

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.

Our church communities are called to be places where the transformational love of God is embodied and life in all its fullness is a gift, which is offered to all people.

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, young people and adults when they are vulnerable
- establishing safe, caring communities, which provide a loving 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, 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 Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy for Bents Green Methodist Church

This policy was agreed at a Church Council held on 20th November 2024..

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.

Bents Green Methodist 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.

Bents Green 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 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 our wish 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.

Bents Green 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, child sexual exploitation 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 promotion of welfare so that each of us can reach our full potential in God's grace.

Bents Green 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 circuit and in the churches.
3. **PROVIDE** support, advice and training for lay and ordained people to ensure that 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. **AFFIRM** and give thanks for those who work with children and vulnerable adults and also acknowledge the shared responsibility of all of us for safeguarding children *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 Council and reports annually on the implementation of the safeguarding policy.

Bents Green Methodist Church appoints Glenn Evans as Church Safeguarding Officer (Adults and Children) and supports him in his 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, signed 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.
- promote appropriate routes for reporting of concerns
- identify and inform those who are required to attend safeguarding training and maintain records of attendance. Work with the Circuit Safeguarding Officer and Church Safeguarding Officer to arrange training.
- attend training and meetings relating to the role
- work in partnership with others including stewards and user groups to promote good safeguarding practice on church premises. This may include gaining written confirmation that hirers of church premises are aware of the church safeguarding policy or are using an appropriate policy of their own.
- 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.
- advise the Circuit Safeguarding Officer and/or Church 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.

a) 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.

b) Good practice

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 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 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.
- v) 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.
- vi) 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 in the church

Workers will be appointed after a satisfactory criminal records check 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, 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).

d) Pastoral visitors

Pastoral visitors will be supported in their role with the provision of safeguarding training upon appointment. If they are undertaking tasks for which a criminal records check would be required, this will be undertaken prior to appointment.

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

A leaflet outlining good practice and systems should be given to everyone who works with children, young people and vulnerable adults. This leaflet should be reviewed annually.

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 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, Daphne Wilkins.

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.

h) Other groups on church premises

Where the building is hired for outside use, the Church Safeguarding Officer should be informed. The Church Safeguarding Officer will keep the records and take advice as appropriate from the Circuit Safeguarding Officer.

i) 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, Rev Romeo Pedro. If a complaint is made to another person it should be referred to 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, the Rev Gill Newton, District Office, Victoria Hall Methodist Church, Norfolk St, Sheffield City Centre, Sheffield S1 2JB.

Safeguarding officers must be informed of any complaint or issue relating to the potential abuse of children 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: November 2025.

j) Key concepts and definitions

- 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 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/specific 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 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.

Signed Chair of Church Council

Dated

APPENDIX A

Church Safeguarding Officer and Representatives

Glenn Evans 235 1057

Church Minister Rev Philip Peacock 258 9223

Circuit Safeguarding Administrator Debbie Wheeler 272 6561

District Safeguarding Officer

Alison Hill 07483 362735 safeguarding@sheffieldmethodist.org

Church Stewards as on 20th November 2024

Peter Larder 268 6507 Jonathan Trezise 236 5938

Other points of contact

South Yorkshire Police (All sections) (0114) 220 2020

Social Services (Children & Families services) (0114) 273 4855 (for issues within families)

Sheffield LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) (0114) 205 3535 (for issues involving voluntary helpers or paid workers)

Childline 0800 1111

APPENDIX B Guidelines for working with children, young people and vulnerable adults

A) General:

For good practice in our Church activities we should ensure that:

- all children, young people and vulnerable adults are treated with respect and dignity, and no negative discrimination ever takes place
- children's and youth workers (and anyone else) are not alone with a child, a young person or a vulnerable adult where their activity cannot be seen, as far as possible and never on a regular basis; on church premises this may mean leaving doors open, or two groups working in the same room
- workers and helpers are trained, and support one another in ensuring these guidelines are followed
- the church premises, and access to and from them, are safe and well lit.

All of us are responsible for observing the guidelines set out above.

B) Specific with regard to working with children and young people:

- at least two adults will lead any children's and young people's activities
- if a worker does find themselves on their own with children, e.g. through the illness of another worker, they must contact the minister or safeguarding officer to inform them, and together undertake a risk assessment on what action to take (NB: this must not happen on a regular basis)
- in a pastoral situation with a child or young person, where privacy and confidentiality are important, another adult should be told that the interview is taking place, and with whom it is taking place; whenever possible doors should be left open
- avoid games whose rules do not prevent the possibility of physical aggression, or inappropriate touching
- refrain from any sexually suggestive comments, ridiculing, or rejection of a child
- avoid inappropriate touching of any form; exercise caution if comforting an injured or distressed child or young person
- manage children's behaviour without physical contact, or aggressive or intimidating behaviour by the worker or helper
- avoid, where possible, giving lifts to individual children; if this is unavoidable, ask them to sit in the rear of the car
- follow Methodist Church guidance on camping and residential trips, residential settings and youth meetings at home

C) Specific with regard to vulnerable adults

- exercise caution if comforting an injured or distressed vulnerable adult, or in any one-to-one situation
- show sensitivity to individual needs and preferences
- never patronise, and always refrain from verbal, emotional or physical bullying, e.g. ridicule or rejection
- when it is necessary to prevent a vulnerable adult leaving the premises, use persuasion and cajoling rather than physical prevention whenever possible
- avoid giving lifts to a lone vulnerable adult unless there is a genuine emergency, in which situation two helpers are required
- ensure two helpers are present whenever financial transactions are taking place

D) Specific with regard to employed children's and youth workers, and to the leaders of all activities involving children, young people or vulnerable adults:

- if a worker has a concern about the behaviour or suitability of a colleague, s/he must speak to the leader of the activity, the minister or the safeguarding officer
- workers must be given the regular opportunity to meet and review the work they have done and plan future work
- leaders should discuss with workers their role and any concerns they have about their work with children, young people or vulnerable adults

APPENDIX C

The Methodist Church Social Media policy was re-adopted as church policy on 20th November 2024. It can be viewed at children-and-youth-social-media-guidance-060520.pdf in the social media guidelines on the Methodist Church website:

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

As part of this, we also have our own written policy, which can be viewed on the church website: www.bentsgreenmethodist.org.uk