview by appropriate supervisory staff.
  - 4) Reference checks.

### 3. Other Information:

- a. Adult survivors of child abuse will be required to meet with the Pastor or his designee prior to working with minors. Please note that being an adult survivor of child abuse does not disqualify a person from serving with minors at SFBC.
- b. Persons who have been convicted of, placed on regular or deferred adjudicated probation for, received pre-trial diversion for, pled guilty or nolo contendere for any prohibited offense shall not serve in any capacity involving minors. Prohibited offense includes any offense involving sexual contact, physical abuse, violence or threatened violence, or such other felony or crime involving moral turpitude as determined by the Pastor or his designee.

### 4. Storage and availability of records

- a. Information gathered during the application process including the application, references, and any background check material will be kept on file in a secure (locked) location. The specific location will be determined by the church staff in consultation with the church's attorney. Only the church staff and the attorney will know the location of these records.
- b. Some or all of this information may be located online through an approved provider. If this is the case providers meeting the most strenuous security levels will be used.
- c. No one shall have access to that information except appropriate ministry staff and, in the case of an investigation, law enforcement agencies.
- d. Upon the resignation of a person from a leadership position with minors, their application materials (application, references, and any background check materials) will be kept for three years (in accordance with Louisiana current public records laws). These records will then be shredded. A log will be kept of the person's ministry involvement with minors including dates so that we can give a reference of their service to another church who might call for that information. The date that their records were destroyed will also be noted on the log.
- e. If an incident causes an investigation (either internal or external) all forms and other supportive materials will also be kept under the same guidelines.
- f. If a person is denied for service (e.g., due to information discovered during reference checks or the criminal background check), that information will be kept on file for three years. A log entry will be made to show the person applied for a position but was denied. That denial of service may be reported to another church calling for a reference.

## Section D: GENERAL PROTECTION PROCEDURES

### 1. Team Approach

- a. Two adults is the minimum for classroom settings (e.g., Sunday School).
- b. Persons under the age of 18 who are with children will be under the supervision of an adult.
- c. All classrooms housing minors will have a window in the door or wall to allow for observation. Ministry leaders are responsible for monitoring by periodically observing each room.

### 2. Security

- a. Teachers and other volunteers working with children will, as much as possible, wear name tags to identify themselves to parents.
- b. No minor child is allowed to pick up another child.
- c. Preschoolers must be picked up by a parent or adult guardian.
- d. Grade school children must be picked up at their classrooms or activity area. Children will not be allowed to leave the building to find their parents.

- e. Preschoolers must be checked-in for all church activities using the current method.

#### Section E: REPORTING & RESPONSE PROCEDURES

1. Obligation to Report - In all cases where a worker has reasonable cause to believe that a minor may be abused or neglected, the worker is obligated to report the incident or suspicions in writing to the appropriate ministerial staff member or Pastor using the Suspected Abuse Report Form (see appendix).
2. Responding to the Report
  - a. When ministerial staff receives a report of an incident of abuse, he/she shall immediately take all steps necessary to ensure the safety of the alleged victim.
  - b. The ministry staff member will perform due diligence to insure the validity of the allegation. This process should be documented on the Suspected Abuse Follow Up Report Form (see appendix)
  - c. In the case of a substantiated allegation, these guidelines should be followed by the Pastor or his designee:
    - 1) Make certain that all efforts at handling the incident are documented in writing including dates and times using the Suspected Abuse Follow Up Report Form (see appendix).
    - 2) Report the incident immediately to the church's legal counsel, and the insurance company. SFBC should not try to handle this matter without outside professional assistance.
    - 3) SFBC personnel should not try to conduct an in-depth investigation. SFBC should contact the proper civil authorities and give them all the support they need to conduct their investigation.
    - 4) SFBC will remain unbiased and supportive of and minister to all parties involved, recognizing that allegations of abuse are devastating to both the accuser and the accused. Therefore the above policies of reporting will be carried out tactfully, discreetly and without bias.
    - 5) If the accused abuser is a church worker, either volunteer or paid, they will be removed from his/her position until the allegations are fully investigated and resolved. A paid employee will be placed on involuntary paid leave until the allegations are cleared or substantiated.
    - 6) A single organizational leader will be designated by the Pastor as spokesperson. Due to the legal implications it is recommended that the church's attorney serve as this spokesperson.
    - 7) A file will be kept on permanent record of all reports filed and support materials (see the section entitled "Storage and availability of records" earlier in this document). This file will be in a secure area and no one except appropriate ministry staff and law enforcement or civil agencies may have access to this information.
  - d. In summary, should child abuse allegations occur, workers and staff will:
    - 1) Respond to each allegation in a serious manner,
    - 2) Treat each allegation with confidentiality and respect to the privacy of all involved parties,
    - 3) Cooperate fully with civil authorities,
    - 4) Extend genuine care to all victims.

#### Section F: TRANSPORTATION & SAFETY

1. Generally speaking, transportation to and from church events fall into two major categories; church-provided transportation (e.g., church provided vans or busses) and private transportation provided by individuals.
2. Parents should always come in with their child and "check in" with an adult who is responsible for the event. It is important that we know who is present.

3. If a child is riding home with someone other than the person who delivered them that must be made known to the adult in charge.
4. An emergency phone number(s) should be available for each child present.
5. Church-Requested Carpooling – Occasionally the church will ask individuals to provide private transportation to and from church events.
  - a. SFBC and it's representatives have the right to refuse a driver.
  - b. The driver must be at least 21 years old.

#### Section G: PERMISSION FORMS/MEDICAL RELEASE FORMS

1. At the beginning of each church year (September thru August) a General Permission Form will be available for parents to complete (see appendix).
2. Many off campus events are provided by organizations other than the church (e.g., Louisiana Baptist Convention) and require their own permission slip/medical release form.
3. If a child is going to be involved in an activity where his or her parents are not present (either at the church or off campus) it is recommended that health insurance information be obtained.
4. If this is an out-of-town trip with no parent or guardian present, the health insurance information is required and must be brought on the trip.
5. The insurance information is requested either on the Event Permission Form or the General Permission Form.

#### Section H: HEALTH ISSUES

1. 24 Hour Rule – Children should not be brought to church or church activities if they are within 24 hours of having a fever, vomiting, diarrhea, sore throat, eye infection or skin rash that has not been treated.
2. Ill Children - An ill child will be isolated from the other children and attended to until a parent picks up the child. Parents will be contacted and asked to pick up their child if any of the following symptoms occur:
 

a. Vomiting	e. Nits in the hair
b. Diarrhea	f. Red eyes with a mucus discharge (pink eye)
c. Unexplained rash	g. Armpit or fever strip temperature of 100 ° or greater
d. Green mucus discharge from nose	
3. First Aid Kits - Fully stocked first aid kits will be kept in the Preschool Suite, Children's Building, Church Office, Fellowship Hall, Youth House, and College House.
4. Medications
  - a. Teachers and staff are not allowed to dispense medication. Only parents or legal guardians may dispense medications while a child is at church.
  - b. An exception to this rule can be made if a child is going on an overnight or extended church-sponsored trip (e.g., youth camp). In that situation, an adult chaperone will be responsible for dispensing the medication. Directions must be given in writing. If the child is old enough to take his or her own medication, an adult chaperone will still check with the child to make certain he has taken it.
5. Transmission
  - a. Handwashing – Leaders who are in consistent contact with children must wash their hands when they arrive, before feeding, before and after toileting and diapering, and after cleaning up any vomit, spit-up, blood, or runny noses.
  - b. Teachers should use latex gloves when dealing with the clean up of body fluids.
  - c. Lice – SFBC has the right to check children who are suspected to have head lice. If lice are found, the

child cannot return until he has received proper treatment and has been reinspected. A child is not allowed back until he is nit free.

6. Injury – If a child is injured while on campus or at a church sponsored off campus event the following procedure will be followed:
  - a. If the injury needs immediate medical attention, the parents will be contacted immediately. If parents are unavailable appropriate measures will be taken to treat the injury.
  - b. The child should receive as much medical attention as necessary (and available) for stabilizing their injury. This may include calling for an ambulance.
  - c. After these steps have been taken, an Injury Report (see appendix) should be completed and a ministerial staff member should be notified.

#### Section I: MISCELLANEOUS

1. Parents shall be permitted to observe in their child's room at any time.
2. Using physical restraint to prevent a child from harming self or others is permitted if necessary. As much as possible this should be done in a positive manner with words of encouragement.
3. Extreme disciplinary problems should be reported to the parent and the ministry leader. That leader may choose to inform the staff minister to whom they are responsible.
4. Physical affection should be used appropriately. Touching to comfort or affirm a child in an age appropriate manner is permitted.
5. Only appropriate music or videos may be used for church activities involving minors. If there is a question the adult sponsor/chaperone should ask the appropriate staff minister prior to its use.
6. Appropriate clothing for adults and minors should be observed. Please see the Dress Code in the appendix.

#### Section J: PRESCHOOL GUIDELINES

Specific guidelines for preschoolers are considered a part of this document and are in the appendix.

#### Section K: EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

1. Fire - If a fire alarm goes off, teachers and leaders should immediately begin the process of evacuating the facility according to the evacuation plan. Evacuation plans are posted in each room.
2. Tornado/Weather - If it is reported that conditions are right for a tornado or severe weather, preparations need to be made for placing the children in the safest location possible. Children should be moved to hallways and away from exterior windows.
3. Hazardous Material - In the case of a hazardous material alert, door and windows will be closed and ventilation systems turned off until the all-clear is given.
4. Violence
  - a. Local law enforcement authorities should be notified immediately when an act of violence or hostage situation occurs.
  - b. If possible, adults & children should take refuge in a room with a door that locks.
  - c. Children should hide under a table, in a closet, or in a corner.

## **Appendix**

## Appendix A: PRESCHOOL GUIDELINES

### A Note to Our Parents...

We take very seriously the important trust you have shown us in caring for your preschooler. Our goal is for your child to have positive experiences and good feelings about church in the safest environment possible. These guidelines will help us as we accomplish this. If you have any questions or suggestions, please feel free to ask Carol Smith or Ron Thomas.

### General

1. Preschool care will be available only to children of parents participating in activities and services of the church. No one shall leave a child in a Preschool Department for any reason other than attending a church related activity.
2. Do not leave a child in any preschool room unless a teacher is there to receive the child.
3. We request that only one parent drop-off and pick-up children. This will help reduce congestion. We encourage "visiting" with church family, but please do so in the outside hallway.
4. The only people who should be in the Preschool Suite should be parents, workers, and preschoolers.
5. Please do not allow your child to bring toys, candy or other personal items into the classroom. Often times these items get lost or broken. We are not responsible for lost or stolen items.
6. Diaper bags, bottles, coats, etc., **MUST BE LABELED** with your child's name.
7. Babies and ones will be transferred to older class rooms as they mature and develop and as space is available. Children ages two, three, four and five are promoted by their birthdate and are done so at promotion time.
8. All parents who have preschool children are expected to serve in Extended Teaching Care on a rotating basis. Both parents are needed.

### Security System

The security system we use on Sunday mornings, evenings, and Wednesday evenings, is for all preschoolers (birth through kindergarten age) and is used to insure the safety of your child.

- Dropping off - Our Preschool Ministry uses a computerized check in system. Using the computer at the Preschool Desk, type in the first few letters of your child's last name and press "Find". A list of your children will appear. Highlight the children you are checking in and press "Check In/Out". Take the labels from the printer and stick your child's label on their back. Save the return receipt to pick up your child. Bring your child to the gate where a volunteer will deliver them to their classroom.
- Picking up - Come to the gate prepared to present your return receipt. A volunteer will retrieve your child from their room and bring them to you. If you need to speak with your child's teacher, please plan to stay a few minutes after pick up time is complete. No one under the age of 16 is allowed to pick up a preschooler. Please pick up your preschooler promptly after each service.

### Illness

For the protection of your child, and because we are concerned about the well being of all the children in our care, any child who is or appears ill cannot be accepted into a Preschool Department. This policy is based on the recommendation taken from the report of the Committee on Control of Infectious Diseases of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

1. Fever within the previous 24 hours.
2. Vomiting or diarrhea (for any reason) within the previous 24 hours.

3. Any symptom of usual childhood diseases such as: scarlet fever, measles, mumps, chicken pox, and whooping cough.
4. Sore throat, croup, thrush, any unexplained rash.
5. Any skin infections - boils, ringworm, impetigo
6. Pink eye or other eye infections
7. Common cold - the child should be free of all symptoms (including runny nose with any colored discharge) of the common cold and/or allergies. If a child has chronic allergies, and is under the care of his physician, please tell the teacher.

Children who become ill during a church activity will be isolated and the parents will be contacted to pick up the child immediately. Under no circumstances will any teacher, worker, or volunteer give any medication to any child in the Preschool Area.

#### Feeding

All preschoolers should be fed BEFORE coming to the Preschool Department. Snacks such as Goldfish crackers and Tang are available. Occasionally other finger foods may be served that may pertain to what is being taught in class about God's world.

Juice, water, and finger snacks are the only foods that will be served to younger preschoolers during Sunday and Wednesday services. No other food will be served and no exceptions will be made.

Infant Feedings - Babies will be fed as needed. Parents should supply bottles and food.

## Appendix B: Dress Code

While there are differences of opinion about “proper” dress, the following Biblical guidelines should be applied.

1. Guideline of modesty: 1 Timothy 2:9-10 reminds us that we are to dress “modestly, with decency and propriety,”
2. Guideline of responsibility: Paul reminds us in 1 Corinthians 8:13 that we have a responsibility to others, “if what I eat causes my brother to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause him to fall.”
3. With these guidelines in mind, we should dress in a way that is generally considered appropriate. Standards of dress change over time and are different from church to church, but we should avoid any style of dress that is offensive or sends a message opposing the church community's values.
4. Some areas of consideration are clothing that is too revealing, too tight, too short. Also, t-shirts and clothing that promote products or a lifestyle that is inconsistent with our values.
5. Knowing that our desire is to reach a community whose lifestyle and dress is at times different, these guidelines would be handled with much grace and, hopefully, with the positive example of our church family.