

# *Southlands Methodist Church*

(Bishopthorpe Road, York, YO23 1NX)

## **Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy**

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This policy was agreed at a Church Council held on Thursday, 7 June 2018.

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.

Southlands 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.

Southlands 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.

Southlands Methodist 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.*

Southlands 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 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 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.

1. Southlands 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.
2. Southlands Methodist Church commits itself to ensuring the **IMPLEMENTATION** of Connexional Safeguarding Policy; government legislation and guidance and safe practice in the circuit and in the churches.
3. Southlands Methodist 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. Southlands Methodist 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.

Southlands Methodist Church appoints Kath Weston as Church Safeguarding Officer (for children and adults) and supports her in her 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 Officers
- 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 see [Safeguarding Records: Joint Practice Guidance for the Church of England and the Methodist Church - Updated Jan 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 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
- 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<sup>1</sup> and this is stored and reviewed at least annually. This should be made available if asked for
- xii) Ensure that the church recruits safely for all posts
- xiii) Ensure that the church has a safeguarding noticeboard with 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 (2017).

**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 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 be expected to undergo basic safeguarding training within the first 6 months of appointment. Each worker will have a supervisor who will provide regular opportunities to discuss further training needs (e.g. food hygiene, first aid, lifting and handling, etc.), as well as any concerns or suggestions for changes to practice.

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<sup>1</sup> Risk assessments are conducted annually for each room, which cover regular uses of the rooms. Certain church activities which are perceived to carry a higher degree of risk (such as the Toddler Group) have annual risk assessments. For other church activities (such as Young Church, Messy Church, Kids Club) risk is assessed and noted in staff working notes. Hirers of the premises have their own risk assessments for their activities.

**d) Pastoral visitors**

In terms of safeguarding, Pastoral Visitors will be supported in their role with the provision of basic safeguarding training upon 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.

**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 to 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 Kath Weston. The Church Safeguarding Officer will forward it immediately to the Circuit Safeguarding Officer in order that an appropriate response can be made. The District Safeguarding Officer and District Safeguarding Group will need to be informed of all off site events.

**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. The lettings secretary will consider the various users of the building in making lettings and take advice as appropriate from both the DSO and CSO. All lettings will be notified to the Church Safeguarding Officer and records thereof will be kept securely<sup>2</sup>.

**i) Complaints procedure**

It is hoped that complaints can generally be dealt with internally by the organisations. However, a complaint may be made to a person who will be appointed by the Church Council and who is currently Kath Weston. If a complaint is made to another person, it should be passed to Kath Weston 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 which will involve initially speaking with the Local Complaints Officer who is the Rev. Keith Albans (Superintendent Minister).

**j) Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Church Council. The date of the next review is February 2019.

**k) Key concepts and definitions**

- i) Vulnerable Adults: Any adult aged 18 or over who, due to disability, mental function, age or illness or traumatic circumstances, may not be able to take care or protect

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<sup>2</sup> Electronic files will be encrypted and paper copies kept in a secure, fire proof cabinet in the church office.

themselves.

- ii) Safeguarding and 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