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**SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY FOR  
COPPLESTONE METHODIST CHURCH**

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.

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.

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

Copplestone 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 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.

Copplestone 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 issues of promotion of welfare so that each of us can reach our full potential in God's grace.

Copplestone 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.
- **IMPLEMENT** the Methodist Church Safeguarding Policy, government legislation and guidance and safe practice in the circuit and in the churches.
- **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.

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

Legal responsibility for safeguarding rests with the members of the Church Council. The safeguarding officer should be a member of the Church Council. Coplestone Church will appoint a church safeguarding representative and the Church Council will support them in their 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 the current safeguarding officer, national helplines and other suitable information. This must be renewed annually.
- provide a point of reference to advise on safeguarding issues
- liaise with circuit and district safeguarding officers
- promote safeguarding best practice within the local church with the support of circuit ministers
- 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 District 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 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 audit of safeguarding activities.
- oversee safeguarding throughout the whole life of the church (eg lettings, groups, property etc)
- 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
- ensure that the church recruits safely for all posts

### **Good Practice**

Coplestone Methodist Church believes good practice means:

- All people are treated with respect and dignity.
- 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 the date, time and place of the visit.
- 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 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.

- 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 to be kept in the church file for each driver/car. All cars must have business cover insurance.
- 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.
- 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.
- All DBS checks will be renewed within five years.

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

### **Appointment and training of workers\***

Workers will be appointed after a satisfactory DBS disclosure and following safer recruitment procedures of the Methodist Church. Each paid worker will have an identified supervisor who will meet at regular intervals with the worker and will have an annual review conducted by a named member of the Church Council. A record of these meetings will be agreed and signed and the record kept. Each worker will be expected to undergo basic safeguarding training, within the first 6 months of appointment. The other training needs of each worker will be considered (eg food hygiene, first aid, lifting and handling, etc). The Church will adhere to the latest published Methodist Church Safer Recruitment Policy. New members of the congregation wishing to help in any area of church life must have attended the church for more than 6 months before undertaking 'one off' duties. Once they have attended for more than a year, training, role descriptions and the safer recruitment policy will be put in place and checks will be made taking up appropriate references.

*\*These procedures do not apply to workers (who are not necessarily part of the congregation) who have been encouraged to get involved as helpers in areas that are not safeguarding-sensitive (e.g. the Cafe). These helpers will be supervised at all times by the workers designated to lead the activity.*

### **Pastoral visitors/leaders**

Pastoral Visitors/leaders 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. All visits must be recorded with the time, date, reason for visit etc.

### **Guidelines for working with children, young people and vulnerable adults**

- The Methodist Church Safeguarding overview leaflet will be given to all people working with children, young people or 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.
- To give children the opportunity to talk to an independent person the Childline and NSPCC Helpline telephone numbers are to be displayed on the notice board of the meeting room.
- A register must be taken at all clubs where young people attend and a registration form must be completed by the parents of a child or young person.
- Details of any medical conditions and an emergency phone for every child/young person who attends a club must be recorded and accessible.
- There must be a minimum of two volunteers/workers at all groups where children and young people are present and it is recommended that there should be at least one male and one female. The recommended minimum staffing ratio levels can be found in the Methodist safeguarding guidance/policy (*link at the end of the document*).
- All volunteers or workers must sign a role responsibility form so they know what their role is within

the church and complete the relevant safeguarding forms. They must also read and adhere to the Internet safety guidance and policy (*they will be asked to read this with their role descriptions, a copy can be also found on the Coplestone church website*) and read the Code of Practice for working with children and young people (*link at the end of this document on the Methodist Church Website*). All volunteers or workers must complete the correct safeguarding training.

- All Local Preachers are required to complete EDI training, Advanced Safeguarding Training and hold a current DBS.
- All members of the Church Council are to comply with Standing Order 010(2ii).
- All Church key holders are required to complete Safeguarding Form D. Keys will only be issued to people who attend the Church and a register will be kept of those keyholders.

### **Ecumenical events**

Where ecumenical events happen on church premises, safeguarding is the responsibility of this Church Council. Therefore, the Church Council will need to ensure that the procedures of such events follow good practice before permission is given for the church to be used.

### **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 the church council secretary. 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.

### **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.

### **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. 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, in an attempt to resolve it. If the complaint is against the superintendent, it should be sent to the District Chair.

The Church Safeguarding officer 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.

Any Safeguarding issues should be reported to Hannah Petherick (Safeguarding Officer) or Sean Schofield (Safeguarding Trainer).

This policy was agreed at Church Council on: 29<sup>th</sup> October 2025

Signed (Chair of Church Council): *Rev Peter Brown*

(Superintendent Minister and Chair of Church Council)

Review Date: *October 2026*

*The Plymouth and Exeter District Safeguarding Policy can be obtained from their website.*

<https://www.pemd.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/District-Safeguarding-Policy-1.pdf>

*A copy of the Methodist Church Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance will be kept by the Safeguarding Church Representative and can be found on their website.*

[https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/18740/safeguarding\\_policy\\_procedures\\_and\\_guidance\\_for\\_the\\_methodist\\_church\\_sept\\_2020.pdf](https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/18740/safeguarding_policy_procedures_and_guidance_for_the_methodist_church_sept_2020.pdf)

*A code of conduct for workers with children and young people can be found online and this is made aware at point of a role being introduced.*  
[https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/18267/code\\_of\\_safer\\_working\\_practice\\_with\\_children\\_and\\_young\\_people\\_july\\_2020.pdf](https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/18267/code_of_safer_working_practice_with_children_and_young_people_july_2020.pdf)