

KEYNSHAM METHODIST CHURCH SAFEGUARDING POLICY FOR CHILDREN, AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

Definitions

In this policy document the following words will have the meanings as set out below.

- “Child” and/or “children” includes all children and young people under the age of 18.
- “Vulnerable Adults”: any adult aged 18 or over who, by reason of mental or other disability, age, illness or other situation is permanently or for the time being unable to take care of her or himself, or to protect her or himself from significant harm or exploitation.

This policy was agreed at a Church Council held on 13th June 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 of male and female 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

Keynsham Methodist Church (KMC) is committed to the safeguarding and protection of all children and vulnerable adults and affirms that the needs of children or of people when they are vulnerable are paramount.

KMC recognises that none of us is invulnerable but that there is a particular care for those whose vulnerability is increased by situations, by disabilities or by reduction in capacities. 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 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, vulnerable adults, for survivors of abuse, for communities and for those affected by abuse.

KMC fully agrees with the Connexional statement:

As the people of the Methodist Church we are concerned with the wholeness of each individual within God’s purposes for everyone. We seek to safeguard all members of the church community of all ages

KMC 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 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.

KMC 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.

KMC commits itself to ensuring the implementation of Connexional Safeguarding Policy, government legislation and guidance and safe practice in the circuit and in the churches.

KMC 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.

KMC affirms and give 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 children and vulnerable adults who are on our premises.

It is the responsibility of the Church Council (CC) to appoint a Church Safeguarding officer and that there should be no gaps in this crucial provision. It is not appropriate for the Minister to fill any gap because of the

potential for a conflict of roles. The role will usually be undertaken on a voluntary basis although expenses should be met.

KMC appoints **Jo Lodder** as Church Safeguarding Adults Representative and Church Safeguarding Children Coordinator and supports them in their role which is to:

- i) support and advise the minister and the stewards in fulfilling their roles
- ii) provide a point of reference to advise on safeguarding issues
- iii) liaise with Circuit and District Safeguarding Coordinators
- iv) promote safeguarding best practice in the local church work with the support of local church workers and circuit ministers
- v) 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 June 2015)
- vi) ensure that all safeguarding training which is required is undertaken by those in post and appropriate records kept and made available
- vii) attend meetings and training organised to support the role
- viii) oversee safeguarding throughout the whole life of the church (eg lettings, groups, property etc)
- ix) report to the Church Council annually
- 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 reviewed annually
- xi) promote appropriate routes for reporting of concerns
- xii) ensure that the church recruits safely for all posts
- 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. This must be reviewed annually.

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 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 in Britain (April 2020)

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) Both sets of church premises will be assessed by the Safeguarding officer with the Property steward and/or their representatives at least annually for the safety of children and vulnerable adults. A 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 by the event organiser to ensure the vehicle is suitable and insured and that the driver and escort are appropriate. A record to be kept in the Church Safeguarding 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 in case they need to be seen at a later date.

vi) The Church Council will actively consider the extent to which it is promoting its policies and practices in this area.

These things are to safeguard those working with children and vulnerable adults

c) Appointment and training of workers

All paid and voluntary 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; they will also be expected to undergo basic safeguarding training, within the first year of appointment. The other training needs of each worker will be considered annually (e.g. food hygiene, first aid, lifting and handling, etc.) at a review conducted between the worker and the organisation leader.

d) Pastoral Visitors

In terms of safeguarding, Pastoral Visitors will require a satisfactory DBS check and be supported in their role with the provision of basic Foundation module (2020 Edition) safeguarding training on appointment.

e) Guidelines for working with children and vulnerable adults

A locally produced 'Safeguarding guidance' leaflet outlining good practice and systems along with a 'Quick Reference Guide' produced by the Methodist Connexion will be given to those working with children, young people and vulnerable adults. This Leaflet will be reviewed annually

f) Ecumenical Events on Church Premises

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

Where ecumenical events take place on other church premises then that church is responsible.

g) KMC and Ecumenical Events off Church Premises

KMC Church Council remains responsible for Methodist members. Adequate staffing will be ensured for such events. Written notification and a risk assessment will be given to the Safeguarding Coordinator or Minister prior to any agreement or off site activity. 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 person signing the letting agreement will be given a copy of this policy and their signed letting agreement.

i) Complaints procedure

It is hoped that complaints can generally be dealt with internally by the organisations. However, a complaint may be made to the Minister or the Safeguarding Coordinator. If a complaint is made to another person, it should be passed to the Minister or Safeguarding Coordinator who will arrange to meet with 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.

Disclosures

The Minister must be informed of serious complaints, allegations, suspicions and confidential disclosures relating to abuse any of which may require referring to the Methodist Circuit/District as well as outside agencies, e.g. Social Services and Police.

j) Review Guest Wi-fi Acceptable Use Policy: The Safeguarding Officer should ensure that a Wi-fi policy has been produced, approved by the KMC Church Council and is accessible / available to all members of, or visitors to, either Church centre. The aim of the policy is to ensure that the Wi-fi service provided is used lawfully, and in a way that does not affect the security of the Wi-fi service or other users as laid down in the KMC Safeguarding Policy. A programme of work to develop this policy entry has just started. It is also hoped that periodic audits of usage can be undertaken and any violations of the policy can be recognised, reported to the Minister and responded to in a timely and appropriate manner. It is anticipated that the template produced by the Connexion will form the basis for this policy with refinements incorporated to reflect local arrangements.

k) Review

This policy will be reviewed in 2026 at the Autumn Church Council.

Dated: 6th October 2025

Signed: .....Revd. John Hayes, Chair of Church Council