

CHILD AND ADULT ABUSE, BULLYING AND HARASSMENT PREVENTION FOR FOUNDATIONS FIRST CHRISTIAN

Revised August 24, 2024

Introduction

To help protect children, volunteers and staff, **FOUNDATIONS FIRST CHRISTIAN (FFC)** has adopted the following Youth and Adult Abuse Prevention Program. It is important that all **FFC** paid staff, parent helpers and volunteers understand and implement these guidelines to help prevent abuse of all types against children and adults. The following includes the Purpose and Definitions for these guidelines, the outlines of Protection and Prevention, and an Acknowledgement to be signed by those people working with children.

Purpose

These procedures are designed to reduce the risk of all kinds of child abuse as well as harassment or abuse of adults, in order to:

1. Provide a safe and secure environment for children, youth, adults, members, volunteers, visitors, and paid staff.
2. Assist **FFC** in evaluating a person's suitability to supervise, oversee, and/or exert control and guidance over the activities of children and youth.
3. Satisfy the concerns of parents and staff members with a screening process for paid staff and volunteers.
4. Provide a system to respond to alleged victims of abuse including but not limited to sexual abuse and their families, as well as the alleged perpetrator.
5. Reduce the possibility of false accusations of abuse including but not limited to sexual abuse made against volunteers and paid staff.

Definitions

The following terms used herein and are defined as follows:

1. *Paid Staff:* Any teacher, faculty member or employee of any type who is paid.

2. *Children/Youth/Minor*: Any person who has not reached his/her 18th birthday or the age of majority as defined by state law.
3. *Adult*: Any person who has reached his/her 18th birthday or as defined by state law.
4. *Volunteer*: Means an unpaid person who is not a member of FFC but is engaged in or involved in activities and who is entrusted with the care and supervision of minors or a person who directly oversees and/or exerts control or oversight over minors or adults.
5. *Member*: Members of Foundations First Christian Inc., include Board members, compensated staff, families of enrolled students and enrolled students. A and B members have committed to serving the FFC community at least 20 and 10 hours respectively (or the equivalent) per week.
6. *Sexual Abuse*: The employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any minor or adult to engage in, or assist any other person to engage in, any sexually explicit conduct or any simulation of such conduct for the purpose of producing any visual depiction of such conduct or rape, and in cases of caretaker or inter-familial relationships, statutory rape, molestation, prostitution, or other form of sexual exploitation of minor or adult, or incest with a minor or adult, or as defined by federal and state law. This includes and is not limited to unwelcome sexual remarks, jokes, advances, leering, whistling, or sexual gestures; sexual touching, fondling, molestation, assault, or other intimate physical contact; compelling another person to engage in a sexual act by threats or fear or undue influence; and providing or displaying pornographic materials to another person.
7. *Emotional Abuse*: Verbal or nonverbal conduct including mental exploitation, degrading communication, or humiliating or threatening conduct that may or may not include bullying or as defined by state law.

Protection and Prevention

Member, Volunteer and Employee Screening Procedures

The following screening procedures are to be used with FFC adult members, (including paid staff and Board members) and non-member volunteers who are entrusted with the care and supervision of minors or a person who directly oversees and/or exerts control or oversight over minors. All information collected should be maintained in confidence.

1. *Employment Application and Member/Volunteer Application*: Any adult member, including paid staff and Board members, and non-member volunteers who will work with a minor must complete the Employment Application and/or the Service Application. The release statement attached to the Application must be signed by the individual completing the Application to apply for and qualify for service. A completed and clear background check will also be part of this application

process. FFC reserves the right to terminate any member, employee or volunteer for issues that may be disclosed through this process or become known after the hiring process.

Our Employment Application includes questions regarding:

- Current and previous residence addresses.
- Current and previous employment, including addresses, dates, duties, titles, and reasons for leaving.
- Names and addresses of schools attended and degree(s) earned.
- References from previous employers and organizations that serve children.
- Pending criminal charges (where not prohibited by state law).
- Criminal history information.

Our Member/Volunteer Application includes questions regarding:

- Current address.
- Volunteer experience.
- Criminal history information.
- Personal references.

Applications include a statement, which the applicant should acknowledge in writing, certifying that statements provided in the application are true and complete, and any misrepresentation or omission may be grounds for rejection of the applicant or for dismissal if he or she is employed. This statement authorizes **FFC** to contact any individual or organization listed in the application.

2. Review all statements made in the application, paying specific attention to any gaps in time and irregular employment patterns or unexplained absence. Pursue these gaps with employers listed and in a subsequent interview.
3. Conduct interviews with qualified applicants.

If detrimental information is uncovered but the applicant remains desirable, discuss this information with the applicant. In the event the applicant is ultimately hired or accepted as a member or non-member volunteer, document the reasons for overriding the prior information.

Whenever possible, **FFC** will have a Board Member participate in the interview.

4. Contact listed references for employees, members and volunteers. Ask for any information that might help determine the applicant's suitability for the position. If a response is not received within a reasonable period of time, follow up and keep notes if possible.
5. Contact all listed references and employers for paid staff. Inquire as to the reason the applicant left and ask for any information that might help determine the applicant's suitability for the position. If a response is not received within a reasonable period of time, follow up and keep notes if possible.
6. *Criminal Background Check:* **FFC** will conduct a criminal background check on all members, including paid staff Board members and non-member volunteers who are entrusted with the care and supervision of minors or a person who directly oversees and/or exerts control or oversight over minors. All criminal background checks will be updated periodically, typically annually.

Confidentiality

Information obtained through the screening, application, reference check, interview, and criminal background check will be kept in confidence and shared with only those needing to be made aware of the findings, unless otherwise required by law. All information discovered or obtained through the above-referenced means will be kept in a secure location and access to it will be restricted if possible. These materials will be archived.

Supervision Procedures

Unless an extenuating situation exists, **FFC**:

1. Will have adequate number of screened and trained paid staff, members or non-member volunteers present at events involving minors. Supervision will increase in proportion to the risk of the activity.
2. Will monitor facilities during activities involving children.
3. Will release minors only to a parent or guardian utilizing sign-in and sign-out sheets found in the office if outside of the "normal" daily schedule. Otherwise, a minor will be released only to a parent, guardian or authorized person at the end of the day.
4. Will obtain written parental permission, including a signed medical treatment form and emergency contacts, before taking minors on trips and should provide information regarding the trip.
5. Will use two paid staff, members or non-member volunteers when transporting minors in vehicles.
6. Will require that young children be accompanied to the restroom and the adult member (including paid staff or Board member), or non-member volunteer wait outside the facility to escort the child back to the activity. Whenever possible, the escort will be the same sex as the minor.
7. Will encourage minors to use a "buddy system" whenever minors go on trips off of **FFC** property.

8. Will screen all adult members (including paid staff and Board members) and non-member volunteers and approve those individuals in advance for any overnight activities.

Behavioral Guidelines for Paid Staff and Volunteers

All Employees, Members and non-member volunteers will observe the following guidelines, which pertain to activities on FFC campus as well as FFC-sponsored events off campus:

1. Do not provide alcoholic beverages, tobacco, drugs, contraband, or anything that is prohibited by law to minors.
2. To the extent possible, **FFC** events that are co-educational will have both male and female chaperones.
3. Whenever possible, at least two unrelated adult members or non-member volunteers will be in the room when minors are present. Doors will be left fully open if one adult needs to leave the room temporarily and during arrival to the class or event before both adults are present. Speaking to a minor or minors one-on-one should be done in public settings where adult members or non-member volunteers are in sight of other people.
4. Avoid all inappropriate touching with minors. All touching shall be based on the needs of the individual being touched, not on the needs of the member or non-member volunteer. In the event a minor initiates physical contact and/or inappropriate touching, it is appropriate to inform the minor that such touching is inappropriate.
5. Never engage in physical discipline of a minor. Employees, Members and non-member Volunteers shall not abuse minors in any way, including but not limited to physical abuse, verbal/mental abuse, emotional abuse, and sexual abuse of any kind.
6. If you recognize an inappropriate relationship developing between a minor and adult, maintain clear professional boundaries and refer the minor to another individual with supervisory authority.
7. Anyone who observes abuse of a minor will take appropriate steps to immediately intervene and provide assistance. Report any inappropriate conduct to the proper authorities and officials of **FFC** for handling.

Disqualification

No person may be entrusted with the care and supervision of minors or may directly oversee and/or exert control or oversight over minors who has been convicted of the offenses outlined below, been on a probated sentence or received deferred adjudication for any offense outlined below, or has presently pending any criminal charges for any offense outlined below until a determination of guilt or innocence has been made, including any person who is presently on deferred adjudication. The following offenses disqualify a person from care, supervision, control, or oversight of minors:

1. Any offense against minors as defined by state law.

2. A misdemeanor or felony offense as defined by state law that is classified as sexual assault, indecency with a minor or adult, assault of a minor or adult, injury to a minor or adult, abandoning or endangering a minor, sexual performance with a minor or adult, possession or promoting child pornography, enticing a minor, bigamy, incest, drug-related offenses (certain offenses will be taken under advisement), or family violence.
3. A prior criminal history of an offense against minors.

Sexual Offender at FFC

FFC will not allow a person known to be a sexual offender to remain or become involved in FFC as an employee, parent helper or volunteer.

Behavioral Guidelines

Students are important contributors to the culture of the Christian community FFC seeks to build and maintain on their behalf. In a thriving, supportive community, members of all ages treat others as they would want to be treated - fairly and with kindness - recognizing that all people are made in God's Image and Likeness and are precious to Him. There are many ways this kindness is demonstrated, such as:

- Supporting, encouraging and defending one another by taking care to include others in games, teams, and social relationships with a goal to build friendships without excluding or hurting others. Students should report harmful behavior to a teacher, whether it is directed at themselves or someone else.
- Showing respect for others while on campus, while being mindful that, even while off campus, Members of FFC represent our learning community and our Lord, Jesus Christ.
- Recognizing that the classroom belongs to all students and disruptive behavior is damaging to the learning environment and the well-being of fellow students. Examples of disruptive behavior include: speaking out instead of raising a hand, making unnecessary noises, getting out of his/her seat without permission, bothering a neighbor, name calling and teasing or invading the privacy or property of others.
- Honoring God and each other by avoiding profane language or "trash talk." Verbal abuse of any adult or student is unacceptable. Verbal abuse is defined as derogatory language used while speaking to or when referring to a student or staff member.
- Showing respect for the learning community and the church by being quiet in the hallways, respecting and caring for the property of others.
- Honoring God's design for holy sexuality by abstaining from all inappropriate conduct, including suggestive language, offensive gestures, intimate physical contact and other behavior of a sexual nature.
- Students and adults are to use the bathroom consistent with their biological sex, with the exception of preschool children under direct adult supervision. Adults are encouraged to use the bathrooms on the upper floor, leaving the downstairs bathrooms for students.

Response to Sexual Abuse

FFC will respond promptly to investigate any accusation of sexual abuse. All accusations of sexual abuse will be taken seriously. It is important to be appropriately respectful to the needs and feelings of those who allege sexual abuse and those who have been accused of sexual abuse.

Note: *If an accusation is made, the Executive Director and a Member of the FFC Board should be notified.*

When an allegation is made involving sexual abuse, the person reporting the complaint is to be told about the guidelines and the procedures to be followed. The Executive Director and Member of the FFC Board will begin investigating the allegations and may use the assistance of legal counsel or other consultants. If the Executive Director or FFC Board Member is the individual accused of sexual abuse, then a second person from the FFC Board will fill in the role of the individual being accused, and they will conduct the investigation. The investigation will be conducted as follows:

1. Report the incident to appropriate authorities in accordance with the state mandatory reporting laws.
2. Report the matter to **FFC** insurance carrier.
3. Cooperate with authorities and the insurance carrier.
4. **FFC** may suspend (with pay for paid staff) the alleged offender while a confidential investigation is being conducted.
5. An official of FFC (and legal counsel or other consultants) will then meet with the governing body of **FFC** and present a report on their investigation, which will include findings and recommendations of actions.
6. An official of **FFC** will meet with the alleged perpetrator and notify him/her of the results of the investigation and recommendations for actions.
7. An official of FFC will meet with the alleged victim, along with his/her parents or guardians, and notify them of the results of the investigation and recommendations for actions.
8. During the investigation, an official of **FFC** shall maintain contact with the alleged victim and his/her parents or legal guardian and inform them of the actions taken and assist them in their process of healing.
9. An official of **FFC** (and legal counsel or other consultants) may meet with the alleged perpetrator, the alleged victim, and any others with knowledge of relevant facts.
10. Communicate with criminal and civil legal counsel of **FFC**.
11. Communicate with those affected by the ministry of the alleged perpetrator.

12. Hire a consultant or assign a spokesperson to respond to media or prepare a statement for the media if the need shall arise, subject to the approval of **FFC'S** attorney.

Youth and Adult Abuse Prevention Program Acknowledgment

These guidelines have been designed to guide and assist you when working with minors. The information establishes general practices and guidelines and should not be construed in any way as a contract of employment or continued employment. **FFC** reserves the right to make changes in the content or application of this program and to implement those changes with or without notice.

I have received a copy of the **FFC'S** Child and Youth Abuse Prevention Program. I understand it is my responsibility to become familiar with and adhere to the information contained herein. I understand that these policies are the property of the **Foundations First Christian**.

Print Name

Signature

Date