



# FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

WASHINGTON MI  
— EST. 1940 —

## Parent Guide

Dear Parents & Guardians,

Our Child Protection Policy will work best when you, the parents, understand what we're asking of our workers and of you. Your cooperation will go a long way toward a safe children's ministry. The following is an informal summary of some helpful information from our policy with some extra recommendations for you as parents. You can read and download the entire policy from our website. If you have questions, please email Kyle Jensen ([kjensen@fbcwm.org](mailto:kjensen@fbcwm.org)).

### General Principles

- Your child is always welcome in any of our main gatherings. Squirmy kids aren't a problem. Baby noise isn't a problem. We love having your kids here! No one will pressure you to use our children's ministries if you are uncomfortable doing so. There is a cry room located at the back of our auditorium if you need it.
- Unless your child is checked into one of our Children's Ministries, supervision is your responsibility. Please supervise your children directly while at church.
- Please treat our workers with kindness and respect. They love your kids, and they are working hard to make sure that they stay safe. If you're being asked to do something inconvenient, there's likely a really good reason why.

### Planning Ahead

- Please fill out a Children's Ministry Participation Form for your children. This will enable us to register them within our system. If we don't have this form from you, we can't let your children participate in our children's ministries.
- We require a parent/guardian to remain in the church building at all times while their child is checked in to any ministry of First Baptist Church.
- Please ensure that your children are healthy before attempting to check them in to any of our Children's Ministries. The Check-In

Coordinator may refuse to check your child in if they're showing signs of illness.

- We do not allow children or workers to bring food with them into the classroom or nursery. We do provide nut-free snacks and water that may be distributed to older nursery children or elementary children. If you don't want any snacks to be given to your child, please note that on your Children's Ministry Participation Form.
  - Our nursery workers will feed your child a bottle brought from home if desired. Please ensure that both the bottle and the diaper bag are clearly labeled with your child's name.
  - Nursing mothers are welcome to use the nursing room located in the nursery if their child needs to be fed during a service (you'll need your parent tag).
  - You may also notify the Check-In Coordinator that you need to check your child out temporarily to feed them (you'll need your parent tag). You're welcome to feed your child in the church kitchen.

### **Checking In**

- Please make sure that your child's restroom/diaper needs are taken care of before checking them in. If your child is potty-training, please inform the nursery workers when you drop your child off.
- If you have already registered your child with us, you may check in at the check-in station by telling the Check-In Coordinator your phone number. If you chose to receive a key tag, you can also scan that.
- The Check-In Coordinator will give you a nametag for each child. This must be placed visibly on the child where they would be unlikely to remove it (such as on their back, between their shoulders).
- The Check-In Coordinator will also give you a parent tag. This parent tag is unique to this service and is required for checking your child out, so you'll want to hang onto it. It may be split in two, and either half may be presented at check-out.
  - You are responsible to maintain possession of your parent tag for the duration of the service. People who are not listed on the parent tag may not be sent with the parent tag to pick up children (this includes older siblings or extended family)

unless you make prior arrangements with the Check-In Coordinator when you check your children in.

- All parents must stay outside of their child's classroom during check-in and check-out. Please stay outside the child-safe doors built into the counter in the nursery and outside of the Fellowship Hall. This helps us maintain a safe environment for all the kids in our care. If your child cannot remain in the classroom without you, please check them out of their classroom and rejoin the service with them.

### **During the Service**

- Please consider putting your phone on vibrate during the service. On the off-chance that a worker needs to get ahold of you, they will start by calling the phone number(s) on the child's nametag.

### **Checking Out**

- Please make your way to the Children's Ministry area promptly at the conclusion of the service. Please prioritize picking up your children as a kindness to our workers.
- Make sure you bring your parent tag to check out your child. Take the parent tag to the entrance of the classroom or nursery and present it to a worker. The worker will cross-check your tag with your child's nametag. If the tags match, they'll remove and destroy the child's nametag and release the child into your care.
- If you should lose your parent tag, here's what you can expect from our workers:
  - If our workers know you and your family, they'll require both parents to be present to pick up your children.
  - In ALL other situations (including times when both parents of a known family can't be present), you'll need an Elder or the Children's Ministry Director to accompany you back to the classroom and oversee the check-out process.
  - Our workers will NEVER release a child into the care of a solitary adult without the proper parent tag apart from the involvement of an Elder or the Children's Ministry Director.
- Our workers may begin calling you at the phone number(s) listed on your child's nametag if you aren't reasonably prompt in picking up your child.

## **Discipline**

- Our workers have been instructed never to use any form of corporal punishment on your children. Rather, they may verbally correct with kindness and/or use a brief “time-out” as appropriate.
- If your child is uncontrollable, our workers will seek to contact you either by phone or via the Check-In Coordinator. You will be asked to remove your child from the classroom.
- If your child must be removed, they will not be allowed to participate in that ministry again until approved by the Elders. This policy is in place to protect our workers from potentially problematic situations.

## **Response to Evacuation**

- In the event of an evacuation, please DO NOT try to retrieve your children. We have evacuation procedures in place, and we will return your children to you in a safe and secure manner. Please evacuate the building as instructed and find an Elder once outside. Follow his instructions to retrieve your children.

## **Response to Signs of Abuse**

- If you have reason to believe that your child was abused while involved in a ministry of First Baptist Church, please call the police. We will never discourage you from reporting reasonable suspicion of abuse.
- If you’ve called the police, please inform an Elder so we can begin responding appropriately as a church. We want to make sure that your family is being cared for and that our church takes the proper steps forward.
- If you’re unsure, please share your concerns with an Elder as soon as possible. We want to help you and ensure your child’s safety.
- Our church will cooperate fully with any investigation by the civil authorities into allegations of abuse.