

## **First Baptist Church of Littleton Safe Church Policies and Plans**

**Protecting Our Children** – these policies and plans are designed for all the volunteers at First Baptist who work with children and youth in Sunday School, junior church, bell and music groups, youth group and any other special educational/mission program or trips. It is designed to protect the children and the adults. The policies within must be reviewed at the start of every Church Sunday School year and all volunteers should attend a mandatory safe church session. If volunteers are unable to come they should schedule an appointment to go over all the material with the pastor Director of Christian Education or Board of Education Chair.

**The Board of Christian Education** has the specific oversight of these policies, with the support of **The Advisory Council**. The Board of Christian Education should review the policy annually and bring the Safe Church policy to the attention of the Advisory council for a vote of affirmation. All families should receive a copy of the Safe Church policy.

### **Location of Safe Church Policies & Plans Documents**

Copies of the Safe Church Policies and Plans will be kept in

1. The Church Office,
2. The Church Library;
3. The Pastor's office.

### **Policies and Procedures at First Baptist Church of Littleton**

#### **A. Recruiting & Supervising Volunteers**

1. All volunteers should fill out a Volunteer Application Form, which includes references, and work experience. The form will ask the question “ have you ever been convicted of or plead guilty to any crime(s)?”
2. All volunteers must agree to have a CORI/SORI check performed on them. If they have recently moved to Massachusetts, they must agree to have a criminal background check performed from that state. If a volunteer will not agree to have a background check performed they may **not** work with children and youth at First Baptist Church. *See new FBC CORI policy added 9/20/05 Appendage E.*
3. New persons attending the church may not work with children and youth alone for a period of six months to one year and only then after a criminal background check is done and references are checked.

#### **B. Code of Conduct or Do's and Don'ts to Prevent the Possibility of Child Abuse**

The possibilities of child abuse or accidents or misunderstandings happening in any setting where children and youth gather are a reality that cannot be ignored. Therefore, it is important that the programs at First Baptist clearly state what it believes is acceptable behavior between teachers, volunteers and children. The following **Code of Conduct** (Do's and Don'ts) concerning Sunday School, Junior Church, Youth Group and Musical rehearsals are policy and must be adhered to.

The First Baptist Church programs maintains an **Open Door Policy** meaning that parents, ministers and appropriate adults **may attend, drop-in, or observe any activity at any time.**

## **CODE OF CONDUCT or Do's and Don'ts**

### **GENERAL**

1. **NEVER** put yourself in a situation where you are alone in a building or room with a single youth or child. Follow the **“two staff”** rule. If you must speak with a youth/child in private, do so in plain view of others and never in a room with the door closed. **Leave doors open.** It is the goal of FBC to have two staff in all situations – if not in each classroom then to have multiple adults in an open area to prevent one adult-one child situations.
2. Do not let children wander around the building during Sunday School or worship. They **must** be in worship with their parents or in a junior church/bell program. Third grade and up may go to the bathroom alone – but the adult/parent/teacher responsible for that older child must be aware of their leaving, length of time gone, and return.
3. Do not let preschool and younger children go the bathroom alone
4. Dismissal time – **do** make sure the children are dismissed to their parent/parents. **Do not** let them run around the building to find their parents. Sunday School classes will be dismissed at 9:50am. Teachers will bring the children upstairs to their parents in the adult classroom or Christian Ed room. Make sure they are handed over to the correct adult. Preschool and younger children *should not* be dismissed alone and *should never* be wandering around looking for their parents.
5. Ask the parents to come to the classroom at 9:50am to pick up their children so that you see they are handed off to the correct adult. Preschool and younger children should not be dismissed alone and should never be wandering around looking for their parents.
6. Be aware of all allergies and fears of children in your classroom.
7. A married couple should not teach the same class or be the only ones running a youth group event. Members of the same family should not be running a class or activity alone.
8. Be aware of dangers from certain craft items – for example be aware of choking hazards with strings around necks.
9. We **DO NOT ALLOW** romantic relationships between youth leaders and youth group members.

### **PHYSICAL CONTACT AND TOUCH**

10. In the case of babies and toddlers, if it is necessary to assist with hygiene involving sensitive areas do so ONLY in the presence of other volunteers. Follow Universal precautions. See appendage A.
11. Do not inflict any discipline or play that would cause physical pain (i.e. hitting, slapping, shaking, squeezing, physical stress such as sit-ups, pushups)
12. Do discipline participants in such a way as to gain respect (caring for them, removal of privileges or bring their parents into the situation)
13. Do not touch the sensitive areas of ANY participant (genitals, breast, buttocks) or allow any casual contact with those areas, which might be misunderstood by the participant.
14. Do not hug (for more than 10 seconds of embracing, or arms around a participant) unless to physically assist a disabled person to be mobile.
15. Hugs in *public views* that are *quick* and “ok” with the child/youth are appropriate. Ask the child if it’s “ok” to give them a hug - if you’re not sure. It’s important to let participants know we care.
16. Do hold hands with participants if it is part of a worship/communion/prayer service and only in the presence of others. In other situations, do not hold hands with a youth participant.
17. Do not hold hands with older participants who may take it as a boyfriend/girlfriend relationship.
18. Do not wrestle or tickle (it could over stimulate)

### **TRIPS AND TRANSPORTATION**

19. Do not drive with a child/youth alone. If children & youth are being transported for an activity, it is best to have two adults in the vehicle. **Permission slips** must be used and if only one adult is able to drive it must be so noted on the permission slip.
20. On youth group outings away from the church, youth **may not** drive.
21. On a youth outing – do not toss participant in the water (if at a lake, ocean, or pool area). It could cause injury or be mistakenly understood. No practical jokes as they also may be misinterpreted.
22. Do not use nametags or similar items with the names of children on a field trip - in order to maintain privacy and prevent strangers calling them by their name.

### **C. Building Safety and Building Issues**

1. **Fire/Emergency procedures** - Be aware of the Emergency/Fire plan. A Fire drill will be held once a year in conjunction with the Trustees and Fire Department. (See appendage B)
2. **First Aid Kit** – First Aid Kits will be placed on all three floors. Be aware of where they are.
  - Basement level – on the counter across from the bathroom
  - Ground level – in the hall between the kitchen and CE room, by the phone
  - Top Level – on the costume rack next to the Pastor’s office, across from the Youth Room
3. **Police/Fire** - The Emergency number in Littleton is 911. The church is located at 461 King St, Littleton. Next to Hunter’s Appliance. Across from the Shell Station. In case of medical emergency move children away from incoming safety personal and vehicles.
4. **Nursery Issues** – be sure that all bottles are labeled and refrigerated. Giving the wrong bottle to a different child could be disastrous.
5. There should be **outlet** covers on all electric outlets in rooms where preschoolers/toddlers/babies are present.
6. Walls, woodwork, toys should be checked for peeling, chipped paint, sharp edges.
7. Windows are installed on the doors to all Sunday School & Youth rooms. They should **not be covered up** under any circumstances. Parents are allowed to check on their children at any time. Classroom doors must not be locked.
8. Be aware of new visitors to the church as well as any strangers who enter the building. If they are wandering around the building – please ask if you might direct them to the worship area. Please be mindful of the presence of strangers. If there are unaccompanied children present – please stay with the children and escort them to the company of their parents.

**D. Older youth – Discussion of sensitive issues.**

The nature of any church youth program invites and welcomes serious discussion on many of the tougher and delicate issues of life and faith. These discussions should be entered into openly and honestly, valuing the opinion and struggle of each and every person. The purpose of the First Baptist youth program is not to advocate for or against any particular issues, but to equip the youth in the Christian faith as they develop critical thinking skills, grow in their self-esteem, which will enable them to make their own Christ centered faith based decisions.

If sensitive issues and discussion topics are going to be addressed through out the year, it is always better to inform the parents of the curriculum ahead of time. A letter should be sent to the parents before the sessions informing them of the topics which may at times be discussed and let them know that it will be done with an attitude of respect.

**E. PARTICIPANTS RIGHTS at First Baptist Church**

All participants have the right to feel they are in a safe and secure environment. All people have the right to receive food, water, shelter, and, above all, humane treatment.

A participant has the right to not participate in any activity, provided it does not disrupt the overall program or other participants. A participant has the right to feel free from harassment by others. A participant has the right to deny others the opportunity to “play” with their belongings. This includes, but is not limited to such items as radios, hand held games, cameras, walkmen, *IPods*, crutches, wheelchairs and walkers. The best rule of thumb when it comes to human rights; if you would want or if you suspect something to be a right of yours, then it should be a right of your participant.

## **F. INCIDENT & INJURY REPORTS**

In the event of an injury or accident and incident/injury report should be filled out as soon as possible. This is done in order to protect the participant and the staff member and will ensure that proper procedures and care has been followed. In addition, if during an activity or session an inappropriate conversation, fight, altercation, or theft occurs an incident report should also be filled out. In the event that a conversation or situation may be taken out of context or misinterpreted, an incident report should be filled out. The pastor will keep the incident reports in a secure and confidential manner and will investigate any problems and follow up as necessary.

A copy of an incident/injury report is included at the end of this document. (see appendage C)

## **G. SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

The First Baptist Church of Littleton adheres to the policy on sexual harassment provided by the American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts.

The American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts (TABCOM) and First Baptist Littleton has never tolerated sexual harassment or harassment on any other basis protected by law, and we are taking this opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to that policy. We believe that all members are entitled to work/learn/play in an environment free of any form of harassment. TABCOM and First Baptist Littleton will strive continually to maintain an atmosphere in which the personhood of men and women, children and youth is affirmed and in which all people are valued as human beings rather than objects. Therefore, it is TABCOM’s and the First Baptist Church of Littleton’s policy to take immediate corrective action, including suspension or dismissal, in the event of harassment.

## **I. Guidelines Defining Sexual Harassment**

Although harassment based on any legally protected characteristic is prohibited, sexual harassment deserves special attention. The guidelines followed by TABCOM and the First Baptist Church of Littleton in defining sexual harassment are contained in the “Guidelines for Equal Employment Opportunity Commission” 1604.11 clarifying Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

1604.11 *Sexual Harassment* – Harassment on the basis of sex is a violation of Sec. 703, Title VII. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when (1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual’s employment, (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual, or (3) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an

individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

## **II. Procedure for Complaints of Sexual Harassment**

Any Sunday School or youth participant or leader who feels he/she is being sexually harassed by another, should report this fact to his/her teacher or the pastor(s). If the harassing party is one of the teachers, the participant may bring the matter to the immediate attention of the pastor or pastors. If the harassing party is one of the pastors, the participant may bring the matter to the immediate attention to the Chair of the Board of Christian Education or other Sunday School leader.

1. All claims of sexual harassment will be investigated within two weeks and to the extent reasonably possible, the complaint will be kept confidential, as is consistent with our obligation to investigate, prevent, and end harassment. All participants and staff are entitled to privacy, and we will extend this right to individual's accused of harassment to the extent possible.
2. A subcommittee (known as The Response Team) with no less than two members, one male and one female, will be established each year in preparation for the possibility of hearing complaints under this policy. The Response Team will be familiar with the terms of this policy, as well as the established procedure of the church for dealing with a complaint. See **Appendage F** for procedure for The Response Team.
3. Staff members and volunteer leaders found to be in violation of TABCOM's and First Baptist's policy on sexual harassment will be disciplined up to, and including, termination.
4. If no merit has been found for the charge, the accuser will be told what the findings were and why there was no harassment involved.
5. TABCOM's and First Baptist Littleton's policy against sexual harassment will be reiterated to both parties, and the complainant will be assured that he/she may come forward with any additional information or other complaints he/she feels necessary.
6. No one will be retaliated against based upon the filing of a complaint of sexual harassment.

## **H. CHILD ABUSE ISSUES**

### **1. Reporting:**

What are the reporting laws for the state of Massachusetts?

### **III. Massachusetts General Laws. Chapter 119, Section 51A**

“Any person paid to care for or work with a child in any public or private facility”

Who is obligated to report in Massachusetts?

As a staff or volunteer leader of a church program, you are mandated to report a situation of suspected child abuse if you believe abuse has occurred.

What is First Baptist Church's policy for reporting?

If you suspect abuse to a child has occurred you are responsible to:

- a) Call the Massachusetts Department of Social Services at **1-800-792-5200**
- b) Document your observations, concerns and facts that lead you to believe there is abuse.
- c) Inform the pastor or pastors.

**Reporting concerns & questions:**

Should I report when there is lack of solid evidence?

Yes. We should report any observations, knowledge or reasonable suspicions of abuse. (key words "reasonable cause or suspicion")

What happens when a report is made?

An investigation and evaluation may be made by the Department of Social Services. The department then has several options available in the event an unsafe situation is found.

Could there be repercussion against me?

As long as a report is made in good faith and if the person has reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering from such abuse or neglect, there are no repercussions. Please follow policy noted above.

If a young person begins to share a concern about child abuse and asks you not to tell anyone, what should I do?

You must gently but firmly tell the young person that you are required to report the alleged abuse to the State and that you will support them through the process. You **MUST** report the abuse.

**2. Definitions from the Massachusetts Department of Social Services Website and Manuals.**

The following is quoted directly from the Massachusetts Department of Social Services website at <http://www.state.ma.us/dss/>

- A. What is Child Abuse?
- B. Abuse (defined by 110 CMR 2.00)
- C. How to Help
- D. Who is a Mandated Reporter?

**A. What is Child Abuse?**

Child Abuse can include physical, sexual, or emotional injury to a child. Child neglect is a broader term, and one that is often misunderstood. The following are the most common definitions related to child maltreatment as defined by Massachusetts General Law (M.G.L.) and DSS Regulations (110 CMR), along with some basic explanations of these terms.

### **B. Abuse (defined by 110 CMR 2.00)**

The non-accidental commission of any act, by a caretaker, upon a child under age 18, which causes or creates a substantial risk of physical or emotional injury, or constitutes a sexual offense under the laws of the Commonwealth, or any sexual contact between a caretaker and a child under the care of that individual. This definition is not dependent upon location (i.e., abuse can occur while the child is in an out-of-home or in-home setting).

Abuse is any action that creates an injury or a substantial risk of injury to a child. Abuse can be physical, sexual or emotional. Physical abuse includes beating, shaking, kicking, burning or other types of bodily harm that can result in bruises, fractured or broken bones, internal injuries or death.

#### **Shaken Baby Syndrome**

Infants, babies or small children who suffer injuries or death from severe shaking, jerking, pushing or pulling may have been victims of Shaken Baby Syndrome. The act of shaking a baby is considered physical abuse, as spinal, head and neck injuries often result from violently shaking young children. It has been estimated that 50 percent of children who are victims of Shaken Baby Syndrome die from their injuries.

#### **Sexual Abuse**

Sexual Abuse occurs when an adult caretaker has any sexual contact with a child. This can happen through intercourse, which is considered rape under Massachusetts General Law. It includes any oral, genital or anal penetration. Sexual exploitation and molestation are also considered abuse. These are defined as contact or interaction with a child, that is used to satisfy an adult's sexual needs and desires. This includes any verbally enticing language, as well as fondling, masturbating or exposure of sexual organs by the adult. Sex between adults and children is never considered consensual.

### **C. HOW TO HELP from the Massachusetts Department of Social Services 1-800-792-5200**

If a child tells you that he or she has been hurt, call us now. If you are concerned that a child may be the victim of any type of abuse or neglect call us now. Sometimes, people are unsure if a situation is abusive. Even if you're in doubt, let us know. We have extensive experience in child protection. We may find no abuse or neglect has taken place. Yet, it's better to be safe than sorry. Your call is confidential.

Your call can also be anonymous. If you want to give your name, please know that the law forbids us from releasing it to anyone. If a family is investigated and asks for our paperwork, we white-out the name of the person who made the report. However, if the case ever goes to court, a judge may request this information.

When you contact a DSS Protective Screening Unit you'll be asked for some information. You may not have all the answers. Just tell us what you know regarding:

- The name, address, sex and estimated age of the child and any other children at the home
- The names, addresses and phone number of the adult's responsible for the child
- The full nature and extent of the child's injuries, maltreatment and/or neglect
- Any indication of previous injuries, abuse, maltreatment or neglect
- How great a risk you believe this may be
- How you learned of this
- Any action that has been taken to treat, shelter or assist the child
- Any other information that could be helpful in establishing the cause of the injuries

#### **D. Who is a Mandated Reporter?**

Under Massachusetts's law, The Department of Social Services (DSS) is the state agency that receives all reports of suspected abuse or neglect of children under the age of 18. State law requires professionals whose work brings them in contact with children to notify DSS if they suspect that a child has been – or is at risk of being abused or neglected.

Massachusetts law defines the following professionals as mandated reporters: with children at risk of abuse or neglect.

References to Massachusetts law in this Guide are citations from Chapter 119, sections 51A-E.

- Priest, rabbi, clergy member, ordained or licensed minister, leader of any church or religious body, accredited Christian Science practitioner, person performing official duties on behalf of a church or religious body that are recognized as the duties of priest, rabbi, clergy, ordained or licensed minister, leader of any church or religious body, or accredited Christian Science practitioner, or a person employed by a church or religious body to **supervise, educate, coach, train or counsel a child on a regular basis**. Mandated Reporters who are staff members of medical or other public or private institutions, schools or facilities, must either notify the Department directly or notify the person in charge of the institution, school or facility, or his/her designee, who then becomes responsible for filing the report. Should the person in charge/designee advise against filing, the staff member retains the right to contact DSS directly.

(end of document quoted from the Massachusetts Department of Social Services)

[http://www.mass.gov/Eeohhs2/docs/dss/can\\_mandated\\_reporters\\_guide.pdf](http://www.mass.gov/Eeohhs2/docs/dss/can_mandated_reporters_guide.pdf)

## **Appendage A**

### **UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS GUIDELINES FOR HEALTH CARE & CLEANLINESS**

The First Baptist Church recommends following universal precautions in dealing with ALL people.

**WASH YOUR HANDS:** Hand washing should be done before and after contact with participants. If you have assisted a participant with toileting, or eating, wash your hands well with soap and water when you are through. This will also protect you from possible infection of colds, flu, etc. Hands should be kept away from mouth and face – always wash your hands before eating or touching your face.

**DISPOSAL OF DIRTY DIAPERS:** Please wrap soiled diaper in a separate bag before throwing away.

**USE OF GLOVES:** In the nursery, the use of Gloves are required if contact with blood, bodily fluids, secretions or excretions is anticipated. This is particularly important for any person who has cuts or abrasions on their hands, since many contagious conditions are passed from blood to blood contacts. CHANGE gloves after working with EACH participant.

**WOUND CUTS;** These should be cared for using the above precautions. Gloves are to be worn for procedures such as dressing changes.

An **INCIDENT REPORT** should be filled out following any cut, injury or accident; Include details of how the accident happened and the procedure and steps taken following the incident

**Appendage B**  
**First Baptist Church**

## **Fire & Evacuation Instructions**

1. Know how many children you have in your classroom each Sunday and who they are. Keep track of their whereabouts (bathroom trips, parents taking them out early)
2. In case of fire, smoke detectors going off or FIRE alarm activation: Leave all belongings behind and proceed to the nearest exit in a line.
3. Classrooms with two teachers have one teacher lead the group to the exit and have the other teacher be the last in line, assuring that all children are out of the classroom. If only one teacher, start the line toward the exit and make sure all children are out of the room.
4. Once your group is outside, proceed to the **Littleton Post Office Parking lot** and take a headcount. Please locate a Pastor or Christian Education member to check in and inform them that everyone in your group is accounted for.

**DO NOT** - Let Anyone go back into the Building

**DO NOT** - go to Dunkin Donuts or a Convenience Store

**OUR MEETING PLACE:**  
**LITTLETON POST OFFICE PARKING LOT**

**Appendage C**

**INCIDENT/INJURY REPORT**  
for the First Baptist Church of Littleton

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary persons involved (specify participants and staff):

Precipitating cause of incident:

Description of incident:

Was participant sent home or did participant leave?

Was the participant picked up by someone other than expected?

Outcome (How was the situation handled?)

Did the participant receive medical treatment? Where? By Whom? At what Location?

Signature of volunteer making report \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewed by Pastor/ \_\_\_\_\_

Copies sent of report sent to \_\_\_\_\_

Further action needed \_\_\_\_\_

## 2007 First Baptist Church of Littleton Volunteer Application

Because we take seriously the responsibility of our caring for our children, it is the policy of the First Baptist Church of Littleton for adult volunteers to fill out a volunteer application form and be willing to have a CORI (Criminal Record) and SORI (Sexual Offender) performed. We thank you for your cooperation!

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Business Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Emergency Contact & Number \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Employer \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Special professional training, skills, hobbies:

\_\_\_\_\_

List (name and town) your present church \_\_\_\_\_

or other church you have attended in the past five years: \_\_\_\_\_

Other volunteer experience

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Any Special Certification (i.e. CPR, Medical, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

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Do you have a valid driver's license: Yes No

Driver's License#: \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever been convicted of or plead guilty to any crime(s): Yes No

If yes, describe each in full: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever been refused participation in any other youth programs? Yes No

If yes, explain: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please list three references, at least one of which has knowledge of your participation as a volunteer in a church or religious organization. The others may be personal references.

**Name & Phone**

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As a condition of volunteering, I give permission for Rev. Deborah J. Blanchard and Maria Reilly to conduct a background check on me, which may include a review of sex offender registries, child abuse and criminal history records. I understand that my volunteer position is conditional on the church receiving no inappropriate information on my background. I hereby release and agree to hold harmless from liability the First Baptist Church.

Applicant Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant Name (please print or type) \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security # \_\_\_\_\_

**Church Use Only:**

Background check complete by \_\_\_\_\_

## **FIRST BAPTIST CORI POLICY**

### Appendage E

Where Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) checks are part of a general background check for employment, volunteer work or licensing purposes, the following practices and procedures will generally be followed.

**I.** CORI checks will only be conducted as authorized by CHSB. All applicants will be notified that a CORI check will be conducted. If requested, the applicant will be provided with a copy of the CORI policy.

**II.** An informed review of a criminal record requires adequate training. Accordingly, all personnel authorized to review CORI in the decision-making process will be thoroughly familiar with the educational materials made available by CHSB.

**III.** Unless otherwise provided by law, a criminal record will not automatically disqualify an applicant. Rather, determinations of suitability based on CORI checks will be made consistent with this policy and any applicable law or regulations.

**IV.** If a criminal record is received from CHSB, the authorized individual will closely compare the record provided by CHSB with the information on the CORI request form and any other identifying information provided by the applicant, to ensure the record relates to the applicant.

**V.** If the First Baptist Church of Littleton is inclined to make an adverse decision based on the results of the CORI check, the applicant will be notified immediately. The applicant shall be provided with a copy of the criminal record and the organization's CORI policy, advised of the part(s) of the record that make the individual unsuitable for the position or license, and given an opportunity to dispute the accuracy and relevance of the CORI record.

**VI.** Applicants challenging the accuracy of the policy shall be provided a copy of CHSB's *Information Concerning the Process in Correcting a Criminal Record*. If the CORI record provided does not exactly match the identification information provided by the applicant, First Baptist Church will make a determination based on a comparison of the CORI record and documents provided by the applicant. The First Baptist Church may contact CHSB and request a detailed search consistent with CHSB policy.

**VII.** If the First Baptist Church reasonably believes the record belongs to the applicant and is accurate, based on the information as provided in section IV on this policy, then the determination of suitability for the position or license will be made. Unless otherwise provided by law, factors considered in determining suitability may include, but not be limited to the following:

- (a) Relevance of the crime to the position sought;
- (b) The nature of the work to be performed;
- (c) Time since the conviction;
- (d) Age of the candidate at the time of the offense;

- (e) Seriousness and specific circumstances of the offense;
- (f) The number of offenses;
- (g) Whether the applicant has pending charges;
- (h) Any relevant evidence of rehabilitation or lack thereof;
- (i) Any other relevant information, including information submitted by the candidate or requested by the hiring authority

**VIII.** First Baptist Church will notify the applicant of the decision and the basis of the decision in a timely manner.

## **First Baptist Church Response Procedure APPENDAGE F**

### **Procedures for Handling Complaints of Sexual Exploitation or Harassment**

#### **IV. A. Generally**

1. A subcommittee (known as The Response Team) with no less than two members, one male and one female, will be established each year in preparation for the possibility of having complaints under this policy. The Response Team will be familiar with the terms of this policy, as well as the established procedure of the church for dealing with a complaint.

#### **B Several approaches may be taken in addressing incidents of alleged sexual exploitation or harassment:**

1. The complainant can attempt to resolve the matter directly with the respondent, the individual accused of sexual exploitation or harassment.
2. The complainant can report the incident to the minister, in an effort to resolve the matter informally.
3. If an informal resolution of the complaint does not seem wise, appropriate, possible, or does not succeed, the complainant may request that the Response Team institute formal proceedings which shall include the following steps:
  - The Response Team shall advise the Minister and Moderator of the receipt of all complaints and shall keep them apprised of ongoing steps and actions taken. If either the Minister or Moderator is the subject of the complaint, this notice requirement shall not apply as to that person.
  - The Response Team or an appropriate subcommittee thereof, shall make determinations and take actions appropriate to resolve the matter. These may include:
    - a. **finding that sexual exploitation or harassment has occurred**, and that the appropriate body of the church is called upon to take action accordingly; such action may include one or more of the following:
      - (i) A formal reprimand, with defined expectations for changed behavior;
      - (ii) Recommending or requiring psychological or psychiatric assessment, counseling and/or treatment;
      - (iii) Probationary standing, with the terms of the probation clearly defined;
      - (iv) Dismissal from employment or authorized volunteer position by, affiliation with, or membership in, the church.
    - b. **Finding that sexual exploitation or harassment did not occur.**
      - The Response Team may seek the advice of legal counsel or others to advise it in performing its functions.

C. A written summary of the Response Team proceedings in such cases **will be** maintained.

D. The person(s) toward whom the inappropriate behavior is directed need not be the complainant. Moreover, neither consent nor acquiescence will excuse or exonerate inappropriate behavior. At any time the church may initiate or proceed with the formal complaint process.

E. In determining whether alleged conduct constitutes sexual harassment or exploitation, consideration shall be given to the record of the alleged incident(s) as a whole and to the totality of the circumstances, including the context in which the alleged incident(s) occurred.

F. Any person bringing a sexual harassment or exploitation complaint or assisting in investigating such a complaint will not be adversely affected in terms and conditions of employment or church membership or affiliation, or otherwise discriminated against or discharged.

G. If the complainant or respondent is not satisfied with the disposition of the matter by the Response Team, he or she has the right to appeal to the Moderator, or to the Vice Moderator if the Moderator is the subject of the complaint, who shall refer the matter to the Advisory Council. The subject of any such appeal to the Advisory Council shall be limited solely to whether the procedures of this policy were followed. The matter will not be reconsidered on the merits and the decision of the Advisory Council will be the final resolution of the matter. If the Advisory Council determines that the procedures of this policy were not followed, it will refer the matter back to the Response Team to complete the processing of the complaint in accordance with these procedures.

II. Child Abuse apart from any legal requirements, the First Baptist Church will make a report to appropriate authorities, including but not limited to the Massachusetts Department of Social Services (DSS) if at any time the church has reasonable cause to believe that a minor may be an abused or neglected child. Any Minister of the church who becomes aware of facts or circumstances that child abuse or neglect has occurred or that there exists a substantial risk that child abuse or neglect may occur in the reasonably foreseeable future shall immediately report the matter to **the Massachusetts Department of Social Services 1-800-792-5200.**

III. Clergy Apart from any disposition of the matter by the church, all allegations of behavior which call into question the fitness for ministry of any Minister will promptly be forwarded to the TABCOM Commission on the Ministry. The Commission on Ordained Ministry may be contacted at the office of The American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts at (781) 320-8100, x111, 20 Milton St, Dedham, MA 02026.