



FBC Sexual Misconduct Policy
(A subset of the Discipline Policy)

Psalm 34:18

"The Lord is near to the brokenhearted And saves those who are crushed in spirit."

Psalm 82:3-4

"Vindicate the weak and fatherless; Do justice to the afflicted and destitute. Rescue the weak and needy; Deliver them out of the hand of the wicked."

Policy Statement

FBC is committed to treating all people as the image bearers they are, free of sexual misconduct in all locations (e.g. church, travel, offsite events) and in all forms (e.g. in person, mail, electronic mail, social media) by all persons in our control (e.g. members, attendees, contractors). Reporting may be done to any pastor, elder, or directly to the Safe Church Team number on the website. If you think you might be suffering from sexual misconduct, we want you to know you are not alone, and we want to foster healing and justice by responding to every report with care and sensitivity.

Definition

The definition of sexual misconduct is intentionally broad including...

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and all other verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual or otherwise offensive nature, especially where:

- Submission to such conduct is made whether explicitly or implicitly a term or -condition of employment
- Submission to or rejection of such a conduct is used as the basis for decisions affecting an individual's employment
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment
- Offensive comments, jokes, innuendos, and other sexually oriented statements

Examples of the types of unwelcome conduct expressly prohibited by this policy include, but are not limited to the following:

- Unwanted and unnecessary touching, such as rubbing or massaging someone, stroking hair, or brushing against another's body
- Sexually suggestive touching
- Grabbing, groping, kissing, or fondling
- Promises of employment rewards in return for sexual favors, or threats if sexual favors are not provided
- Whistling and catcalls
- Lewd, off-color, sexually -oriented comments or jokes
- Foul or obscene language
- Leering, staring, stalking, harassment
- Suggestive or sexually-explicit posters, calendars, photographs, graffiti, cartoons
- Unwanted or offensive letters or poems
- Sitting or gesturing sexually

- Offensive e-mail or voicemail messages
- Sexually oriented or explicit remarks, including written or oral references to sexual conduct, gossip regarding one's sex life, body, sexual activities, deficiencies, or prowess
- Questions about one's sex life or experiences
- Repeated requests for dates
- Sexual assault or rape
- Any other conduct or behavior deemed inappropriate by Faith Bible Church

Prevention Ruth 2:9, Mark 12:30-32

This policy will be reviewed and signed annually by all church leadership (e.g. Pastors, staff, elders, deacons, teachers)

Specific policies will be in place to prevent abuse for ages birth through youth (e.g. Child and Youth abuse prevention policy, KIDZ INC volunteer screening procedure, background checks and sexual abuse awareness online training for KIDZINC staff and volunteers)

Security will be provided to prevent or identify abuse (e.g. security guards present at many church activities, video cameras are currently in place for all space used from birth through youth)

People requesting the church for a meeting will be advised by the receptionist if security is not provided at that time.

Security will be made aware of any attendee with known concerns from background checks or public records and appropriate restrictions will be put into place (e.g. sexual offender will not be able to work with or enter building where minors are present).

The policy statement will be included on the FBC website.

Policy compliance will be audited annually by the person in charge of ministry operations

Reporting

A reporting phone number will be included on the website which will go to the 'Safe Church Team'. The purpose of the Safe Church Team is to respond well to a victim and provide an investigation that is independent of church leadership, to minimize any appearance of bias.

At least one staff member will be tasked with knowing external reporting requirements (currently Care and Counseling Pastor).

If the Safe Church Team is contacted directly, they will immediately (same day) report the allegation to the Lead Pastor and Elder Chairman and Elder Vice Chairman (If the allegation is against one of these people, then only the other two are notified). If someone other than the Safe Church Team receives an allegation they will immediately (same day) report as above. In that case, the elder chairman or vice chairman will then contact the Safe Church Team to investigate or report to the authorities in the required time.

The Elder Chairman will report all allegations by the next day to the Elders and will ensure reporting to the church's insurance carrier.

Response

(Ex. 22:21-23, Num. 35:9-12, Ps. 34:18, 74:21. 22:25-7, Prov. 31:8-9, Matt 18:15-20, James 1:27

The Lead Pastor and Elder Chair will assess any action needed for immediate safety even before the completion of an investigation (e.g. suspend from serving considering whether staff or attendee, severity level such as physical touching, or repeat allegation).

All criminal activity will be turned over to the appropriate authorities and while FBC will not be a part of the investigation except in providing information we will strive to be attentive and caring throughout the process. (Note that any allegation concerning those under 17 is automatically considered criminal).

FBC will maintain a Safe Church Team of at least 3 and not more than 5 people including both genders. Before any decision is reached, the committee will consider whether they need HR or legal input. All members will be independent from the victim and accused. One member of the team of the same gender as the victim will serve as an advocate for the victim. The team will remain in place for 1 year at which time they may be extended or replaced. The Care and Counseling Pastor will recommend team candidates to the elders for approval. Team member characteristics include approachability, Biblical wisdom, empathy, availability, and background (legal, counselor, etc.). The team will get training in sexual misconduct from an outside counselor each time a new member is named. The team will keep all matters completely confidential from all others including family. The Care and Counseling Pastor will select the outside counselor.

Allegations will be assumed credible until proven otherwise by thorough investigation. Allegations should be written including names, dates, incident specifics and any potential witnesses. The victim will not be required to directly confront or have communication with the accused.

If there is potential for more victims, the committee will seek to identify them and investigate. Video footage will be reviewed to confirm there are not other inappropriate situations.

God's love for a victim and the truth will be valued above the reputation of the church.

The accused will be treated with grace and kindness that reflect God's love and hope. They may be asked to respond to immediate protective measures that will limit them, but will be treated with respect while protecting their full rights pending investigation.

Investigations will be done with a sense of urgency.

If abuse is determined, the church discipline policy will be the guide for corrective action. Written notes will be kept for a period of 7 years in the office of the Lead Pastor's administrative assistant. The following will be included in the file: a written statement of the allegation, all notes covering the evaluation, all written communication, all applicable video footage, a statement of how the issue was resolved.

The church will cooperate fully with any external authority.

After a decision is made, a plan of communication will be developed by the Safe Church Team and reviewed with the Lead Pastor, Elder Chairman and Vice Chairman. Everyone informed about a case will treat the issue as confidential.

Either the victim or accused can appeal the decision to the Elder Board.