

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy for Trinity Church, Lower Earley. Updated Feb 2022

The Policy is derived from the Methodist Church resources held on <http://www.methodist.org.uk/safeguarding/policies-procedure-and-information/policies-and-guidance/>, including the practices and principles drawn up in the *Domestic Abuse Policy*, *Code of Safer Working Practice with Children and Young People*, and *Safer Recruitment Policy*. [Note: Physical Copies are held in the church library and Office]. Consequently, there are a number of references to the Methodist Church within this policy. There is also reference to the URC Policy found at www.urc.org.uk/safeguarding and the CofE Parish Safeguarding Handbook found on www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/policy-and-practice-guidance where hard copies are freely available. Please be assured we regard this policy as applying to all denominations with the Trinity LEP umbrella (herein known as **The Church**)

The 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 protect them from harm.

The Church is committed to the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults and affirms that the needs of children or of people when they are vulnerable and at risk are paramount.

The Church recognises that it has a particular care for all who are vulnerable whether by disabilities or by reduction in capacities or by their situation. It is recognised 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.

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

The Church fully agrees with the Methodist Church response to the IICSA investigation into Child Protection in Religious Organisations and Settings (September 2021) and adopts this statement:

The Methodist Church is committed to safeguarding as an integral part of its life and ministry. 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.*

The Church recognises the serious issue of the abuse of children and vulnerable adults and recognises that this may take the form of physical, emotional, sexual, financial, spiritual or institutional abuse or neglect. It acknowledges the effects these may have on people and their development including spiritual and religious development. It accepts its responsibility for ensuring that all people are safe in its care and 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 issues of promotion of welfare so that each of us can reach our full potential.

1. The Church commits itself to **RESPOND** without delay to any allegation or cause for concern that a child or vulnerable adult may have been harmed, 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. The Church commits itself to ensuring the **IMPLEMENTATION** of Connexional Safeguarding Policy; including Joint Practice Guidance for the Church of England and Methodist Church; government legislation and guidance on safe practice.
3. The Church commits itself to the **PROVISION** of 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.
4. The Church **AFFIRMS** and gives thanks for the work of those who are workers with children and vulnerable adults and acknowledges the shared responsibility of all of us for safeguarding vulnerable adults who are on our premises.

The Church appoints Ann Baker as Church Safeguarding Officer (adults) and Ann Baker as Church Safeguarding Officer (children) and supports her in her role which is to:

- i) Support and advise the minister, staff and key volunteers (including stewards and CC members) in fulfilling their roles
- ii) Provide a point of reference to advise on safeguarding issues
- iii) Liaise with the Circuit and District Safeguarding Officer, and other denominational authorities as deemed appropriate
- iv) Promote safeguarding best practice within the local church with the support of circuit ministers
- v) Ensure proper records are kept of all incidents/concerns according to Methodist policy and practice and where a template of an Incident form can be found www.methodist.org.uk/safeguarding/policies-procedure-and-information/forms/safeguarding-concern-forms/
- vi) Ensure that all safeguarding training which is required undertaken by those in post and appropriate records kept and made available.
- vii) Attend training and meetings organised to support the role

- viii) Oversee safeguarding throughout the whole life of the church e.g. lettings, groups, property, etc.
- ix) Report to the church council annually in February
- x) Ensure the church completes a yearly audit/monitoring on safeguarding confirming that policies are in place for the church and all groups and lettings in the church and that these have been annually reviewed
- xi) Ensure the church completes a risk assessment on each area of activity in the church and this is stored and reviewed at least annually. This should be made available to anyone involved in that activity.
- xii) Ensure that the church recruits safely for all posts, which means DBS disclosure and following the safer recruitment procedures of the Methodist Church.
- xiii) Ensure that the church has a safeguarding noticeboard with a copy of the current signed safeguarding policy, contact numbers for local and national helplines and other suitable information.

a) Purpose

The purposes of this safeguarding policy are to ensure procedures are in place and people are clear about roles and responsibilities for children, young people and vulnerable adults in our care and using our premises. It is to be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding policy, procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church (2021) and with reference to similar documents from the URC and the CofE (see above links)

b) Good Practice

We believe good practice means that:

- 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 note of this 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 and vulnerable adults and the risk assessment report will be given annually to the Church Council in written form. 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 or vulnerable adults will be checked to ensure the vehicle is suitable and insured and that the driver and escort are appropriate. An agreed record will be kept in the church file for each driver/car.

- v) Promotion of safeguarding is recognised to include undertaking those tasks which enable all God's people to reach their full potential. The Church Council will actively consider the extent to which it is succeeding in this area.

These things are to safeguard those working with children, young people and those adults who may be vulnerable.

c) Appointment and training of workers

Workers will be appointed after a satisfactory DBS disclosure and following 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 by the Safeguarding Officer in the Church Office. Each worker will be expected to undergo basic safeguarding training, within 6 months of appointment. The other training needs of each worker will be considered (e.g. food hygiene, First Aid, lifting and handling, etc. and each worker will have an annual review conducted by a named member of the Church Council and another worker within the organisation.

d) Pastoral visitors

In terms of safeguarding, Pastoral Visitors will be supported in their role with the provision of basic safeguarding training within 6 months of appointment

e) Guidelines for working with children, young people and vulnerable adults

A leaflet will be produced and reviewed annually to be given to each worker with children, young people and vulnerable adults outlining good practice and systems. The leaflet will be reviewed annually with this policy [Church Councils may produce their own material or use appropriate Connexional leaflets. (Quick Reference Guide hard copies displayed on church noticeboards.)

f) Ecumenical events

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

g) Events with church groups off the premises

Adequate staffing, a risk assessment and notification of the event is required to be given to the church Safeguarding Officer PRIOR to the agreement for any event or off site activity. The Church safeguarding Officer will forward the notification immediately to the Circuit Safeguarding Officer and district Safeguarding Group will need to be informed of all off site events, this would not include small groups.

h) Other groups on church premises

Where the building is hired for outside use, the person signing the letting agreement will be given a copy of this policy and the leaflet "Quick Reference Guide" (Appendix A) Hard copy on display in building. The lettings secretary will consider the various users of the building in making lettings. All lettings will be notified to the Church Safeguarding officer who will keep a record and take advice as appropriate from both DSO and CSO.

i) Complaints procedure

It is hoped that complaints can generally be dealt with internally by the organisations. However, a safeguarding complaint may be made to a person(s) who will be appointed by the Church Council; a safeguarding officer and chair of Church Council. If a Safeguarding complaint is made by another person, it should be passed to the Safeguarding Officer and Chair of Church Council, who will arrange to meet the complainant and attempt to resolve the complaint. If the complaint cannot be resolved, consideration will be given to invoking the complaints system of the Methodist Church which will involve initially speaking with the Local Complaints Officer www.methodist.org/for-churches/governance/complaints-and-discipline

The Safeguarding Policy will be reviewed annually by the Church council. The date of the next review will be February 2022

j) Key concepts and definitions

- i) Vulnerable adults: any adult aged 18 or over who, due to disability, mental function, age, illness or traumatic circumstances, may not be able to take care of or protect themselves.
- ii) Safeguarding is protecting children or vulnerable adults from maltreatment; preventing impairment of their health and ensuring safe and effective care.
- iii) 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.
- iv) 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.

Dated _____

Signed _____ Chair of Church Council

Appendix A

Safeguarding – Children, Young people and Vulnerable adults

A quick reference guide for those working within the Church Reviewed Feb 2022

Things to remember...

- **Treat everyone with respect setting a positive example for others.**
- **Respect personal space and privacy.**
- **Ensure another adult is present or within sight or hearing of any activity.**
- **Ensure any actions cannot be misinterpreted by someone else.**
- **Challenge unacceptable behaviour.**
- **Do not put a child, young person, vulnerable adult or yourself in a vulnerable or compromising situation.**
- **Do not have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with others.**
- **You must not keep allegations or suspected abuse secret.**

What to do if....

....You suspect abuse

- **Are you concerned about a child, young person or vulnerable adult's immediate welfare (physical, emotional, sexual) or do you suspect neglect? Do not delay, consult the person to whom you are responsible.**
- **Advise your minister, and/or the Safeguarding Officer of your actions.**
- **If you choose you can contact police or Social Services.**

....An allegation is made about another person or yourself...

- **Make notes, record dates, times and events. Sign them and keep a copy.**
- **Report it to the person to whom you are responsible and your minister.**
- **Only tell those who need to know.**

....A child, young person or vulnerable adult wishes to disclose they have been abused

- **Listen, keep listening, do not question or investigate**
- **Do not promise confidentiality – tell them we need to share this.**
- **Assure them they are not to blame**
- **Tell them what you are going to do and that they will be told what happens**
- **Make careful notes of what is said, record dates, times, events and when you are told and keep a copy.**
- **Report it to the person to whom you are responsible and your minister.**
- **Only pass information to those who need to know.**