

Safeguarding Children and Adults who are Vulnerable Policy for Loughton Methodist Church

This policy was agreed at a Church Council held on 3 May 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 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.

Loughton Methodist Church is committed to the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults who are vulnerable and affirms that the needs of children or of people when they are vulnerable are paramount.

Loughton Methodist Church 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, young people and adults who are vulnerable. 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, adults who are vulnerable, for survivors of abuse, for communities and for those affected by abuse.

Loughton 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.

Loughton Methodist Church recognises the serious issue of the abuse of children and adults who are vulnerable 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, as far as is practical and possible, 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.

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Loughton Methodist Church commits itself to respond without delay to any allegation or cause for concern that a child or adults who are vulnerable 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.

Loughton 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.

Loughton 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.

Loughton Methodist Church affirms and gives thanks for the work of those who are workers with children and adults who are vulnerable and acknowledges the shared responsibility of all of us for their safety on our premises.

Loughton Methodist Church appoints Kim Schofield as Church Safeguarding Adults Representative and as Church Safeguarding Children Coordinator, referred to locally as The Safeguarding Officer, 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 Superintendent and District Safeguarding Coordinator
- iv) promote safeguarding best practice within the local church with the support of circuit ministers.

a) Purpose

The purposes of this safeguarding policy are to ensure procedures are in place and people are clear about roles and responsibilities for adults who are vulnerable in our care and using our premises. It is to be read in conjunction with Safeguarding, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church in Britain (April 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 where the activity cannot be seen.
- iii) Those who act on behalf of the Church should not contact a child using their personal email accounts and should not add them to personal social media providers e.g. Facebook. Personal accounts should always be set at the highest level of privacy to also protect the adult acting on behalf of the Church.
- iv) Those who act on behalf of the Church who meet for pastoral reasons with an adult who is vulnerable should generate a written note of this meeting including date, time and place of visit. This should be kept by the Pastoral Visitor and made available to the Minister and/or Safeguarding Officer if required.
- v) The church premises will be assessed for safety for children and adults who are vulnerable 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.

- vi) Any church-organised transport of children or adults who are vulnerable will be checked to ensure the vehicle is suitable and insured and that the driver and escort are appropriate.
- vii) 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. Each worker will be expected to undergo basic safeguarding training, within the first year of appointment. The other training needs of each worker will be considered (e.g. food hygiene, first aid, lifting and handling, etc.) and each worker will have an annual review conducted by a named member of the Church Council and another worker within the organisation. No appointment can be made until safeguarding checks are completed and approved by the Safeguarding Officer. A worker without safeguarding approval cannot take up, or continue, in a role with children or vulnerable adults.

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) Ecumenical events

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

f) Events with church groups off the premises

Notification of the event with a full list of participants and leaders will be given to the Safeguarding Officer prior to the event. A home contact must be appointed on each occasion.

g) 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 Safeguarding Commitment Document (SF6). The lettings secretary will consider the various users of the building in making lettings. External Groups hiring church premises must abide by the minimum standards set out in the Church Safeguarding Policy Document.

h) Internet and Social Media

Internet access is provided by the Church for staff and public use. The access should be restricted to prevent inappropriate use. The use of external data networks to access inappropriate material is prohibited and any inappropriate use should be reported to the Safeguarding Officer. Children and young people should be monitored by their supervising adult.

i) Cyberbullying

Most users of mobile phones and the internet will use these devices appropriately but there are legal consequences for those that do not.

Sending nasty comments, inappropriate messages, making threats, making private information public are all examples of on-line abuse.

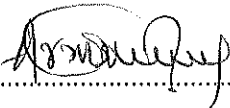
j) Review

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

j) Key concepts and definitions

- i) Adults who are vulnerable: 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.
- ii) Safeguarding and protecting children or adults who are vulnerable 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 adults who are vulnerable or by strangers; by an adult or by a child. It may be an infliction of harm or a failure to prevent harm.
- v) A worker is defined as anybody, volunteer or staff, who has a role within the church community.

Dated ~~27/11/18~~ 3/5/18

Signed  Chair of Church Council