

CHRIST CHURCH METHODIST AND UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

CHICHESTER

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Introduction

Christ Church Methodist and United Reformed Church (URC) Trustees agreed on 1st November 2018, that the Methodist Church UK Safeguarding Policy would be implemented irrespective of the denomination of the minister in pastoral charge. Therefore, this policy has been written in accordance with the model safeguarding policy of the Methodist Church UK.

Statement of Safeguarding Principles

It is Christ Church Methodist and United Reformed 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 Christ Church 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 community is called to be a place 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 a safe and caring community, 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 West Sussex County Council 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.

Christ Church Safeguarding Policy

Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy

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.

This policy was agreed by the Trustees on 7th October 2025.

Christ Church believes each person has a value and dignity which comes directly from God's creation in God's own image and likeness. We 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.

Christ Church is committed to the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults and affirms that the needs of vulnerable individuals at risk are paramount.

Christ Church recognises that it has a particular care for all who are vulnerable whether because 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.

Christ Church recognises the serious issue of the abuse of children, young people 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.

Christ 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 UK 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, young people and adults who may be vulnerable.
4. **AFFIRM** and give thanks for those who work with children, young people and vulnerable adults and acknowledge the shared responsibility of all of us for safeguarding children, young people *and* vulnerable adults who are on our premises.

Christ Church Trustees

Legal responsibility for safeguarding rests with the Trustees. The Safeguarding Officer should be a Trustee or have the right to attend at least annually to report on implementation of the Safeguarding Policy.

Christ Church Methodist and United Reformed Church appoints: **Gill Constable Church Safeguarding Officer Adults and Children** and supports her in their role, which is to:

- provide support and advice to the Minister and the Trustees in fulfilling their roles regarding safeguarding.
- ensure that a suitable, signed Church Safeguarding Policy is always available in the Church, along with names of current safeguarding officer, national helplines, and other suitable information. This must be renewed annually.
- record all safeguarding issues that are reported to the Safeguarding Officer, according to the Methodist Church UK 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 District Safeguarding Officer to arrange training.

- attend training and meetings relating to the role.
- work in partnership with others including the Booking Secretary, Elders 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 where necessary as an agenda item at Trustee meetings and report to the Trustees and Church Meeting 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 District Safeguarding Officer of any issues with compliance with safeguarding training, policy or safer recruitment requirements and respond promptly to any request from them about an audit of safeguarding activities.

a) 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, young people and vulnerable adults and a written risk assessment report will be given annually to the Trustees. This will include fire safety procedures. The Trustees will consider the extent to which the premises and equipment are suitable or should be made more suitable.
- iv) 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.
- v) Promotion of safeguarding is recognised to include undertaking those tasks which enable all God's people to reach their full potential. The Trustees will actively consider the extent to which it is succeeding in this area.

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

b) Appointment and training of workers in the church

This paragraph refers to paid Church workers recruited, selected, employed, and supervised by Christ Church, that is not third-party contractors. Church workers will be appointed following a satisfactory criminal record check and following the safer recruitment procedures of the Methodist Church UK. Each worker will have an identified supervisor who will meet at regular intervals with the worker. A record of these meetings will be agreed, 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, moving and handling).

c) Elders, Pastoral Contacts, volunteers working with children and young people

Elders, Pastoral Visitors, volunteers working with children and young people will be supported in their role with the provision of safeguarding training. A criminal records check will be required and undertaken prior to appointment.

d) 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.

e) Ecumenical events

Where ecumenical events happen on Church premises, safeguarding is the responsibility of the Trustees.

f) 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 Trustees' Church Secretary Ed Martin.

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.

g) Other groups on church premises

Where the building is hired for outside use, the Church Booking Secretary will keep records.

Complaints procedure

There is a formal complaints procedure within the Methodist Church UK, 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, the Revd. Rosemarie Clarke, tel. 01903 717035, email Rosemarie.clarke@methodist.org.uk. If a complaint is made to another person, it should be referred to the Superintendent. Meetings will be arranged with the person making the complaint and, usually, the person against whom the complaint has been made, to resolve it. If the complaint is against the superintendent, it should be sent to the District Chair, the Rev Conrad Hicks, The Methodist Church, Basepoint Business Centre, Metcalf Way, Crawley, RH11 7XX Tel: 01293 813970

Safeguarding officers must be informed of any complaint or issue relating to the potential abuse of children, young people 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 Trustees.

Next review date: October 2026

d) Definition of Key Terms

- 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, young people, 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, young people and/or 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, young person, 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.
- vi) Worker: anyone working with children or vulnerable adults in the name of Christ Church Methodist and United Reformed Church, whether in a paid or voluntary capacity.

Signed: H. M. Higgin-Botham
Rev. Helen Higgin-Botham (Chair of Trustees)

Dated: 7th October 2025

METHODIST CHURCH UK SAFEGUARDING CONTACTS

Connexional Safeguarding Team
25 Tavistock Place
London WC1H 9SF
Tel: 020 7467 5189
Email: safeguarding@methodistchurch.org.uk

Regional Safeguarding Manager South East
Claire Coles
Tel: 07958 915 747
Email: colesc@methodistchurch.org.uk

Circuit Safeguarding Officer
West Sussex Coast and Downs Circuit (Methodist)
Bridget Quint
Email: bridgetquint12@gmail.com

Church Safeguarding Officer
Christ Church Methodist and URC
Gill Constable
Email: gconstable8@gmail.com

WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

Raising a concern about a child. If you think that a child is in immediate danger, call the police on 999.

If the concern is less urgent and you are worried about a child under 18 years of age living in West Sussex contact: 01403 229900

Out of Hours: Emergency Duty Team (5.00pm-8.00am weekdays) and for emergencies at weekends and bank holidays (24 hours) on: 033 022 26664

If the Emergency Duty Team is not available ring: 07711 769657

Raising a concern about an adult. If you think the danger is immediate phone the police on 999.

If less urgent phone Sussex Police on 101.

Contact Adults' Care Point on 01243 642121.

For a same day response ring Adult Social Care Out of Hours Manager: 033 022 2700

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

Concern about an adult working or volunteering with a child, who may have behaved Inappropriately, to be reported to the LADO Team. Advice and information are available from the LADO Team email. LADO@westsussex.gov.uk, tel. 033 022 26450

OTHER CONTACTS

National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)

Help for adults concerned about a child. Call 0808 800 5000
or email: help@NSPCC.org.uk

ChildLine Phone helpline for children and young people. Call 0800 1111

WORTH Domestic Abuse Advisors

Support to people affected by domestic abuse in West Sussex. Always phone 999 in an emergency. Contact can be made by:

Text: 07834 968539.

Tel: 033 022 28181 (Monday -Friday: 9am -5pm)

Email: domesticabuseservicescentral@westsussex.gov.uk

National Domestic Abuse Helpline run by Refuge

National charity providing information, advice and support.

Website: refuge.org.uk

Tel: 0808 2000247