

*First Baptist Church, Georgetown
2624 Dumbarton Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20007*

***Policy Statement on Sexual Misconduct with
Children and Child Protection***

First Baptist Church, Georgetown is committed to providing a safe, respectful and nurturing environment that is in keeping with God's sacred trust. The Church is firmly dedicated to the purpose of caring for families and their children. Because we consider the abuse or neglect of children to be contrary to Christian morality and a violation of our Church's Covenant and Mission, sexual misconduct on the part of any clergy person, employee, or volunteer with a child is expressly prohibited and will not be tolerated. The actions described below are meant to ensure both the safety and protection of rights of all who congregate and worship within our Church and meeting areas. It is also used to comply with **Article V, Section 2e-i of the Constitution of First Baptist Church, Georgetown.**

Policy

Sexual misconduct includes sexual abuse, sexual harassment, and sexual exploitation. All employees and volunteers of the Church must comply with the laws of the District of Columbia, as well as with the Church's policy and its Guidelines concerning sexual misconduct with children and child protection.

This policy statement is meant to emphasize our Church's deep concern for both the victim and the victim's family; to safeguard against any fraudulent claims and accusations that may ruin the reputation of innocent persons; and, as appropriate, assist in the reconciliation of the offender and his or her family. As set forth in our Church Covenant, we shall engage to watch over; to pray for; to exhort and stir up each other unto every good word and work; to guard each others reputation.

It is the intent of this policy to thwart any form of sexual misconduct with children and child abuse, to mitigate any harm to others, and provide guidance to Church personnel in their response to any allegations of such conduct.

Definitions

For the purpose of these Guidelines, the following definitions apply:

“Child” and “Children” means any person (s) under 18 years of age.

“Sexual misconduct” includes but is not limited to any unlawful sexual act or contact with any child or person as defined by the statutes of the District of Columbia or any applicable Federal law.

“Child abuse” means any sexual, physical, mental, or emotional abuse to any child or person, including any form of child neglect.

Sexual abuse...any sexual activity between a child and an adult, or between a child and another child at least four years older than the victim, including activities such as fondling, exhibitionism, intercourse, and pornography.

Physical abuse.....any physical injury to a child that is not accidental, such as beating, shaking, burns, and biting.

Emotional abuse...any emotional injury to a child when a child is not nurtured or provided with love and security, such as an environment of constant criticism, belittling and persistent teasing.

Neglect...any act depriving a child of his or her essential needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter and medical care.

“Personnel” includes the First Baptist Church, Georgetown pastoral and support staffs, trustees, teachers and volunteers within the Church.

Prevention

We will strive to deter incidents of child abuse from occurring by limiting opportunities. It will be our aim not only to protect potential victims, but also to protect volunteers and staff from false accusations.

1. Selection and Screening of Workers

All persons who work with Children participating in our programs and activities will be required to authorize screening concerning prior criminal convictions, civil legal proceedings, lawsuits, and other matters. All screening forms and reporting documentation shall be kept confidential.

2. Church Monitor and Staff Assignments

Any location of an activity involving Children must be available for viewing and accessible to parents, staff, or other personnel at all times.

3. Waiting Period

All volunteers must be part of the Church body for at least 12 months before allowed to minister to or work alone and independently with Children.

4. Annual Review

The Church will provide on an annual basis an orientation and review about Child Abuse. This will include an overview of our Child Protection Policy and guidelines; indications, signs, or symptoms of child abuse; and information of where to direct Parents and Personnel who want more information. The annual review shall include an emergency response guideline and basic first aid application.

Reporting and Response to Incidents of Child Abuse or Sexual Misconduct

*In the event that an incident of abuse, sexual misconduct, or neglect is alleged to have occurred at **First Baptist Church, Georgetown** or during a Church sponsored program or activity, the following procedure shall be followed:*

Initial Reporting...the observer of the incident shall report it to the Pastor, Head of the Deacon Board, or the Chair of the Trustee Board within 24 hours. A written report shall follow as soon as possible.

Response...the individual receiving the report shall promptly convene a Response Team that will consist of the Pastor, the Head of the Deacon Board, the Chair-Person of the Trustee Board, and the Church Attorney.

- 1. The parent or guardian of the child will be notified.*
- 2. The individual alleged to be the perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct will immediately be suspended from working with children pending an investigation.*
- 3. Civil authorities will be notified, **First Baptist Church, Georgetown***

will comply with the legal and mandatory requirements of the District of Columbia. We will fully cooperate with any civil investigation.

- 4. Our insurance company, **GuideOne Insurance**, will be notified and we will complete an incident report. Any and all documents received relating to the incident and/or allegations will be forwarded to the insurance company.*
- 5. Our Church Attorney, **Atty. June Hatton Barr**, shall be our designated spokesperson to the media concerning the alleged incident. She will be consulted regarding all media inquiries and the release of information to the congregation.*
- 6. In order to protect the reputation and good name of both the accused and the alleged victim, information will only be disclosed to those authorized to receive such information under the laws of the District of Columbia or these procedures.*
- 7. A Pastoral visit will be arranged for those who desire it.*

It is the intent that the implementation of this policy will assist in the prevention of any opportunity for sexual misconduct with children or child abuse and will provide guidance on the appropriate responses to any allegations of sexual misconduct with children or child abuse within the Church or at any of its sponsored activities.