

FBC Safety and Welcome Ad-Hoc Committee Current Practices and Recommendations

The members of this Ad-Hoc committee include: Crystal Bacon, Chris Chapman, Michael Hood, Warren Howell, Holly Ivel, Lynn Lingafelt, Ron Maness, Rodney Mobley, Leah Reed, Kimberly Taylor, Sabrina Tyndall, Ryan Willis, & Hollis Yelverton

Objectives

This committee was tasked to review procedures for welcoming new and returning guests and boundaries needed to maintain a safe environment for all who are in our space.

We began meeting in September to look at current procedures and discuss what issues need to be addressed. Through our series of meetings, we identified the following current practices and policy recommendations, sorted by times of the week our space is utilized. Following each section our recommendations are listed in red ink.

For the purposes of these recommendations, we have defined two categories of building space usage:

- *“Closed Group” - Any time this phrase is used, it means this is not a program that is open to the public. Only people actively participating in the program are permitted for the duration of the activity.*
- *“Open Building” – Any time this phrase is used, it means this is a time that is open to the public, and all are welcome.*

Further, these groups may be considered either “FBC Church-related” (such as our youth group activities) or “Outside” groups (those who use our space for other purposes, such as Gratitude meetings, the White Flag shelter, or MMIH handbell rehearsals to name a few).

WELCOMING VISITORS:

Overall, we agreed that our church is very warm and welcoming to all, and that remains a priority for us as a congregation.

Our Sunday greeters are consistently in place at the back door and in the Lewis Lobby to welcome all and direct new people to Sunday School classes.

Recommendations

- **Keep an updated Sunday School list in a place accessible by greeters.**
- **In coordination with the Hospitality Committee, revamp our “visitor packets” to have on hand each Sunday, easily accessible for the greeters to give newcomers.**

SUNDAY MORNING:

OPEN BUILDING - The church building is open to all on Sunday mornings from 9:15am - 12:15pm(ish). Currently, we have a weekly team of 3 greeters scheduled from 9:15 to 11:00am. They begin in the Lewis Lobby welcoming guests and then move to the sanctuary doors at 10:30am, ending their shift shortly after worship begins.

The scheduled RPD officer arrives at 9:15 and also begins their shift in the Lewis Lobby, at which time the doors are unlocked. The officer stays in this area until 10:45, and then moves to the Narthex/Salisbury Street door of the sanctuary, and sits off to the side, observing our space and using the iPad to monitor security camera feed.

If we don't have a scheduled officer, two greeters will remain in the Narthex during worship and our facility staff will remain at the throne in the Lewis Lobby.

Recommendations

- After Sunday school is over, have on-call Facilities staff lock all classroom doors.
- To provide coverage on the front two Pulpit Sanctuary door exits, **add a second weekly team of 3 people** to serve as Hall Greeters during the worship hour (10:45a-12pm). The goal of this group would be to help visitors and members find their way in the halls between the Lewis building and Sanctuary without wandering into unused spaces.

Our Minister with Community will recruit members for this team. The Hospitality Committee will then coordinate this group and manage the schedule for both teams of greeters (for Sunday School hour 9:15-11:00am and the Worship hour 10:45a-12pm).

- Determine a communication method between all greeters, ministerial staff, on-call facility staff and the RPD officer on duty.
- Research the possibility of adding cameras on the 2nd and 3rd floors of the Lewis building and Sanctuary Building hallways.

SUNDAY EVENING:

CLOSED GROUP - For youth group activities, **only adults** affiliated with the group (youth, siblings, parents, adult volunteers, and staff) will be allowed in those activities.

The youth minister has youth parents monitor the door to allow those who are participating in the building. The doors to the building are kept locked at all times, and the parent is oriented to only allow in those who are approved. There is no security officer on duty during this time.

Currently outside groups need prior approval from ministerial staff to schedule activities in the building during this time. The youth minister is informed of other scheduled groups to plan and ensure youth activities remain in separate spaces from other groups.

Recommendations

- No changes suggested – adequate procedures are already in place for our youth.

WEDNESDAY EVENING:

CLOSED GROUP - While we welcome visitors on Wednesday evenings, we require reservations for our meal, and have defined groups meeting during this time. Activities include music and missions for children and youth, handbells, seminars for adults, and adult choir at the end of the evening.

Currently, the RPD officer is scheduled from 4:45-7:45pm. The parking lot door gets unlocked as early as 4:30pm, and stays unlocked until at least 7:45pm, but it is not necessarily monitored. The officer is typically stationed in the Lewis Lobby with the security camera iPad.

The RPD officer moves to the back parking lot to observe those exiting from 7:15-7:45pm.

Recommendations

- Schedule a door monitor/greeter any time there is programming happening in the building, ideally keeping the outside door locked at all times. The goal would be to welcome and orient new guests and ensure those coming in are planning to participate, possibly assigning them a “shepherd” to orient them to the evening’s activities and to serve as a resource. We do not want individuals roaming the building when and where minors are participating in activities.
- Assign and coordinate door greeters as needed. Since this will be a church-wide policy, the group who is responsible for programming will be assigned the responsibility of monitoring the door. The Adult Ministries Council takes the lead in planning Wednesday nights, so this group would assign and coordinate door greeters for Wednesday nights.
- Assign invited guests a shepherd to orient them to programming activities. On occasion, we have guests come in only for a meal (which we typically provide for free). We determined that this is not a sustainable offering from a security standpoint. If they are not participating in the programs available, they should not be staying in the building. If a participant invites a guest to come in for dinner, that participant should be their “shepherd” for the evening.
- Set up a “resource station” inside the back parking lot doors so the door monitor/greeter has accessible information to share with guests looking for a meal, or other community resources to help to meet their needs.
- Have the on-call Facilities staff walk the building from 7:30-7:45pm ensuring all guests have left the building before the RPD officer shift ends. For groups meeting beyond scheduled Wednesday programming (such as adults attending choir, Nar-Anon, or other pre-approved, scheduled groups), each would be responsible for providing a door monitor to let in only their participants.
- Lock all unused spaces in the church (such as Sunday school classrooms) when programming is finished.

WEEKDAYS:

- **CLOSED GROUP** - Unless an individual has made an appointment with one of the ministers or staff members, no person should be wandering/loitering around unsupervised in our building. This is crucial all the time, but especially when either the Infant-Toddler Center or Weekday Preschool are in session.
- **OPEN BUILDING** - Our Clothing Ministry is open most Mondays from 10am to 12pm. Through the work of the Clothing Ministry planning team and volunteers, there is a current system in place to greet guests and make them feel welcome and also provide security and monitoring of the space to keep all in the building safe and secure.

Recommendations

- With proximity to ITC and Weekday Preschool areas and Clothing Ministry guests who are minors, and to comply with insurance directives, require all regular Clothing Ministry volunteers to complete a background check and have them renewed on a regular basis.
- Review and/or revise procedures with office volunteers and church staff for when and how to allow visitors and members into the building by buzzing them in at the door, to ensure those who are let in are scheduled to be there and/or a staff member or volunteer is available to receive or assist them.
- Address potential door mechanism issues to prevent guests from wandering in without notice. (Research possible replacement of magnet system and assess latching issues).

SAFETY PROCEDURES REGARDING CHILDREN IN OUR CARE:

- In terms of screening volunteers, those who volunteer in positions with our children (such as class leaders, extended session volunteers, etc.) must first be actively involved in the life of the church for at least 6 months.
- When scheduling leaders in classes, we assign two non-related adults in each class.
- For Sunday School and Extended Session, we have a coordinator position who rotates through to provide support and supervision.
- Currently, background checks are required and updated for any volunteer chaperoning on overnight trips.

Recommendations

- To comply with our current church insurance liability policy, require background checks for every volunteer who is currently working with children and youth in our church. Research options for this service.

SPECIAL EVENTS / OUTSIDE GROUPS

Currently, all outside groups wanting to use our building meet with the Church Administrator, Wayne Hager, to get the most current written facilities agreement.

Recommendations

- Have outside groups who are scheduled to use our space review and sign a written agreement of our policies and procedures, so there is a clear understanding of our expectations.
- Create a procedure for when multiple groups are utilizing spaces at the same time, especially when one group is a “closed group” and one is “open to the public” such that the safety of the closed group remains a priority.

OVERALL SAFETY / WELCOMING NEEDS RELATED TO OUR CURRENT SPACE:

The following suggestions include some improvements to our physical space:

- Revamp/create directional signs throughout the building, including:
 - Adding visible signs for where to find the bathrooms, the church office and other areas (Infant-Toddler Center, Weekday Preschool, etc.).
 - Updating/relocating the directory in the Lewis Lobby on the wall; (it is not noticeable in its current location and may not be used currently.)
 - Placing a directory at the parking lot entrance (and possibly all entrances) with this information: 2nd Floor – Office, 3rd Floor – Meeting Group Name; a sign that could be tailored, easily updated with current events each week.
 - Adding a directory in the elevator.
- Improve the current video/doorbell answering system. It can be difficult to identify who is at the door with the current video, and the audio is often hard to understand. Research other technology to replace the current system for improved communication and visibility. The new system ideally needs to coordinate with opening and closing doors and needs to be hardwired such that it works even if Wi-Fi goes down. (Ring technology may not have this capacity).
- Research possibilities for renovating space downstairs to create a more welcoming and engaging entry in the Lewis Lobby to greet guests entering the building, and to be able to direct them in a clear, hospitable way.