

# Good Practice Guidance

For use of Churches in the Nottingham and Derby District of  
the Methodist Church

Reviewed on 07.09.2023

Based on the

*Methodist Church Safeguarding Policies, Procedures and Guidance*

v. March 2023



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## **GOOD PRACTICE GUIDANCE - A TO Z**

Critical to good safeguarding is safer recruitment and safer working practices.

The Church has developed procedures for both these areas, informed by legislation and government guidance. As such, we aim to:

- carefully select and train all those with responsibility within the Church in line with safer recruitment principles
- ensure that any church activities are organised in such a way to avoid the risk of harm to everyone participating
- promote safe spaces that are inclusive and welcoming.

Below is an A to Z list of practices that promote safer working and safer space.

Church Council members and leaders of groups with children, young people and vulnerable adults will be familiar with and implement safer recruitment and safer working practices for all activities.

### **Accident book/ Incident Book**

An accident/incident book/log will be available on all church premises and at all church activities

Any injury, however slight, suffered by an employee, office holder or volunteer in the course of their involvement in any church activity will be recorded in the accident book/log, together with the particulars that are a requirement of statutory regulations.

### **Additional needs**

If a child or adult has additional needs the church will try to make reasonable adjustment to accommodate these needs. This may for example include changes to building or provision of large print resources.

Ask the person (or their parent/carer as applicable) how best to meet their needs.

If premises are being redesigned or refurbished, take the opportunity to anticipate the possible additional needs of future children and adults. Disability legislation requires organisations to take reasonable steps to meet the needs of disabled people, and this includes children.

### **Advocacy /access to an independent person**

Children need to know who they can talk to if they need help. Churches will display Childline posters and the contact number where they will be seen by children and young people. See [NSPCC](#)

Vulnerable adults will be allowed and encouraged to share any concerns they have with parents, carers or church staff/volunteers. The Methodist Church aims to create a culture of transparency and accountability, where secrecy will not be tolerated. For adults who lack

capacity, appropriate support and advice can be obtained from IMCAs. Find out more: [independent mental capacity advocate](#)

## **Anti-bullying**

### **POLICY FOR CHILDREN/ YOUNG PEOPLE'S GROUPS**

The Methodist Church works with children and families as part of its activities. The purpose of this policy statement is:

- to prevent bullying from happening between children and young people who are a part of our organisation or take part in our activities
- to make sure bullying is stopped as soon as possible if it does happen and that those involved receive the support they need
- to provide information to all staff, volunteers, children and their families about what we should all do to prevent and deal with bullying.

This policy statement applies to anyone working or volunteering on behalf of the church, Separate documents set out:

- our code of Safer Working practice for those who work with children, young people and adults
- our policies and procedures for preventing and responding to bullying and harassment that takes place between adults involved with our organisation are below.

Bullying includes a range of abusive behaviour that is

- repeated
- intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally.

We recognise bullying causes real distress and affects a person's health and development

- in some instances, bullying can cause significant harm
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- everyone has a role to play in preventing all forms of bullying (including online) and putting a stop to bullying.

We will seek to prevent bullying by:

- developing a code of behaviour that sets out how everyone involved in our organisation is expected to behave, in face-to-face contact and online, and within and outside of our activities
- holding regular discussions with staff, volunteers, children, young people and families who use our organisation about bullying and how to prevent it
- providing support and training for all staff and volunteers on dealing with all forms of bullying, including racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic and sexual bullying
- putting clear and robust anti-bullying procedures in place.

Our regular discussions with staff, volunteers, children, young people and families will focus on:

- group members' responsibilities to look after one another and uphold the behaviour code
- practising skills such as listening to each other
- respecting the fact that we are all different
- making sure that no one is without friends
- dealing with problems in a positive way
- checking that our anti-bullying measures are working well.

#### Responding to bullying

We will make sure our response to incidents of bullying takes into account:  
the needs of the person being bullied

- the needs of the person displaying bullying behaviour
- needs of any bystanders
- our activity, group or church.

We will review the plan we have developed to address any incidents of bullying at regular intervals, in order to ensure that the problem has been resolved in the long term.

#### Diversity and inclusion

We recognise that bullying is closely related to how we respect and recognise the value of diversity. We will be proactive about:

- seeking opportunities to learn about and celebrate difference
- increasing diversity within our staff, volunteers, children and young people
- welcoming new members to our organisation.

This policy statement should be read alongside our organisational policies and procedures including:

- safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures
- managing allegations made against a child or young person
- managing allegations of abuse made against staff and volunteers
- code of conduct for staff and volunteers • equality, diversity and inclusion policies.

Further advice may be sought from the NSPCC Helpline 0808 800 5000 or by contacting the District Safeguarding Officer on 07434 284633.

#### POLICY FOR ADULTS

All allegations of bullying of adults will be reported to the District Safeguarding Officer

The Methodist Church offers a warm welcome to everyone and strives to be a safer place for all where all forms of bullying and harassment will not be tolerated.

#### Policy Statement

Bullying and harassment are unacceptable and never excusable. The Methodist Church holds that all forms of bullying and harassment are unacceptable, inconsistent and incompatible with the Christian faith and a Christian way of living. The Methodist Church is committed to being a safer space for all. This means ensuring that members of the Methodist Church have an understanding and awareness of harassment and bullying and

know how to respond appropriately, and that there are processes in place to enable the issues to be addressed. Victims of bullying or harassment can expect to be listened to, taken seriously and supported when they disclose that they are subject to bullying or harassment. Local Churches can receive advice and support from their Church/Circuit Safeguarding Officer and the District Safeguarding Officer.

### Definition of Bullying and Harassment

There is no single definition of bullying. The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) states that bullying may be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. Bullying or harassment may be carried out by an individual against an individual (perhaps by someone in a position of authority) or involve groups of people. It may be obvious, or it may be insidious. Whatever form it takes, it is unwarranted and unwelcome to the individual. The Methodist Church offers this definition as follows: *Any behaviour, always involving a misuse of power, which an individual or group knows, or ought reasonably to know, could have the potential effect of offending, humiliating, intimidating or isolating an individual or group should be regarded as unacceptable. 'Unacceptable behaviour' changes its label to 'bullying' or 'harassing behaviour' when it causes actual harm or distress to the target(s), normally, but not exclusively, after a series of incidents over a prolonged period of time. Lack of intent does not diminish, excuse or negate the impact on the target or the distress caused. The degree of intent is only relevant in terms of how the behaviour should be challenged and the issues subsequently resolved. (Positive Working Together - A Short Guide 2015)*

Harassment refers to poor treatment related to a protected characteristic (ACAS 2020). These are as follows:

- age
- sex
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sexual orientation

While bullying itself is not against the law, harassment is. It is against the law to discriminate against someone on any of the above grounds under the Equality Act (2010).

You are also protected from discrimination if:

- you are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic, for example a family member or friend
- you have complained about discrimination or supported someone else's claim.

Bullying and harassment is behaviour that makes someone feel intimidated or offended (Workplace bullying and harassment - GOV.UK 2020). These terms are often used interchangeably and some definitions include bullying as a form of harassment.

## Types of Bullying

There are different types of bullying and some can be covert and therefore more difficult to spot, but others more obvious and therefore easier to identify. It is helpful to split these into different categories:

**Physical Bullying** This can include hitting, kicking, tripping, pinching, pushing or damaging property.

**Verbal Bullying** This can include name-calling, insults, snide remarks, teasing, intimidation, homophobic or racist remarks, or verbal abuse.

**Social Bullying.** This form of bullying can take many forms such as the following:

- Lying and spreading rumours
- Negative facial or physical gestures, menacing or contemptuous looks
- Playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate
- Mimicking unkindly
- Encouraging others to social exclude someone
- Damaging someone's social reputation or social acceptance.

**Cyber Bullying** This can happen at any time and be in public or in private and consist of the following:

- abusive or hurtful texts, emails or posts, images or videos
- deliberately excluding others online
- nasty gossip or rumours
- imitating others online or using their log-in.

**Bullying and harassment can happen:**

- face-to-face
- via a third party instigated by the 'primary' bully
- by letter
- by email
- via any digital platform
- by phone (mobile or landline).

**What is not bullying:**

- single episodes of social rejection or dislike
- single episode acts of nastiness or spite
- random acts of aggression or intimidation
- mutual arguments, disagreements or fights.

These actions can cause great distress, but do not fit the definition of bullying unless someone is deliberately and repeatedly doing them (National Centre for Bullying 2020). The Methodist Church has systems in place to deal with those within the church who are perpetrators of bullying or harassment. The Complaints and Discipline process is one route, but this does not apply to those who are not members of the Methodist Church. To help ensure any allegations of bullying or harassment are dealt with in a timely, sensitive and



comprehensive manner and that pastoral care for the victim is prioritized the procedures for any allegation or complaint are detailed in the flowchart.

SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS Bullying UK <https://www.bullying.co.uk> (A leading charity providing advice and support to anyone affected by bullying). Support and advice for anyone who needs help: National Bullying Helpline 0845 22 55 787  
<https://www.nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk/>

**Appointment of workers with children, young people and vulnerable adults.** See Safer Recruitment.

### Character References

If you are asked to write a character reference for court or a legal process consult the DSO. Further information about providing character references can be found in section 4.5.6 in [https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/24067/safeguarding\\_policy\\_procedures\\_and\\_guidance\\_for\\_the\\_methodist\\_church\\_oct\\_2021docx.pdf](https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/24067/safeguarding_policy_procedures_and_guidance_for_the_methodist_church_oct_2021docx.pdf)

### Church Safeguarding Officer Role description

#### Main tasks

- provision of support and advice to the minister and the stewards in fulfilling their roles with regard to safeguarding.
- ensuring that a suitable, signed church safeguarding policy is displayed at all times in the church on a safeguarding noticeboard, along with contact details for current safeguarding
- officers, national helplines and other suitable information. This will be renewed annually.
- recording of all safeguarding concerns that are reported to the church safeguarding officer, according to Methodist policy and practice and promotion of the requirement for others to do the same. All concerns will be reported to the DSO.
- Identify those who are required to attend safeguarding training and maintain records of attendance. Work with the circuit safeguarding officer to arrange Foundation training, or signpost people to the District website to arrange Advanced Training.
- attend training and meetings relating to the role
- work in partnership with the lettings officer, stewards and user groups to promote good safeguarding practice on church premises. Check hirers or premises have appropriate safeguarding policies in place
- Check that safeguarding is included as an agenda item at all Church Council meetings and report to the Church Council annually.
- inform all those with responsibility for recruitment, whether paid or voluntary, of their obligation to follow safer recruitment procedures
- advise the circuit safeguarding officer and/or DSO of any issues with compliance with safeguarding training, policy or safer recruitment requirements and respond promptly to any request from them about audit of safeguarding activities.
- Ensure safeguarding arrangements are in place for all ecumenical activities; (this

policy applies when the activity takes place on this church's premises).

### **Code of safer working practice with Adults –**

*To be issued to all workers and volunteers with adults*

You will:

- treat all adults with respect and dignity
- ensure that your own language, tone of voice, and body language are respectful
- record any incidents of concern and give the information to your group leader, sign and date the record
- share concerns about an adult or the behaviour of another worker with your group leader and/or the DSO. Complete the safeguarding concern form and send to the DSO.

You will not:

- invade the privacy of an adult who is washing and toileting
- use any form of physical punishment or restraint (except car seat belts)
- be sexually suggestive about or to an adult, or scapegoat, ridicule or reject an adult or group
- permit abusive peer activities (eg initiation ceremonies, ridiculing or bullying)
- show favouritism to any one adult or group
- allow an adult to involve you in behaviour that is overtly physical or sexual
- allow unknown adults access to adults deemed at risk of harm (visitors will always be accompanied by a known person)
- allow strangers to give lifts to adults in your group.

Visiting adults at home

- Most visits to adults in their own home will be straightforward as they will be well known to the church.
- However, when visiting someone new for the first time, visitors will let someone else know whom they are visiting (and when).
- Visiting in twos may be advisable, especially if the adult lacks mental capacity.
- Do not call unannounced. Call by appointment, telephoning the person just before visiting if appropriate.
- Be clear about what support can be offered to the adult if they ask for help with particular problems and refer back to the church if uncertain.
- Do not make referrals to any agency that could provide help without the adult's permission, and ideally encourage them to set up the contact.
- Never offer 'over the counter' remedies to people on visits or administer prescribed medicines, even if asked to do so
- Do not accept any gifts from adults other than token items, to avoid misunderstandings or subsequent accusations from the person or their family. If you have received any gift make your group leader aware you have received the gift and decide with the group leader what should be done with it. If someone wants to make a donation to the church, put it in a sealed envelope, mark it on the outside as a donation and obtain a receipt from the treasurer.

- Pastoral visitors will note the date when they visit people, report their visit to the pastoral secretary and say what is concerning or going well. The pastoral secretary will report safeguarding concerns to the minister and DSO as appropriate and agree what action will take place and who will record the incident.
- It is advisable to take a mobile phone on all visits.

### **Code of Safer Working Practice with Children and Young People**

*To be issued to all who work or volunteer with children and young people.*

#### Appropriate conduct (children)

It is expected that all leaders will:

- be aware of and understand the local safeguarding policy
- Treat all children and young people fairly and without prejudice, discrimination or favouritism
- respect differences in gender, sexual orientation, culture, race, ethnicity, disability and faith and challenge behaviour that demonstrates discrimination and/or prejudice
- ensure that your own language tone of voice and body language is respectful
- always aim to work with or within sight and hearing of another adult (who is not a family member)
- ensure that another adult is informed if a child needs to be taken to the toilet (toilet breaks will be organised for young children)
- ensure children and young people know who they can talk to or contact if they need to speak to someone about a personal concern and encourage them to speak out if they feel uncomfortable or concerned (signpost children and young people to Childline)
- respond warmly to a child who needs comforting but this will not involve physical comfort e.g. cuddles.
- advise children, young people and their parent/carers/guardians in advance if any activity requires physical contact and provide an opportunity to opt out or agree alternative activities.
- administer any necessary first aid with others around
- obtain consent for any photographs/videos to be taken, shown or displayed via any medium. This will be from the parent, carer or guardian and the young person if 12 years or over. Images will not be taken or stored on personal devices.
- record any incidents that concern you or make you feel uncomfortable and give the information to your group leader and/or the DSO (DSO). You will complete the Safeguarding Concern form and send to the DSO.
- You will contact the DSO immediately if you believe you have acted in a way which others may have interpreted as inappropriate or if a child has acted inappropriately towards you. Records will be signed and dated.
- always share concerns about a child or the behaviour of another worker with your group leader and/or the DSO on 07434 284633 and complete the safeguarding concern form
- dress appropriately when working with children and not wear anything revealing or that is not practical for carrying out the tasks as part of your role.

- Notify the group leader if you are given a gift. Do not accept gifts of over £15.
- You will report all concerns about bullying between children to your group leader who will ensure the group's anti-bullying procedure is followed.

You will not:

- initiate physical contact. If contact is initiated by the child pull away gently so physical contact is for the minimum amount of time.
  - invade a child's privacy whilst they are washing or toileting
  - play rough physical or sexually provocative games
  - use any form of physical punishment
  - make any relationship with a child (other than family members) through social networking or online
  - be sexually suggestive in the presence of or to a child, even as a joke
  - touch a child sexually, intimately, or forcefully
  - scapegoat, ridicule, reject or ignore a child, group or adult
  - allow abusive peer activities (eg initiation ceremonies, ridiculing or bullying)
  - show favouritism to any one child or group
  - allow a child or young person to involve you in excessive attention seeking that is physical or sexual in nature
  - give lifts to children or young people.
  - smoke any substance, vape or consume alcohol in the presence of children or when responsible for them
  - provide your personal contact details to a child or young person such as mobile number, email or social media contact.
  - share sleeping accommodation with children
  - arrange social occasions with children or invite them to your home outside organised group occasions (other than with the consent of parent, carers or guardians and where at least one other unrelated adult is present)
  - allow unknown adults access to children (visitors will always be accompanied by a known person)
  - allow strangers, and those who are not authorised, to give children lifts
- accept gifts, without notifying the group leader

### **Consent to share information**

The general principle around consent is that you will explain to children and adults at the outset, openly and honestly, what and how information will, or could be shared and why, and seek their agreement to share personal or sensitive information.

The exception would be where seeking consent would put that person at increased risk of significant harm, or would undermine the prevention, detection or prosecution of a serious crime, including where it might lead to interference with any potential investigation.

You will, where possible, respect the wishes of children, families and adults who do not consent to share confidential information. However, this will not stop you reporting concerns or seeking advice from the DSO, who will discuss the concerns in an anonymized way, wherever possible.

You may still share information if, in your judgement, there is sufficient public interest to override that lack of consent.

When in any doubt, you will seek advice from the DSO.

This is particularly recommended in relation to adults as the issues around capacity and consent are more complex.

### **Consent Forms**

Where the church is running a dedicated service for children or vulnerable adults best practice requires that all activities will have: a registration form including the following: name and address

- date of birth
- emergency contact details
- medical information
- any additional needs including activities person cannot take part in
- consent for emergency medical treatment
- consent for photographs/videos if relevant.

Consent forms will be available at every session of the relevant group for reference and use in case of emergency. Separate consent will be obtained for one-off events and activities (eg swimming) and also for outings, weekends away etc. Personal details will be stored securely.

### **Day trips – See Residential and Day Trips**

#### **DBS Checks**

The requirement for and the type of DBS check is determined by the role description. Contact with vulnerable groups and frequency will be clearly stated in the role description. Guidance on type of check, and whether barring information is required can be found on pp 17-18 of the Safer Recruitment policy, [policies here](#) There are additional resources on the District website, including role descriptors and a DBS check decision making flowchart. See <https://www.methodist-nd.org.uk/resources/safer-recruitment/>

#### **DDC Due Diligence Checking**

The organisation which processes DBS checks on behalf of the Methodist Church. Website <https://www.ddc.uk.net/>. For advice about DBS checks consult the safer recruitment policy. Contact DDC on 0845 644 3298 or 0116 260 3055

#### **Definitions**

Child

Anyone under the age of 18.

Vulnerable Adult

Any adult aged 18 or over who, due to disability, mental function, age or illness or traumatic circumstances, may not be able to take care or protect themselves against the risk of significant harm, abuse, bullying, harassment, mistreatment or exploitation.

For definitions of abuse and further guidance see *Safeguarding Policies, Procedures and Guidance*, March 2023, Sections 6.1 & 6.2

### **Disability and Accessibility**

The Equality Act 2010) [www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance) provides disabled people with protection from discrimination and gives legal rights in the areas of:

- employment
- education
- access to goods and services

What does accessibility mean in practice? Some examples:

- accessible toilets
- installing ramps
- providing information in various mediums eg braille, clearer signage
- providing sign language interpreters
- installing T-loops
- ensuring that wheelchair access is possible
- providing disability awareness training.

### **Domestic Abuse**

Domestic abuse is defined as the abusive behaviour of one person towards another if the persons involved are **16 years of age or over** and personally connected.

Behaviour is abusive if it consists of any of the following:

- Physical or sexual abuse
- Violent or threatening behaviour
- Controlling or coercive behaviour
- Economic abuse
- Psychological, emotional, or other abuse

All reports of Domestic Abuse will be taken seriously by the church and advice sought from the DSO. **We have adopted a separate Domestic Abuse policy and charter.** (Click: [policies](#) )

We pledge to:

- raise awareness about domestic abuse and its impact on individuals, children, the wider family and community
- ensure that the safety of individuals suffering abuse or seeking help is the first priority, and be aware of the need for confidentiality (unless there are safeguarding concerns) consider how best to provide support and information for anyone seeking help, including working with specialist agencies
- encourage discussion of how our church can be a safer space for victims and survivors of domestic abuse
- regularly discuss the Domestic Abuse policy, procedures, theology and principles that underpin it
- adopt the Domestic Abuse Charter and display this in our churches and on social media

- discuss domestic abuse with church leaders, including at the Church Council
- 

### **Drivers – see Transport for Church Activities**

#### **Drug and Alcohol Use**

Drugs and alcohol are strictly forbidden while participating in Methodist activities for young people. This applies to staff, volunteers, visitors, children and young people. If drug or alcohol use by children or young people is suspected, the group leader will be informed and a discussion will take place about informing parents/carers. The DSO will be informed. Consideration will be given to the need to inform the police and for a referral to appropriate support services. Alcohol is not generally allowed on Methodist Church premises.

#### **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

EDI (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion) and Unconscious bias

Our safeguarding policy is underpinned by the commitments outlined in the 'Strategy for Justice, Dignity and Solidarity' (The Methodist Conference 2021), aiming to ensure that we improve the experiences of all people and working towards a fully inclusive church. As part of achieving this we will also consider how unconscious bias can affect us and train ourselves to recognise it and modify our responses accordingly.

'Working towards a fully inclusive Methodist Church: A User guide to the strategy for Justice Dignity and Solidarity is available here: [User Guide](#) The EDI toolkit is available here: [Edi toolkit](#)

#### **E- Safety and Internet use with children and young people**

- Where WIFI is available on church premises, an acceptable use notice will be displayed with the access instructions. A template is available from here: [WIFI acceptable use policy](#)
- Create a social media policy and agreement. See [Social media guidelines in work with children and young people](#) You can also find a really helpful guide at : <https://bit.ly/DigitalSafeguarding>
- Ensure that all electronic communications are appropriate and professional.
- If using e-technology as a group activity, ensure that an adult worker knows and understands what is happening within the group.
- Do not make any relationship with a child (other than family members) through a social networking site or online.
- Maintain a log of all electronic contact with individuals or groups including messaging and texting.
- Ensure that parents or carers are aware of what their children or young people are doing and have given their written permission in advance.
- When demonstrations are being given, plan beforehand to ensure that all websites visited have material that is appropriate for the age group taking part.
- Where children and young people are given access to undertake their own searches on the Internet, get advice on search engines from <https://www.internetmatters.org/>

- Children and young people will be regularly informed and reminded of safe Internet use and accessing social media. If they have any concerns or fears, they will be encouraged to access websites such as NSPCC or Childline or talk to an adult.

### **Electrical equipment**

The use of electricity or electrical equipment in church buildings will comply with the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989. Church members can reduce or remove risks by, for example:

- reporting all faulty equipment
- switching off all equipment when not in use and disconnecting the equipment when leaving the room
- not undertaking electrical repairs unless qualified
- securing trailing leads and cables
- removing trip hazards
- never using electric socket covers

### **Emergency Contact and Support Organisations - See safeguarding policy**

### **Financial integrity**

Financial dealings can have an impact on the Church and the community and will always be handled with integrity. Those with authority for such matters will maintain proper systems and not delegate that responsibility to anyone else.

- Church workers will not seek personal financial gain from their position beyond their stipend, salary or recognised allowances.
- Church workers will not be influenced by offers of money.
- Church workers will ensure that church and personal finances are kept apart and will avoid any conflict of interest.
- Money received by a church will be handled by two unrelated lay people.
- Any gifts received will be disclosed to a supervisor or colleague where it will be decided whether they can be accepted.
- Do not canvass for church donations from those who may be vulnerable (eg the recently bereaved).
- Church workers and volunteers will notify their line manager, Minister in Pastoral oversight or the Superintendent Minister before taking on Power of Attorney, wills, bequests or acting as an executor for someone known to them through their church role, and the DSO will be notified.

### **Fire procedures**

- Children and adults will be aware of the fire procedures.
- Fire extinguishers will be regularly checked and smoke detectors fitted throughout the premises.
- A fire drill will be carried out regularly by all groups who use the premises regularly.
- Exits and fire exits will be clearly marked.
- Lights will flash for deaf people in event of a fire.
- Candles will be placed in safe places.
- Emergency lighting will be in place in case lights go off.



For further advice please see [Workplace fire safety](#)

### **First aid provision**

A first aid kit will be available on the premises where an activity is taking place. The contents will be stored in a watertight container and be clearly marked.

Each group will designate one worker to check the contents at prescribed intervals.

All staff and volunteers will be encouraged to have some first aid knowledge and the church or circuit will encourage access to first aid training.

A list of first aiders will be compiled and kept available.

A compliant first aid kit will be carried on all activities off-church premises and in all vehicles used by the church (both church-owned and private).

### **Forms**

Safeguarding Concern referral forms can be found here [Church safeguarding referral form](#)

The following forms are available from [safeguarding forms](#)

- Confidential declarations: All office holders will complete a confidential declaration.
- Safeguarding DBS verifier privacy notice
- Keyholder declaration – Form D: Before the keys can be issued the keyholder is asked to sign the declaration and acknowledge the conditions of issue. This includes a privacy notice and consent form.
- Exemption forms for ministers
- Volunteer with vulnerable groups – Form A

### **Health and medication**

When organising any activity involving vulnerable groups, health issues will be identified before the activity takes place. These may include noting any mobility difficulties and ensuring that the meeting place is accessible. They may also include matters relating to medication.

In such circumstances, the event leader will ensure that:

- the person required to administer any medication is identified
- parents/carers are consulted so that medication requirements are fully understood
- all medication is stored securely
- consent forms are signed
- a record is made of any medication given, and signed and dated

### **Health and safety**

It is the responsibility of the Church Council to ensure that proper health and safety processes are in place. Health and safety will be managed as part of all activities and reference will be made to the following policies and guidance:

- Health and safety regulation HSE
  - Methodist Insurance offer a self assessment for churches for Health and Safety. [Click here](#)
- [Health and Safety](#)

### **Hire or use of church premises**

See Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes (TMCP) Lettings policy, flowchart and guidance: Click: [Third party use](#)

- For Martial Arts groups with under 18's (including Karate, TaeKwonDo, KungFu, Judo, see **Martial Arts**)
- Many churches own buildings, which they hire out to community groups and others. Some of these undertake work with children. The observance of 'reasonable care' by both parties is a standard insurance condition.
- The hiring body is required to ensure that children and adults who may be vulnerable are protected at all times, by taking all reasonable steps to prevent injury, illness, loss or damage, and will carry full liability insurance for this.
- Lettings officers/ property stewards will ensure the safety of children and vulnerable adults when booking multiple groups for the premises at the same time. Group leaders will be made aware of any associated risks.
- For both one-off and regular hiring, it is recommended that a written hiring agreement be used. Please refer to the TMCP website for further information and hiring agreements, including the declaration: [www.tmc.org.uk/property/letting-property-and-third-party-use](http://www.tmc.org.uk/property/letting-property-and-third-party-use).
- If the hiring body is required to register with Ofsted, the church will ask to see the registration certificate and record that it has been seen.
- Church Councils are required to ensure that those who use their premises under licence or who hire the premises for regular or occasional use are given a copy of the local church safeguarding policy and declare their willingness to comply with the safeguarding policy of the Methodist Church or equivalent procedures (such as Scouting and Guiding national safeguarding policy). This information will be prominently displayed.
- All non-church groups are required to have their own safeguarding policy which will be checked against this checklist [Safeguarding Policy checklist](#)

### **Insurance**

The church will check adequate insurance is in place to cover all activities as well as the church building. The policy details will be displayed in a public place.

A duty exists upon the insured to research and adopt best practice based upon current and ongoing guidelines. It is also a condition of a policy of insurance that any incident or allegation is notified to the insurer immediately. Failure to comply with this requirement may prejudice any cover provided by the policy. Public liability insurance indemnity limits will be kept under regular review.

Guidance is available from Methodist Insurance or your insurer.

NB It is advised that copies of insurance policies are retained for 50 years, given the potential for historic abuse claims.

### **Internet – (See E- Safety and Internet use with children)**

#### **Keyholders for church premises**

The Methodist Church is not obliged to give anyone access to church premises unless it is required as part of their role for regular hire.

Before any keys are issued, a declaration (form D) will be signed acknowledging conditions of issue. The form can be found at [users and hirers](#)

**Martial Arts**

Martial Arts groups which use the church premises will be signed up to the Safeguarding Code in Martial Arts and display the Safeguarding Code Mark. More information available here [safeguarding code in martial arts](#)

**Mental Health: See Self Harm and Mental Health****Mixed-age activities (eg. Choirs and music and drama groups)**

Care will be taken to ensure that children in mixed-age activities such as choirs, music and drama groups are supervised by DBS checked adults at all times.

DBS checks are not required for adults in those groups who do not have specific responsibility for children. Separate changing facilities will be provided when needed for adults and children and different sexes.

Children will be supervised only by those authorised to do so.

New Places for New People NPNP

See: Pioneer ministers, New Places New People NPNP and new projects

**OFSTED registration**

Churches which provide groups for children under the age of 6 who attend regularly for more than 2 hours at a time or more than 14 days in any period of 12 months will need registration with Ofsted unless an exemption applies. See [out of school clubs](#)

Many children's groups provided by churches will be exempt but will still be required to inform Ofsted of the activity. For further details see [OFSTED](#)

**Pastoral Conversations**

Relevant safeguarding information may be disclosed in the context of a pastoral conversation. A minister or pastoral visitor is not prevented from disclosing details of any crime or offence which is revealed in the course of a pastoral conversation or a confession within that context. The requirements about information sharing apply. Wherever possible, ministers and others engaged in pastoral conversations on behalf of the Church will explain the limits of confidentiality in pastoral relationships. This will occur at the beginning of a pastoral relationship or meeting. Convicted offenders can sometimes come forward with new information. There is no bar in law to prevent ministers passing on such information to the authorities.

**Peer on peer abuse**

All concerns about peer on peer abuse (abuse perpetrated by children/ young people on other children/young people) will be reported to the group leader and the DSO and Children's Services.

**Photography and Video Recordings**

The rights of everyone to choose whether or not to be photographed will be respected. The following measures are taken to safeguard children and young people at Methodist Church activities:

- Display prominently a notice/notices advising people that that the event will be photographed/recorded; example available <https://www.methodist-nd.org.uk/> under safeguarding.
- Any captions for photographs will not contain the names of individual young people.
- Group photos will be used rather than images of individuals where possible.
- Consent for any photographs/videos to be taken, shown or displayed via any medium. This will be from the parent, carer or guardian and the young person if 12 years or over. Images will not be taken or stored on personal devices. Consent forms for parents, carers and young people 12 and over are available on the District Church website, under safeguarding <https://www.methodist-nd.org.uk/>
- Images will only be taken or used of young people in appropriate clothing for the activity, undertaking activities that will portray them and the Church in a positive light.
- Where external media or photographers are present, they will be notified of safeguarding policies and procedures. They will not be left in unsupervised, sole contact with a child or young person and will wear an I.D. badge.
- Do not photograph any child who has asked not to be photographed or any child who is known to be under a court order.
- No external party will be allowed unsupervised access to young people while taking images or speaking to children and young people.
- Photographs and video recordings will be stored securely in a password-protected folder on an encrypted system which is only accessible to appropriate and necessary parties. Images will not be retained on any personal, mobile storage devices do not use children's names in photograph captions. If a child is named, avoid using the photograph.
- At large events arrange video or photographic stills of the participants in action or set up photo opportunities at the end. This allows the performance to go ahead with limited interruption, and allows any child who is not to be photographed to take part. If there are children or young people at the event for whom you do not have a completed consent form, put the notice about photographs in prominent places or in the event programme. Make sure that official photographers are aware of the guidelines for photography.
- Guidelines for photographers are available at <https://www.methodist-nd.org.uk/> (See safeguarding)
- Where a person becomes aware images of a child or young person in a Methodist context are being used inappropriately this will be reported immediately to the DSO on 07434 284633.

### **Pioneer ministers, New Places New People NPNP and new projects**

Across the district our vision and ministry is constantly evolving. It is essential that whenever a pioneer ministry or new project is being discussed and planned or when an existing project becomes 'Church' that safeguarding is carefully considered before plans are fully developed and the work commences so that all safeguarding aspects can be fully considered. Safeguarding should be like a golden thread running through all aspects of the work/project. Please contact the DSO, who will support you.

### **Record-keeping (church activities/events)**

As a guide, records of the following will be kept by the local church:

- safeguarding incidents (on the form available here) [Safeguarding concern referral form](#)  
Safeguarding records to be kept for 75 years.
- church workers employed or working as volunteers with vulnerable groups (this will include start and finish dates, DBS check details, references, application forms, all posts held, training completed)
- risk assessments of church events and activities
- hiring arrangements.

IMPORTANT NOTE There is currently a legal requirement to retain and not destroy all documents relating to the care of children.

### **Registers**

A register will be taken of those attending church activities and will include:

- the date of the activity
- the type of activity
- a list of adults present
- a list of children/young people present.

Registers will be retained until all children and young people contained in the document reach the age of 21. If this is unknown there is a standard retention period of 20 years from the creation of the document.

### **Residential and Day Trips**

The Circuit and DSOs will be informed of the dates, times and location, and leader contact details for all overnight/residential trips involving children and young people/vulnerable adults.

For guidance see: [organising events](#)

A sample consent form for off-site activities is available here [off site activities](#)

### **Risk Assessments for Activities**

Activity risk assessments will be undertaken and a written record made before any activity takes place. These will be approved by the event leader/minister and retained securely in case they need to be seen at a later date (e.g. as a result of an accident taking place).

Activity risk assessments will include:

- the nature of the activity
- the location
- transport needed and associated issues (eg insurance)
- staffing levels/gender
- experience of staff
- ages of the group attending, abilities, additional needs
- medical and health needs of the group

- emergency planning
- identification of risks
- action needed to address the risk
- a named person for resolving risk issues

### **Risk of Children Running Away**

If there is a risk of a child running away if you contact parents/ carers or social care/ police on behalf of a child, do not share with the child who you have contacted. Contact the child's parents if appropriate; or police/ children's social care.

Make a note of the child's physical appearance including what they are wearing.

Consider moving to a place in the building that is less open so they cannot easily abscond. Find something to occupy them.

If a child leaves the premises

Do not try to stop them physically

Do not follow the child as this can make their behaviour more unpredictable and may put them at risk of greater harm. Contact parent/carer and police as appropriate.

### **Safer Recruitment**

Safer recruitment will be undertaken for all roles and responsibilities in the church.

Safer recruitment begins with a role description. For sample role outlines (which you can edit to suit local circumstances) check out District [N&D Safer Recruitment](#)

You can find the Connexional Safer Recruitment and DBS guidance here:

[Safer Recruitment](#)

The Church Safeguarding Officer and the Minister in pastoral charge are responsible on behalf of the Church Council for ensuring all parts of the safer recruitment policy are followed for all appointments.

The Methodist Church uses Due Diligence Checking (DDC) for all DBS checks.

<https://www.ddc.uk.net/>

See the flowchart for who needs a DBS check here <https://DBS flowchart>

DBS checks will be renewed every 5 years in the Methodist Church. Ministers in pastoral charge are normally verifiers, though this task may be delegated to a lay person.

### **Self-harm and mental health needs - Adults**

If anyone expresses thoughts of suicide and another person believes there is immediate risk to life help will be sought immediately from the police/ambulance service by calling 999.

Many adults live with mental health needs at some point in their lives. Where the behaviour of an adult with mental health needs is posing a risk of harm to themselves or other people advice will be sought from the DSO.

### **Self-harm and mental health needs – Children and Young People**

If any child or young person expresses thoughts of suicide and a person believes there is an immediate risk to life immediate help will be sought from the police/ambulance service on 999.

Parents/carers will normally be informed whenever a young person expresses suicidal thoughts or self-harms or talks about self-harming or is concerned about their mental

health. If you think this may put the child/young person at risk you will consult the DSO and your local children's services for advice first.

All concerns about self-harm and children/young people's mental health will be referred to the DSO here [Safeguarding concern referral form](#)

### **Staffing levels required for children's/ young people's activities (staff/child ratios)**

It is the responsibility of the group leader to arrange sufficient supervision to ensure the safe and effective management of all activities. The following issues will be considered when determining appropriate numbers of helpers:

- the gender of the group – if mixed, then staff members will also be mixed, where possible
- Only those aged 18 or over can be counted as part of the staff to child ratio
- Any leader/helper will be more than 3 years older than the upper age limit of the group
- the duration of the activity
- the competence and experience of the staff providing oversight and support
- the age of the group – staff will have the appropriate skills for the age they are working with
- children with additional support needs, such as physical disabilities, behavioural or mental health problems – extra staff may be necessary
- the size and layout of the room or outdoor area and any particular issues that may be relevant to that location.
- the nature of the activity, what this involves and what tasks there will be for children
- There will be a minimum of two unrelated adults present at any activity (it is recommended that there be at least one male and one female) in line with the ratios below. Staff ratios are based on a risk assessment e.g. increased ratios for outdoor or activities.

Required Adult to Child Ratios (as recommended by the NSPCC)

0 – 2 years 1 adult to 3 children 1:3

2 – 3 years 1 adult to 4 children 1:4

4 – 8 years 1 adult to 6 children 1:6

9 – 12 years 1 adult to 8 children 1:8

13 – 18 years 1 adult to 10 children 1:10

### **Specialised activities**

Where the group is participating in a specialised activity such as adventure activities, advice will be sought from the relevant licensing authority/organisation. Advice is also available from the Well for Workers: [organising events](#)

### **Training**

- The Methodist Church offers two levels of Safeguarding Training; Foundation and Advanced.
- Training is refreshed every 4 years.
- A person refreshes their training at the highest level of training.

The responsibility for the provision and record-keeping for **Foundation Training** is with the Circuit. A list of all who need to undertake Foundation training, and those who are warmly invited can be found here [Foundation training required attendance](#)

The responsibility for the provision of Advanced Module training is with the District. A list of those who need to undertake the Advanced Module and those who are warmly invited is available here.

All places will be booked via the District website [Advanced Module Training N&D](#)

Link here: <https://www.methodist-nd.org.uk/resources/safeguarding/>

For all queries relating to Advanced Module training please contact the safeguarding training administrator on [padistrictsafeguarding@methodist-nd.org.uk](mailto:padistrictsafeguarding@methodist-nd.org.uk)

The Methodist Church now recognises the Church of England Safeguarding training. This means if a person has undertaken training with the Anglican church recently they do not have to undertake the same level of training with the Methodist Church. Training will be renewed at least every 4 years.

The Foundation Module, C1, is equivalent to Foundation Module. The Leadership Module, C2, is equivalent to the Methodist Church Advanced training Module.

### **Transport for church activities**

The safety of people being transported to and from church activities is the responsibility of whoever makes the transport arrangements. If parents make those arrangements themselves, then they are responsible for ensuring the safety of those being transported.

If the church makes the arrangements, safety becomes the responsibility of the church.

Transport or travel between church activities will usually be the responsibility of the church.

### **Drivers**

- All those who drive children/adults on church-organised activities/rotas will have held a full and clean driving licence for more than two years.
- Drivers who are not children's/adults' workers will be recruited for the task through the normal recruitment process. (For children and young people this role requires an enhanced DBS with Barred list Check. For driving adults who may be vulnerable this will normally require an enhanced DBS check)
- Any driver for church organized activities who has an endorsement of six points or more on their licence will inform the group leader and the DSO.
- Any driver who has an unspent conviction for any serious road traffic offence will not transport children/adults for the church.
- Drivers will always be in a fit state (ie not overtired, not under the influence of alcohol, not taking illegal substances and not under the influence of medicines that may induce drowsiness).
- An annual licence check will be undertaken for all drivers using the website [check driving licence](#).
- Insurance and MOT details will be provided to the church
- Cars that carry children/adults on behalf of the church will be comprehensively insured for both private and business use.



- The insured person will make sure that their insurance covers the giving of lifts relating to church-sponsored activities.
- Cars will be in a roadworthy condition. They will have up-to-date road tax and MOT (where applicable)

#### Transporting Children

- All children/passengers, including the driver, will wear suitable seat belts and use appropriate booster seats. If there are insufficient seat belts, additional passengers will not be carried.
- Children will not be transported in a private car without the prior consent of their parents or carers.
- At no time will the number of children in a car exceed the usual passenger number.
- There will be a non-driving adult escort as well as the driver.
- If, in an emergency, a driver has to transport one child on his or her own, the child will sit in the back of the car another leader notified and a signed record will be kept of the reason for this.

#### Transporting adults

- Care will be taken in assisting adults to board or leave vehicles and put on seat belts.
- Drivers will be aware of moving and handling issues when assisting adults and transferring their mobility aids.
- Lifts to GP or hospital appointments or adult social care facilities are regulated activity and require additional safer recruitment procedures including an enhanced DBS check with barred list check.

#### Minibuses/coaches

- Workers/helpers will sit amongst the group and not together.
- If noise or behaviour appears to be getting out of control, stop the vehicle until calm is restored.
- Before using a minibus, the most up-to-date regulations for its use will be checked and a trial drive undertaken.
- The driver will check their licence covers the class of vehicle they intend to drive.

#### **Unaccompanied children**

The Methodist Church advises that children under 11 years of age will be taken to and collected from church or a church activity. If a child is over 11 years of age it remains the responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure the child is cared for and arrives and leaves the church safely.

If an unknown child arrives at a church or church activity you will take the following actions:

- Welcome the child
- Confirm their name and request parent/carer contact details
- Contact the parent/carer to confirm where the child is, what the activity is, who is looking after the child and get permission for the child to remain and inform the parent/carer of the end time of the activity.

- Ask the parent/carer for any essential medical information eg details of allergies or health conditions
- Request that a consent form (sent with the child) is completed for future attendance.
- If the child refuses to give information about parent/carer or something they say, or how they present, causes you to believe they may be at risk of harm contact Children's Social Care, using the Out of Hours service if necessary. You may also contact the DSO for advice and support.

### **Uncollected Children**

When a child is not collected from an activity the following steps will be followed:

- The parent or carer will be contacted to confirm whether it is safe for the child to go home unescorted.
- If both the parent/carer and activity leader deem it is safe for them to go alone, the child will be given instructions to go home safely. The parents/carers will be invited to discuss future arrangements.
- In the event the parent/carer cannot be contacted, the police will be called and the child reported as missing from home. If there are safeguarding concerns explain these to the police. Keep trying to contact the parent/carer unless the police advise you otherwise.
- Two leaders will always remain with a child in these circumstances.

### **Venues for church groups with children and adults**

- A health and safety check of the premises will be undertaken regularly by the church. The group leader is responsible for notifying the church property secretary of any health and safety concerns relating to the premises. Similar principles apply if the group meets away from church premises.
- The meeting place will be warm, well-lit and well ventilated. It will be kept clean and free of clutter.
- Fire exits will be checked regularly and clearly marked. The fire exits will not be blocked or obstructed.
- Electric socket covers will never be used as they present a safety hazard.
- Toilets and hand basins with hygienic drying facilities will be easily available.
- Appropriate space and equipment will be available for any intended activity.
- Where food is regularly prepared for the group the facilities are checked by the Environmental Health Office. Leaders have Food Handling and Hygiene training and will provide up to date certificates on request.
- A first aid kit is available, up to date, and leaders know where to find it
- The Childline telephone number (0800 1111) will be on display for children's groups
- The safeguarding poster is displayed including local contact numbers for social care
- The certificate of insurance is displayed
- There is access to a telephone/ mobile phone

### **Vulnerable Children, Young People and Adults**

Some children, young people and adults are more vulnerable than others to being victims of sexual exploitation, human trafficking and modern day slavery.

If it is suspected that a child, young person or adult is affected by any of these issues, the group leader or minister will be informed and further advice sought from the DSO who will support you in contacting the statutory authorities.

### **Websites for Churches**

Methodist churches and organisations creating their own websites adhere to these safeguarding policies and procedures and regularly review the pages of their sites so that they remain up to date, effective and safe. The Internet is constantly evolving and changing, and the Methodist Church guidelines change accordingly. You are strongly advised to review the guidelines regularly to ensure your compliance. See Methodist Church Social Media Guidelines: [here](#)

Anyone designing a website for a Methodist church, will ensure the safety of children and young people and vulnerable adults.

Website builders will follow these guidelines:

- Photographs are personal data as far as data protection legislation is concerned and will be used responsibly. Where a person requests their photograph is not included this decision will be respected.
- Obtain written and specific consent from parents or carers before using photographs of anyone under 18 on a website. This will include providing a privacy notice. Where the person in the picture is 12 or over, their consent will also be sought, in addition to that of parents, carers or guardians.
- Children and young people under the age of 18 will not be identified by name or other personal details, including email or postal addresses and telephone numbers.
- When using photographs of children and young people, use group pictures. When a photograph of an individual child or young person is used, names or other personal details will not be used in any captions.
- Care will be taken when advertising special events for children and young people.
- Ensure that the image files are appropriately named – do not use names in image filenames or alt tags.
- Only use images of children in suitable clothing to reduce the risk of inappropriate use.
- Consider advertising events simply by giving contact details of the adults responsible.
- When posting activity ideas for children or young people, ensure they comply with good safeguarding practice.

### **Whistleblowing**

Concerns about safer practice and behaviour will always be raised as soon as possible. If any member, volunteer or employee feels that any adult is or has behaved inappropriately towards a child or vulnerable adult, they will speak to the DSO or statutory services. See link to the Methodist Whistleblowing Policy: [whistleblowing policy](#)

### **WIFI Acceptable Internet usage policy**

Where WIFI is available on church premises, an acceptable use notice will be displayed with the access instructions. A template is available on the Methodist Church website safeguarding section which can be modified for local use. [WIFI acceptable use policy](#)

**Young people as leaders/helpers**

- If young people (under 18) are being encouraged to develop their leadership skills through helping with younger children they will always be supervised by an appointed worker
- Young people aged 16&17 will be safely recruited to their roles and their suitability assessed
- The worker will be responsible for ensuring good practice and safeguarding procedures are followed and the work they are doing is appropriate to both their age and understanding.
- The worker will also be responsible for ensuring that the safeguarding needs of the young leaders/helper are met.
- Young people will be at least 3 years older than the upper age limit of the children's group.