

Christchurch, Clarendon Park Road, Leicester

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy

Registered Charity number 1148934

This policy was agreed at the Church Meeting held on 26 November 2023

The Methodist Church and Baptist Union believe everyone has a value and dignity, which comes directly from God's own image and likeness this implies a duty to value all people as bearing the image of God and therefore to protect them from harm.

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

This Church recognises that there is a particular care for those whose vulnerability is increased by situations, by disabilities or by reduction in abilities. This increased vulnerability may be temporary or permanent, 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. 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, for communities and for those affected by abuse.

Christchurch 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, discriminatory, domestic, or institutional abuse or neglect, abuse using social media, child sexual exploitation human trafficking (slavery). 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 that their dignity and right to be heard is kept. 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 in God's grace.

Christchurch commits itself to respond without delay to any allegation or cause for concern that a child or vulnerable adult may have been harmed, whether within or outside the church. It commits itself to challenge the abuse of power of anyone in a position of trust.

Christchurch commits itself to ensuring the implementation of Safeguarding Policies of the Methodist Church government legislation and guidance and safe practice within the Circuit and churches.

This Church commits itself to provide support, advice and training for lay and ordained people that will ensure that those in positions of trust and working with groups of children and young people and vulnerable adults will be confident and clear about their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults.

This 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.

This Church appoints [REDACTED] as Safeguarding Adults Officer, and Church Safeguarding Children's Officer, and supports him in his role to:

- Support and advise the minister and stewards in fulfilling their roles regarding safeguarding.
- Promote safeguarding best practice within the Church with the support of the Circuit.
- Ensure proper records are kept of all incidents and concerns.
- Ensure that proper training, which is required is undertaken by those in post and a record kept of their attendance.

- Attend training and attend meetings to develop knowledge of good practice.
- Oversee safeguarding throughout the life of the church.
- Ensure that the church completes an annual audit of safeguarding policies and procedures in the church.
- Ensures the church completes a risk assessment on each area of activity and this is stored and reviewed.
- Ensure the church recruits safely for all posts.
- Ensure the church has a safeguarding noticeboard with a copy of the current, signed safeguarding policy, along with names of current safeguarding officers, contact numbers for local and national helplines and other suitable information. This must be renewed annually.

a) Purpose

This safeguarding policy for Christchurch is to ensure procedures are in place and that everyone is clear about their roles and responsibilities for vulnerable adults and children in its care, and for those who use the premises. It is to be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding, Policy, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church 2023.

b) Good Practice

We believe that good practice means that:

- All adults and children are treated with respect and dignity.
- Those who act on behalf of the Church should not meet or work alone with a child or a vulnerable adult where the activity cannot be seen, unless this is necessary for pastoral reasons, in which case a written note of this should be made and kept, noting date, time and place of visit.
- The church premises will be assessed by the church safeguarding officer with the property officer or their representative at least annually for the safety of children and vulnerable adults, and the risk assessment report will be given annually to the Church Meeting in written form. This will include fire safety procedures. The Church Meeting will consider 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.
- Activity risk assessments will be undertaken before any activity takes place to minimise the risk of harm to those involved. The activity leader will be responsible for ensuring these are completed.

c) Appointment and training of workers

Workers will be appointed after a satisfactory Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. Each worker will be expected to undergo basic safeguarding training within the first year of appointment. The training needs of each worker will be considered (e.g., food hygiene, first aid, moving and handling), and each worker will have an annual review conducted by a named worker of the Church Meeting and another worker within the organisation.

d) Pastoral visitors

Pastoral links will be supported in their role and receive basic safeguarding training. A DBS check will be required for pastoral visitors making home visits.

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

A leaflet outlining good practice and systems for reporting concerns will be available with the safeguarding policy and will be reviewed annually with this policy.

f) Ecumenical Events

Where Christchurch hosts and organises ecumenical events, safeguarding is the responsibility of the Church Meeting.

g) Events with church groups off the premises

Adequate staffing will be ensured for such events. Notification prior to the event will be given to the Church Secretary.

h) Hiring of church premises

Where the building is hired for outside use, the church safeguarding officer should be informed. The lettings secretary will consider the various users of this building in making the lettings and raise any potential safeguarding issues with the church safeguarding officer, who will take advice from the circuit safeguarding officer

i) Complaints Procedure

Feedback from users is encouraged, and any specific issues raised will be followed up by the Church.

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 Rev Paula Hunt. If a complaint is made to another person, it should be referred to her. A meeting will be arranged with the person making the complaint, and with the person against whom the complaint has been made. Wherever possible attempts will be made to resolve the complaint at this stage. If the complaint is against the superintendent minister, then it should be sent to the District Chair the Rev Helen Cameron, Bouverie Court, 6 the Lakes, Northampton NN4 7YD.

The Church Safeguarding officer must be informed of any complaint or issue relating to the potential abuse of children or adults, who may be vulnerable. He will support prompt action to respond to the circumstances of the safeguarding concern.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Church Meeting. The date of the next review will be November 2024

j) 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 presently unable to take care of him/herself or to protect her/himself from significant harm, including neglect.
- **Safeguarding:** 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, or 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.
- **Worker:** anyone working in the name of Christchurch, whether in a paid or voluntary capacity