

First Baptist Church of Waynesboro

Policy and Procedure for Working with Minors

**PURPOSE:**

This policy is intended to protect minors and adults who work with minors at First Baptist Church Waynesboro. These practices enable our congregation to provide a physically safe, emotionally secure, and spiritually nurturing environment for all who attend services and activities of First Baptist Church, Waynesboro. Minors are defined as anyone under the age of 18.

**A. Staff and Volunteer Screening:**

Every person serving in a program that involves minors will be asked to complete a confidential application that will be maintained in a secure location under the direction of the Senior Pastor (or designee). The application process will include criminal background checks and sex offender record checks. Failure to complete this application process or conviction/expungement of a child abuse charge will preclude an adult from working with minors at First Baptist Church Waynesboro.

**B. Staff and Volunteer Training:**

Once background checks are completed and approved, training for volunteers will be provided by First Baptist Church staff members.

**C. Open Door Policy:**

All gatherings of minors at First Baptist Church Waynesboro shall have an “open door” policy. Pastors, parents and church members have the right to observe any activity at a minimum from the door threshold.

**D. Behavioral Expectations:**

All volunteers and leaders are to be models of Christian standards and moral behavior. Hitting or spanking a minor is never appropriate and is prohibited. No adult is to be romantically or sexually involved with any minor.

**E. Individual Counseling:**

Any activity or conversation that is considered “counseling” should be conducted by licensed counselors only. Minors with such needs should be referred to the parents or to ordained First Baptist Church staff for appropriate services.

**F. Permission Slips:**

For activities that involve transportation (provided by church staff or volunteers) away from First Baptist campus, permission slips must be signed by parents or guardians.

**G. Mandatory Reporting of Abuse of Minors:**

Any First Baptist Church staff member or adult volunteer who has reason to suspect that a minor has been abused (or such abuse has been disclosed by a minor to the adult), shall report the matter immediately to the Senior Pastor or designee. Documentation regarding the allegation shall begin immediately. As appropriate, allegations shall be reported to local/state agencies within 24 hours. To safeguard confidentiality and accuracy, the Senior Pastor or designee shall serve as the spokesperson to handle inquiries by the media and to inform the congregation if necessary.

**H. Non-Compliance:**

Failure of any staff member or adult volunteer to follow these guidelines may result in dismissal from all activities involving minors at First Baptist Church Waynesboro.