



Solihull Methodist Church

Feel at Home

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy

The following policy was adopted at a Church Council held on 04 June 2018.

1. Principles

The Methodist Church

The Methodist Church, along with the whole Christian community, believes each person has a value and dignity which comes directly from God's creation of male and female in God's own image and likeness. Christians see God's intention in this being fulfilled by God's re-creation of us in Christ. Among other things, this implies a duty to value all people as bearing the image of God, and, therefore, to protect them from harm.

Solihull Methodist Church:

- is committed to the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and vulnerable adults and affirms that the needs of children or of people when they are vulnerable are paramount;
- recognises that none of us is invulnerable but that there is a particular care for those whose vulnerability is increased by situations, by disabilities or by reduction in capacities;
- recognises that this increased vulnerability may be temporary or permanent and may be visible or invisible, but that it does not diminish our humanity and seeks to affirm the gifts and graces of all God's people;
- affirms the Connexional statement reiterated in *Creating Safer Space 2007*:
'As the people of the Methodist Church we are concerned with the wholeness of each individual within God's purpose for everyone. We seek to safeguard all members of the church community of all ages.'
- recognises the serious issue of the abuse of children and vulnerable adults;
- recognises that abuse may take the form of physical, emotional, sexual, financial, spiritual or institutional wrongdoing or neglect, may take place via online or phone contact as well as face-to-face engagement; or may result from situations of domestic violence, modern slavery or radicalisation;
- acknowledges the effects these may have on people and their development (including spiritual and religious development);
- accepts responsibility for ensuring that all people are safe in its care and that their dignity and right to be heard is maintained;
- accepts responsibility to support, listen to and work for healing with survivors, offenders, communities and those who care about them;
- takes seriously the issues of promotion of welfare so that each of us can reach our full potential in God's grace.

Solihull Methodist Church commits itself to respond without delay to:

- take action on any allegation or cause for concern that a child or vulnerable adult may have been harmed, whether in the church or in another context;
- challenge the abuse of power of anyone in a position of trust;
- ensure that Connexional Safeguarding Policy, government legislation and guidance on safe practice in the circuit and churches are implemented;
- arrange appropriate support, advice and training for lay and ordained people that will ensure people are clear and confident about their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults who may be vulnerable.

2. Appointments and Roles

- Solihull Methodist Church affirms and gives thanks for those who work with children and vulnerable adults in the church setting. All members will be made aware of a shared responsibility for the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, whether on our premises or part of our visiting programme.
- All designated workers with children and vulnerable adults share a particular responsibility and will be provided with appropriate safeguarding training and guidance.
- The following designated persons have particular roles:

The Minister, the Revd Kenneth Howcroft:

- exercising oversight of all safeguarding arrangements;
- being a point of reference for any person who has a concern or has received/wishes to make a complaint;
- ensuring consultation with Safeguarding teams at Church, Circuit and District levels;
- being a channel of liaison with external agencies e.g. social services;

In the Minister's absence:

Reference shall be made to one of the following, who will consult with the Circuit Safeguarding Officer or one of the Circuit Superintendent Ministers before undertaking any action on behalf of SMC: Jenni Kitson, Judy Lingard, Jackie Farmer.

Jenni Kitson: Safeguarding Officer, responsible for...

- Advice on safeguarding issues;
- Monitoring and promotion of best practice within SMC;
- Lay verification and renewal of DBS checks;
- Maintenance and annual review of Central Register;
- Coordination of training provision;
- Being a designated Senior Person for reference in absence of Minister;
- Liaison re safeguarding policy and good practice with Circuit, District and Connexion.

Judy Lingard: responsible for ...

- Support of Jenni Kitson regarding records, advice and training;
- Being a designated Senior Person for reference in absence of Minister.

Jackie Farmer: responsible for...

- Safeguarding of vulnerable adults (with the Minister)
- Being a designated Senior Person for reference in the absence of the Minister.

3. Good Practice

In pursuance of good practice:

- All people will be treated with respect and dignity.
- Those who act on behalf of the Church will not meet or work alone or unobserved with a child or vulnerable adult, unless this is necessary for pastoral reasons.
- The church premises will be assessed for safety for children and vulnerable adults and included within the risk assessment report submitted annually to the Church Council. This will include fire safety procedures and the extent to which the premises and equipment are suitable or should be made more suitable.
- Any church-organised transport of children or vulnerable adults will be checked to ensure the vehicle is suitable and insured and that the driver and escort are appropriate (see further Annexe 4).
- The taking of photographs and making of video-recordings at any event involving children and young people shall only be carried out with the knowledge and permission of the SMC authorised person in charge of the event.
- The signed agreement of parents/carers will be required either on the occasion or in advance, before any recording of images takes place. Any such data/ images and associated names shall only be used as agreed by the parents or carers.
- A form will be used to gain permission for the use of photographs and videos of children and all people. These records will be held securely in the church office.
- For further guidelines on photography and video at church events, please see Annexe 2.
- For guidelines for the use of computers and mobile phones for communicating with children and young people, please see Annexe 3.

4. Appointment and Training of Workers with children and young people

- These workers will only be appointed after a satisfactory DBS disclosure.
- Each worker will be expected to undergo basic safeguarding training within the first few months of appointment.
- Any additional training needs of each worker will be considered (e.g. food hygiene, first aid, etc.)
- The SMC Safeguarding Team will review all appointments on an annual basis.

5. Guidelines for working with children, young people and vulnerable adults

- Pastoral visitors will be supported in their role with the provision of basic safeguarding training upon appointment.
- A copy of the policy and a simple leaflet will be issued to each worker with children, young people and vulnerable adults outlining good practice and systems.
- The leaflet will be reviewed annually with this policy.

6. Ecumenical events

- Where ecumenical events happen on Solihull Methodist church premises, safeguarding is the responsibility of this Church Council.

7. Events with Church Groups off the Premises

- Adequate risk assessments and appropriate staffing will be ensured for such events.
- Where there is a trip away involving young people, a “home” contact with telephone contact numbers of all taking part will be available.
- Notification of the event will be given by the organisers to one of the church’s safeguarding team, named in paragraph 2 above.

8. Other Groups on Church Premises

- All letting agreements will include a suitable form based on Form E, until the Methodist Church produces a suitable replacement form.
- Where the building is hired for outside use, the person signing the letting agreement will be given a copy of this policy, via email or website link.
- The Lettings Secretary will consider potential safeguarding issues in negotiating lettings.
- Where relevant, other groups who have their own policy will be asked to produce a copy for our records.

9. Procedure for Dealing with Concerns or Complaints

Church Organised Activities

- For all Church organised activities, concerns or complaints connected with any aspect of safeguarding will be acknowledged by the worker, officer or volunteer with responsibility for it and must be notified as soon as possible to the Minister or one of the persons named in 2 above.
- The worker, officer or volunteer will note carefully any observations and the nature of the complaint and explain the action he /she intends to take.
- Apart from clarifying the issue, the worker, officer or volunteer will make no attempt to investigate or to interview any of the individuals concerned.
- The matter must be treated as highly confidential and not shared with anyone.

Non – Church Organised Activities

- A complaint/concern will be registered as above by the Church member to whom the complaint is addressed.
- He/she will then refer the matter as above to the Minister or named responsible person.
- In the case of national organisations or organisations under the aegis of trustees, the Minister or designated person will liaise with the relevant authority, after first consulting the Circuit minister.

In the event of the Minister being unable to resolve the complaint, the complainant will be referred to the Methodist Church Complaints System. The local complaints officer is the Revd. Tony Malcolm.

10. Key Concepts and Definitions

- **Vulnerable Adults:** any adult aged 18 or over, who by reason of mental or other disability, age, illness or other situation is permanently or, for the time being, unable to take care of her or himself, or to protect her or himself from significant harm or exploitation.
- **Safeguarding and protecting children or vulnerable adults from maltreatment:** preventing impairment of their health and ensuring safe and effective care.
- **Adult/child protection** is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity which is undertaken to protect children/specific adults who are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm, including neglect.
- **Abuse and neglect** may occur in a family, in a community and in an institution. It may be perpetrated by a person or persons known to the child or vulnerable adult or by strangers, by an adult or by a child. It may be an infliction of harm or a failure to prevent harm.

11. Review

This is a dynamic policy, supporting the Church in being a safe supportive and caring community for children, young people, vulnerable adults, and for those affected by abuse.

It is based on the Methodist Safeguarding Handbook (2010) and subsequent updates and advice.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Church Council. The date of the next review is **February 2019.**

Signed Chair of Church Council

Date:

Solihull Methodist Church

Safeguarding for Workers with Children and Young Adults

1. Principles

- We believe that every person has a value and dignity which comes directly from the creation of male and female in God's own image and likeness. Among other things this implies a duty to value all people as bearing the image of God and therefore to protect them from harm.
- We are therefore committed to:
 - the care and nurture of, and respectful pastoral ministry with all children, young people and adults;
 - the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults when they are vulnerable;
 - the establishing of safe, caring communities which provide a loving environment where there is informed vigilance as to the dangers of abuse.

2. Good Practice

- We will carefully select and train all those with any responsibility within the Church, in line with Safer Recruitment principles, including the use of criminal records disclosures and registration with the relevant vetting and barring schemes.
- We will respond without delay to any complaint or concern which suggests that an adult, child or young person may have been harmed.
- We will seek to work with anyone who has suffered abuse, developing with them an appropriate ministry of informed pastoral care.
- We will seek to challenge any abuse of power, especially by anyone in a position of trust.
- We will seek to offer pastoral care and support, including supervision and referral to the proper authorities, to any member of our church community known to have offended against a child, young person or vulnerable adult.

In all these principles we will follow legislation, guidance and recognised good practice.

3. External Groups

We expect that external organisations meeting on our premises will comply with their own similar safeguarding principles.

4. If you receive a complaint or have cause for concern.....

Church Organised Activities

- For all Church organised activities, concerns or complaints connected with any aspect of safeguarding must be notified immediately and in confidence to the worker, officer or volunteer with responsibility for it.
- The matter will be acknowledged by this person and notified as soon as possible to the Minister or one of our designated responsible persons (see below).
- The worker, officer or volunteer will note carefully your observations and the nature of the complaint and explain the action he /she intends to take.
- **Please make no attempt to investigate or to interview any of the individuals concerned.**
- **If you receive a complaint/concern from a child, your task is solely to listen carefully and note what he/she is saying.**

Non – Church Organised Activities

- Involve a senior worker, officer or volunteer, if available, or register the complaint/concern as above. Refer the matter as above to the Minister or named responsible person.
- In the case of national organisations or organisations under the aegis of trustees, the Minister or designated person will liaise with the relevant authority, after first consulting the Circuit minister.

In the event of the Minister being unable to resolve the complaint, the complainant will be referred to the Methodist Church Complaints System. The local complaints officer is the Revd. Tony Malcolm, Superintendent Minister of the Birmingham Circuit, based at Dorridge.

5. Senior Designated Persons at Solihull Methodist Church

In referring complaints/concerns about any aspect of safeguarding, please notify if possible:

- **The Minister, Revd Kenneth Howcroft**

Or if he is not available:

- **Either Jenni Kitson, or Judy Lingard, or Jackie Farmer.**

Treat the matter as highly confidential and do not share it with anyone else.

Annexe 2

Guidelines for taking photographs and videos at church events

1. Photographs are personal data as far as data protection is concerned, and must be used responsibly.
2. All people taking photographs for official use at the event should register with the event organiser.
3. Ensure that there is specific written consent from parents or carers before using photographs in official documents (e.g. church magazine, promotional material, website) or on social media. A generic form can be used for regular church family members; however, this will not cover visitors or newcomers. Those not giving permission could have their photo blurred.
4. Photography or recording should focus on the activity, not on a particular young person.
5. Images should focus on small groups rather than individuals.
6. If a young person is named in an article, avoid using their photograph.
7. Children and young people under 18 should not be identified by name or other personal details, including email, school, postal address or telephone numbers.
8. All children must be appropriately dressed when photographed.
9. Any concerns regarding inappropriate behaviour or intrusive photography should be reported to the event organiser.
10. Care must be taken when advertising special events for children and young people.

Annexe 3

Guidelines for communicating with children and young people using email, text, mobile phones and social media

1. Obtain written parental permission to communicate by email and/or text.
2. Use group emails and group texts rather than to individuals.
3. Use clear unambiguous language to avoid the risk of misinterpretation and avoid text-speak.
4. End simply with your own name so it is clear who sent the message.
5. Email/text must only be used to communicate specific factual information.
6. Skype and any other webcam or visual communication via the internet is not permitted.
7. Communication via live chat facilities is not permitted.
8. Any computer or similar device used for accessing the Internet on the premises which can be used by children, with or without the permission of the group leader, should have appropriate secure, parental control settings applied to restrict access to unsuitable sites.

For Further guidance, please refer to:

Methodist Church Social Media Guidelines for Children and Youth Workers

www.methodist.org.uk/mission/children-and-youth/the-well-for-workers/downloadable-resources/social-media-guidelines

TRANSPORT POLICY

Introduction

Transport arrangements to and from church activities are the responsibility of parents (when transporting children), or individuals (when transporting adults), if the parents or individuals make the arrangements among themselves. They are the responsibility of the church if the church or church activity organises them.

It should be clearly understood by all concerned at which point responsibility for the child or adult being transported is passed to the church worker or volunteer concerned and at which point it is returned.

Policy

Any church-organised transport of children or vulnerable adults will be checked to ensure the vehicle is suitable and insured and that the driver and escort are appropriate.

Drivers who are not Church Children's Workers or Church Adults' Workers should be recruited for the task through the Church's normal recruitment processes.

All those who drive children or adults on church-organised activities or rotas should have held a full and clean driving licence for more than two years. Any driver who has an unspent conviction for any serious road traffic offence should not transport children or adults for the church.

In practice, this means the following.

1. At the regular DBS check, the authorised checkers will ask to see a valid driving licence that meets the above criteria, a valid MOT certificate (if applicable), and evidence that relevant insurance company for the vehicle concerned covers the giving of lifts relating to church-sponsored activities.
2. It is the responsibility of the driver concerned to inform the leader of the relevant activity, and the Minister or Church Safeguarding Officer immediately if they receive an endorsement of six points or more on their licence, or their car fails its MOT, or their insurance cover is changed.
3. It is the responsibility of the driver concerned to be always in a fit state (i.e. not overtired, not under the influence of alcohol, not taking illegal substances and not under the influence of medicines that may induce drowsiness).
4. It is the responsibility of the driver concerned to ensure that the vehicle concerned is roadworthy.
5. When allocating drivers or arranging lifts, the relevant church officers will seek to ensure that the vehicle and driver (and, in the case of children, the escort) are suitable to the needs of the person being driven.

In addition,

6. Children should not be transported in a private car without the prior consent of their parents or carers. This also applies to formally arranged lifts to and from a church activity.
7. All children and passengers, including the driver, must wear suitable seat belts and use appropriate booster seats. If there are insufficient seat belts, additional passengers should not be carried.

8. When transporting children, at no time should the number of children in a car exceed the usual passenger number. There should 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 must sit in the back of the car.
9. When transporting adults, care should be taken in assisting adults to board or leave vehicles and putting on seat belts, taking account of the guidance on touch. Drivers need to be aware of moving and handling issues when assisting adults and transferring their mobility aids.
10. When using minibuses or coaches, workers/helpers should sit amongst the group and not together. If noise or behaviour appears to be getting out of control, the vehicle should be stopped until calm is restored. If a church worker, member or representative is to drive the minibus or coach, she or he should be suitably qualified, and is responsible for knowing the most up-to-date regulations for its use and having a test drive.