

Solihull Methodist Church (based on the Connexional Model Policy)

Statement of Safeguarding Principles

It is the Methodist Church's intention to value every human being as part of God's creation and the whole people of God. At the heart of the Methodist community is a deep sense of the place of welcome, hospitality and openness, which demonstrates the nature of God's grace and love for all.

Principles

Safeguarding is about the action the Church takes to promote a safer culture. This means we will:

- **promote** the welfare of children, young people and adults
- work to **prevent** abuse from occurring
- seek to **protect** and respond well to those that have been abused.

We are committed to:

- the care and nurture of, and respectful pastoral ministry with, all children, young people and adults
- safeguarding and protecting all children and young people, and adults when they are vulnerable
- establishing a safe, caring community, which provides a supportive environment where there is informed vigilance as to the dangers of abuse.

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 checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

We will respond without delay to every safeguarding concern, which suggests that a child, young person or adult may have been harmed, working in partnership with the police and social services in any investigation.

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.

Working with the Church Safeguarding Officer and the SMC Safeguarding Team, we will support risk assessment of those who present a safeguarding risk within a church environment. We will ensure appropriate pastoral care is offered and measures are taken to address identified risks including referral to statutory agencies, suspension and the use of safeguarding contracts.

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

Safeguarding Policy

Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy for Solihull Methodist Church

Purpose

The purpose of the church safeguarding policy is to check that procedures are in place and provide clarity about the roles and responsibilities of those trusted with promoting the church as a safe space for all its users.

This policy was agreed at a Church Council held on 16 February 2026

The Methodist Church, along with the whole Christian community, believes each person has a value and dignity which

comes directly from God's creation in God's own image and likeness. Christians see this as 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 adults and affirms that the needs of vulnerable individuals at risk are paramount.

Solihull Methodist Church recognises that it has a particular care for all who are vulnerable, whether as a result of disabilities, or reduction in capacities, or by a particular situation. It is recognised that increased vulnerability may be temporary or permanent and may be visible or invisible. Increased vulnerability does not diminish a person's humanity, and the gifts and graces of God are for all people.

This policy addresses the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults. It is intended to support the church in being a safe, supportive and caring community for children, young people, vulnerable adults, for survivors of abuse, and for those affected by abuse.

Solihull Methodist Church recognises the serious issue of the abuse of children, young people and vulnerable adults and acknowledges that this may take the form of physical, emotional, sexual, financial, spiritual, discriminatory, domestic or institutional abuse or neglect, abuse using social media, child sexual exploitation or human trafficking (slavery).

SMC also acknowledges the effects that all forms of abuse may have on people and their development, including spiritual and religious development. SMC accepts its responsibility for ensuring that all people are safe in its care and that their dignity and right to be heard is maintained. It accepts its responsibility to support, listen to and work for healing with survivors, offenders, communities and those who care about them. It takes seriously the promotion of welfare so that each of us can reach our full potential in God's grace.

Commitment

Solihull Methodist Church commits itself to:

1. **RESPOND** without delay to any allegation or cause for concern that a child or vulnerable adult may have been harmed or may suffer harm, whether in the church or in another context. It commits itself to challenge the abuse of power of anyone in a position of trust.
2. **IMPLEMENT** the Methodist Church Safeguarding Policy, government legislation and guidance and safe practice in the Birmingham District and Circuit.
3. **PROVIDE** support and advice for lay and ordained people, and facilitate training for lay people, to ensure that all are clear and confident about their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding and in promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable. Training for ordained people within the church will be provided at District level.
4. **AFFIRM** and give thanks for those who work with children, young people and vulnerable adults and also acknowledge the shared responsibility of all of us for safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults who are on our premises.

Church Council

Legal responsibility for safeguarding rests with the members of the Church Council. The Safeguarding Officer is a member of the Church and reports at every Church Council meeting.

Solihull Methodist Church appoints:

Jenni Kitson Church Safeguarding Officer,

supported by a **Safeguarding Team** consisting of **Jackie Farmer**, **Judy Lingard** and co-opted member, **Sarah Shinner**, working with **Rev Donald Ker**

and supports them in their joint role, which is to:

- provide support and advice to the minister and the stewards in fulfilling their roles with regard to safeguarding.
- ensure that a suitable church safeguarding policy is available at all times in the church, along with names of current safeguarding officers, national helplines and other suitable information. This must be renewed annually.
- record all safeguarding issues that are reported to the church safeguarding officer, according to Methodist safeguarding policy.
- ensure appropriate routes for reporting of concerns are accessible to all
- identify and inform those who are required to attend safeguarding training and maintain records of attendance. Work with the Circuit Safeguarding Officer and District Safeguarding Officer to arrange training.
- attend training and meetings relating to the role
- work in partnership with others, particularly those responsible for lettings within the church, and including stewards and user groups, to promote good safeguarding practice on church premises. This includes gaining written confirmation that hirers of church premises are aware of the church safeguarding policy or are using an appropriate policy of their own and ensuring that keyholders are known, and have signed the appropriate form.
- 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 by liaising with the Safer Recruitment officer. (Please see the Appendix 1 on Safer Recruiting)
- advise the Circuit Safeguarding Officer and/or District Safeguarding Officer 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.

Good practice

Good practice is in place to safeguard those working with children, young people and those adults who may be vulnerable.

We believe that good practice means:

- i) All people are treated with respect and dignity.
- ii) Those who act on behalf of the church should not meet or work alone with a child or vulnerable adult where the activity cannot be seen unless this is necessary for pastoral reasons, in which case a written record will be made and kept, noting date, time and place of visit.
- iii) The church premises will be assessed by the Church Safeguarding Officer with the property steward and/or their representatives at least annually for safety for children, young people and vulnerable adults and a written risk assessment report will be given annually to the Church Council. This will include fire safety procedures. The Church Council will consider the extent to which the premises and equipment are suitable or should be made more suitable.
- iv) Any church-organised transport of children, young people or vulnerable adults will be checked to ensure that the vehicle is suitable and insured and that the driver and escort (where required) are appropriate. A record should be kept in the church file for each driver/car. Drivers will be subject to a DBS check and required to attend the Foundation Safeguarding course. (Creating Safer Space)

(Please see the Appendix 2 on Transport)
- v) All communication with children and young people should be conducted in a safe way, protecting both the young people and the integrity of the leaders entrusted to their care.

(Please see Appendix 3, Guidelines for communicating with children and young people using email, text, mobile phones and social media)
- vi) Care should be taken when photographing children and young people, indeed all people at events, so that images are not shared without permission.

(Please see Appendix 4, Guidelines for taking photographs and videos at church events)
- vii) Activity risk assessments should be undertaken before any church organised activity involving children, young people and adults takes place to minimise the risk of harm to those involved. This will also be required for any large scale activity organised by members of the church for the public. The completed document should be submitted to the designated person at SMC (**Ian Hancock**) at least a week before the event and the contents shared with all the leaders of the group. A written record of the assessment will be retained securely in the office.
- viii) Promotion of safeguarding is recognised to include undertaking those tasks which enable all God's people to reach their full potential.

Appointment and training of paid workers in the church

Workers will be appointed after a satisfactory criminal records check, if required, and following the safer recruitment procedures of the Methodist Church. Each worker will have an identified supervisor who will meet at regular intervals with the worker. A record of these meetings will be agreed and signed and the record kept. Each worker will be expected to undergo safeguarding training, if required, within the first 6 months of appointment. The other training needs of each worker will be considered (such as food hygiene, first aid and lifting and handling).

Pastoral visitors

Pastoral visitors will be supported in their role with the provision of safeguarding training upon appointment and a criminal records check will be required.

Guidelines for working with children, young people and vulnerable adults

Everyone who works with children, young people and vulnerable adults will be given a copy of the connexion safeguarding reference guide when they undertake their training.

Ecumenical events

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

Events with church groups involving children, young people and vulnerable adults off the premises

Adequate staffing, a risk assessment and notification of the event will be given to the church safeguarding officer prior to the agreement for any event or off site activity. Notification of the event will be given to the church council secretary: **Helen Banks** as well as the Safeguarding Officer, and appropriate Management group, when a lay worker is organising the event.

If the activity is unusual or considered to be high risk the Church Safeguarding Officer will contact the Circuit Safeguarding Officer in order that it can be ratified or any queries raised.

Other groups on church premises

Where the building is hired for outside use, it is the responsibility of the Lettings Officer to ensure all correct forms are signed and that outside users agree to abide by this Safeguarding policy or provide an acceptable Safeguarding policy of their own. In the case of them providing their own policy, a copy should be deposited in the church office and the Safeguarding Officer informed.

Complaints procedure

There is a formal complaints procedure within the Methodist Church, which allows concerns to be raised about actions or behaviour by a member or officer of the Church. In addition, employed staff will be subject to relevant contractual procedures. All complaints will be responded to with care, diligence and impartiality.

A complaint should be addressed to the superintendent minister, the Revd. Farai Mapamula, (farai.mapamula@methodist.org.uk). If a complaint is made to another person it should be referred to the superintendent. Meetings will be arranged with the person making the complaint and, usually, the person against whom the complaint has been made, in an attempt to resolve it. If the complaint is against the superintendent, it should be sent to the District Chair, the Revd. Rachel Deigh. info@wmmethodists.org.uk.

Safeguarding officers must be informed of any complaint or issue relating to the potential abuse of children, young people or adults who may be vulnerable. They will support prompt action to respond to the circumstances of any safeguarding concern, whether or not any party involved wishes to make a formal complaint through the Methodist Church.

Review

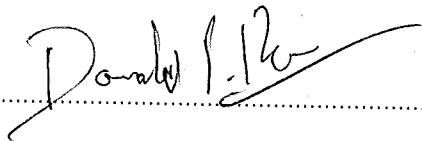
This policy will be reviewed annually by the Church Council.

Next review date: February 2027

Definition of Key Terms

- i) A child is anyone who has not yet reached their eighteenth birthday.
- ii) Vulnerable adults: any adult aged 18 or over who, owing to disability, mental function, age or illness or traumatic circumstances, may not be able to take care or protect themselves.
- iii) Safeguarding: protecting children, young people or vulnerable adults from maltreatment; preventing impairment of their health and ensuring safe and effective care.
- iv) Adult/child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity, which is undertaken to protect children, young people and/or adults who are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm, including neglect.
- v) Abuse and neglect may occur in a family, a community or an institution. It may be perpetrated by a person or persons known to the child, young person 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.
- vi) Worker: anyone working with children or vulnerable adults in the name of Solihull Methodist Church, whether in a paid or voluntary capacity.

Signed



Chair of Church Council

Dated

16th February 2026

Appendix 1

Safer Recruiting procedures for all roles

Solihull Methodist Church is working to follow Methodist Church Safer Recruiting Guidelines for all roles as laid out in the Safer Recruiting Policy, Procedures and Guidance, November 2023 on the Methodist Church website.

This means:

1. All new appointments should in the first instance be referred to our Safer Recruitment Officer, **Cathy Coleman**.
2. All appointments, whether voluntary or paid, will have a role description, and where appropriate, a person specification, to ensure the person fully understands the role and its boundaries and has the appropriate skills. These are being developed across the Circuit and modified at Solihull MC to meet our church's needs. Copies of those in place will be filed in the church office for reference.
3. All new positions whether paid or voluntary should be advertised appropriately with information about the role, and a clear process of how the appointment will be made. The process for most voluntary roles should be in line with those of a paid worker as many carry responsibilities.
4. All new appointments, where the role requires it, will need a DBS check at the appropriate level, following the completion a self-declaration form, and the introduction of references, which may or may not be taken up. The role should not begin until these have been cleared. Many offices in the church require a self-declaration form to be completed even if a DBS is not required.

5. Where stipulated in the role description, training will be required and should be taken within a reasonable period (say 6 months max) from beginning the role.
6. In some situations where the person needs further help to ease into a new role, temporary supervision and support may be appropriate.
7. All appropriate forms will be completed and retained securely as advised by the Methodist Church and in line with Data Protection.
8. In time all those in voluntary roles in the church will receive a role description retrospectively and may be consulted on their role before this is completed.

In addition, for those volunteers and paid workers who have recently arrived from overseas:

1. As the DBS police checks can only apply to the time a person has been in the UK and may still be provided for very brief periods, we are required to request that a recent arrival should obtain a police check in the country where they have previously lived and worked. This will be a certificate of good conduct or similar police check.
2. In some circumstances, **and this is the case for those arriving from Hong Kong**, this is no longer possible, as verified by the Home Office.
3. In some such cases we may be required to request references, both written and a phone call conversation, to check on their previous history, for those instances where normally a full DBS check would be required.
4. For some roles and situations, a probationary period of closer supervision may be advisable.
5. We are required to risk assess those activities involving children and young people, so that those who are new to us are supervised until we know them better.
6. All our decisions should be recorded and kept securely to show that, in spite of a potentially greater risk, we have done all we can to integrate and welcome new people safely into our church family.

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, when needed, 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. As long as no money is taken for giving lifts, it may only be necessary to inform the insurance company. Drivers are responsible for checking with their insurance.
2. A record of drivers and their vehicles will be kept and updated each year. This will be compiled by the Church Safeguarding Officer and kept securely in the church office.
3. **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.
4. **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).
5. **It is the responsibility of the driver concerned** to ensure that the vehicle concerned is roadworthy.
6. 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,

7. 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.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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.

Appendix 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. With permission from the Minister, Safeguarding group and written permission from parents/ carers, Zoom and other similar visual webcam communication may be used by youth leaders to bring together groups of young people, provided that at least two DBS checked leaders are always part of the group session.
7. Communication with individual young people via live chat facilities is never 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 on working with social media, please refer to:

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/guidance-for-churches/digital-communication-guidance-for-churches/social-media/social-media-guidelines/>

Appendix 4

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 of children, young people and vulnerable adults in official documents (e.g. church magazine, promotional material, website) or on social media. People 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.