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## **SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY FOR COPPLESTONE 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 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.

Copplestone 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.

Copplestone Methodist 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. 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, vulnerable adults, for survivors of abuse, for communities and for those affected by abuse.

Copplestone Church fully agrees with 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.*

Copplestone Methodist 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, discriminatory, domestic or institutional abuse or neglect, abuse using social media or 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 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 in God's grace.

Copplestone Methodist 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.
- Ensure the **IMPLEMENTATION** of Connexional Safeguarding Policy, government legislation and guidance, and safe practice in the circuit and in the churches.

- 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.
- **AFFIRM** and give thanks for those who work with children and vulnerable adults and acknowledge the shared responsibility of all of us for safeguarding vulnerable adults who are on our premises.

Copplestone church will appoint a church safeguarding representative and the Church Council will support them in their role which is to:

- support and advise the minister and the stewards in fulfilling their roles
- provide a point of reference to advise on safeguarding issues
- liaise with circuit and district safeguarding officers
- promote safeguarding best practice within the local church with the support of circuit ministers
- ensure proper records are kept of all incidents/concerns according to Methodist policy and practice (see *Safeguarding Records: Joint Practice Guidance for the Church of England and the Methodist Church* - Updated Jan 2015)
- ensure that all safeguarding training which is required is undertaken by those in post and appropriate records kept and made available
- attend training and meetings organised to support the role
- oversee safeguarding throughout the whole life of the church (eg lettings, groups, property etc)
- report to the Church Council annually
- 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
- ensure that the church recruits safely for all posts
- 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.

### **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* (2019).

### **Good Practice**

Copplestone Methodist Church commends good practice with regard to matters of safeguarding and aims to demonstrate this by adherence in all activities to which this relates. We believe good practice means that:

- All people are treated with respect and dignity.
- 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 such cases good practice may be especially important and a record will be made and kept, noting the date, time and place of the visit.
- 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.
- 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 to be kept in the church file for each driver/car. All cars must have business cover insurance.

- Activity risk assessments will be undertaken before any activity takes place to minimise the risk of harm to those involved. Approval will be obtained from the event leader/minister. A written record of the assessment will be retained securely in case they need to be seen at a later date.
- 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.
- All DBS checks will be renewed within five years.

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

### **Appointment and training of workers\***

Workers will be appointed after a satisfactory DBS disclosure and following safer recruitment procedures of the Methodist Church. Each paid worker will have an identified supervisor who will meet at regular intervals with the worker and will have an annual review conducted by a named member of the Church Council. A record of these meetings will be agreed and signed and the record kept. Each worker will be expected to undergo basic safeguarding training, within the first 6 months (agreed by Methodist Conference in 2011 - *Creating Safer Space Report*) of appointment. The other training needs of each worker will be considered (eg food hygiene, first aid, lifting and handling, etc). The Church will adhere to the latest published Methodist Church Safer Recruitment Policy. New members of the congregation wishing to help in any area of church life must have attended the church for more than 6 months before undertaking 'one off' duties. Once they have attended for more than a year, training, role descriptions and the safer recruitment policy will be put in place and checks will be made taking up appropriate references.

*\*These procedures do not apply to workers (who are not necessarily part of the congregation) who have been encouraged to get involved as helpers in areas that are not safeguarding-sensitive (e.g. the Cafe). These helpers will be supervised at all times by the workers designated to lead the activity.*

### **Pastoral visitors/leaders**

In terms of safeguarding, Pastoral Visitors/leaders will be supported in their role with the provision of basic safeguarding training. All visits must be recorded with the time, date, reason for visit etc.

### **Guidelines for working with children, young people and vulnerable adults**

- The Methodist Church Safeguarding overview leaflet will be given to all people working with children, young people or vulnerable adults.
- To give children the opportunity to talk to an independent person the Childline and NSPCC Helpline telephone numbers are to be displayed on the notice board of the meeting room.
- A register must be taken at all clubs where young people attend and a registration form must be completed by the parents of a child or young person.
- Details of any medical conditions and an emergency phone for every child/young person who attends a club must be recorded and accessible.
- There must be a minimum of two volunteers/workers at all groups where children and young people are present and it is recommended that there should be at least one male and one female. The recommended minimum staffing ratio levels can be found in the Methodist safeguarding guidance/policy (*link at the end of the document*).
- All volunteers or workers must sign a role responsibility form so they know what their role is within the church and complete Form A: part 1 and 2 before taking up their post. They must also read and adhere to the Internet safety guidance and policy (*they will be asked to read this with their role descriptions, a copy can be also found on the Coplestone church website*) and read the Code of Practice for working with children and young people (*link at the end of this document on the Methodist Church Website*). All volunteers or workers must complete the correct safeguarding training.

- All Local Preachers are required to complete Safeguarding Form B.
- All members of the Church Council are to comply with Standing Order 010(2ii).
- All Church key holders are required to complete Safeguarding Form D. Keys will only be issued to people who attend the Church and a register will be kept of those keyholders.

### **Ecumenical events**

Where ecumenical events happen on church premises, safeguarding is the responsibility of this Church Council. Therefore, the Church Council will need to ensure that the procedures of such events follow good practice before permission is given for the church to be used.

### **Events with church groups off the premises**

Adequate staffing, a risk assessment and notification of the event to be given to the church safeguarding officer PRIOR to the agreement for any event or off site activity.

### **Other groups on church premises**

Where the building is hired for outside use, the person signing the letting agreement [which should include Safeguarding Form E] ([www.tmcpc.org.uk/property/letting-property-and-third-party-use](http://www.tmcpc.org.uk/property/letting-property-and-third-party-use)), will be given a copy of this policy. The lettings secretary will consider the various users of the building in making lettings.

### **Complaints procedure**

It is hoped that complaints can generally be dealt with internally by the organisation. However, if the complaint is of a safeguarding nature, relating to possible abuse of children or vulnerable adults, then it is essential that your district safeguarding officer is consulted as statutory services may need to be informed.

A complaint should be addressed to the superintendent minister. If a complaint is made to another person it should be referred to her/him. 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.

Any Safeguarding issues should be reported to Hannah Petherick (Safeguarding Officer) or Sean Schofield (Trainer and Leader of the Church).

This policy was agreed at Church Council on: 10<sup>th</sup> October 2023

Signed (Chair of Church Council): *Paul Smith*

(Superintendent Minister and Chair of Church Council)

Review Date: *October 2024*

The Plymouth and Exeter District Safeguarding Policy can be obtained from their website.

<https://www.pemd.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/District-Safeguarding-Policy-1.pdf>

A copy of the Methodist Church Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance will be kept by the Safeguarding Church Representative and can be found on their website.

[https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/18740/safeguarding\\_policy\\_procedures\\_and\\_guidance\\_for\\_the\\_methodist\\_church\\_sept\\_2020.pdf](https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/18740/safeguarding_policy_procedures_and_guidance_for_the_methodist_church_sept_2020.pdf)

A code of conduct for workers with children and young people can be found online and this is made aware at point of a role being introduced. [https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/18267/code\\_of\\_safer\\_working\\_practice\\_with\\_children\\_and\\_young\\_people\\_july\\_2020.pdf](https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/18267/code_of_safer_working_practice_with_children_and_young_people_july_2020.pdf)