**Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy for the Teignbridge Circuit**

This policy was agreed at the Circuit Meeting held on Tuesday 14h September 2023. It will be reviewed at the September meeting 2024.

1. The Policy

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 humans 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.

The Teignbridge Circuit is committed to the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and vulnerable adults and affirms that the needs of children and of people when they are vulnerable and at risk is paramount.

The Teignbridge Circuit recognises that it has 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.

The Teignbridge Circuit fully agrees with 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.

The Teignbridge Circuit recognises the serious issue of 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.

The Teignbridge Circuit 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. It commits itself to providing informed pastoral care to those in need, including the supervision of those who have committed criminal offences.

**IMPLEMENT** the Methodist Church Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance; government legislation and guidance to achieve safe practice in the circuit and in the churches.

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.

**AFFIRM** and gives thanks for the work of those who are workers with children and vulnerable adults and acknowledges the shared responsibility of us all for safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults who are on our premises.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this safeguarding policy is 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 Methodist Church Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance (2023).

The full implementation of these policies should ensure that:

* Church (and all associated activities) is a safer place for everyone.
* Communities we serve have confidence that children and vulnerable adults are as safe as possible and that their wellbeing is enhanced in the life of the church.
* People in the church are alert to unsafe practices and are able to challenge them.
* Office holders are safely recruited, trained for their roles and are accountable for their activities.
* People who have experienced abuse are accepted, empowered and supported in maintaining control over their lives and making informed choices without coercion.
* People who abuse are held accountable to the law and risk is managed while they are supported and challenged to address their motivations and behaviour.

 3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 Circuit Meeting

It is the responsibility of each Circuit Meeting to appoint a Circuit Safeguarding Officer and there should be no gaps in this crucial provision. It is not appropriate for a minister in pastoral charge or circuit superintendent to fill any gap, because of the potential conflict of roles **but an individual safeguarding officer may cover the role in more than one location**. The role will usually be undertaken on a voluntary basis although expenses should be met. Ultimate responsibility for safeguarding within the circuit lies with the Circuit Meeting. **The circuit safeguarding officer should be a member of the Circuit Meeting or have the right to attend at least annually to report on implementation of the safeguarding policy. Where an individual holds the role in more than one location, they must be able to cover the activities identified in the relevant role outline and be facilitated to attend meetings to report on safeguarding in each location.**

The Teignbridge Circuit appoints Mr. Andrew Sinden as Circuit Safeguarding Officer (Children and Adults) and supports him in his role.

The circuit meeting holds the following responsibilities which may be delegated to the Circuit Safeguarding Officer, if appropriate:

1. Support and advice to the Circuit Superintendent and the Circuit Stewards regarding safeguarding matters.
2. With the support of the Circuit Superintendent, prompt recording and reporting of any safeguarding concerns of which they are made aware. This will include appropriate referral to statutory agencies and DSO’s as required by Methodist Church Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance.
3. Making appropriate arrangements for the secure storage, retention and appropriate sharing of safeguarding information held by the circuit.
4. Promoting the safety and well-being of all children and vulnerable adults within the circuit.
5. Presenting a report to each circuit meeting about safeguarding events (noting the need for confidentiality regarding specific cases) and reminding relevant parties (where necessary) that safeguarding should be a standing item on the Circuit Meeting agenda.
6. Receiving and reviewing church risk assessments and training schedules for each church in the circuit and sharing with the circuit meeting annually.
7. Attending the circuit staff meeting as necessary to discuss concerns brought to their attention.
8. Liaising with individual Church Safeguarding Officers to offer guidance and check they are complying with Methodist Church Policies, Procedures and Guidance. This should include at least one annual meeting.
9. Working with the Superintendent Minister, Ministers and the District Safeguarding Officer regarding any safeguarding concerns.
10. Attending and active participation at safeguarding training, district safeguarding events and meetings.
11. Work with local ecumenical partners and their safeguarding representatives.
12. Reviewing safeguarding policies for each church in the circuit prior to presentation to the Circuit Meeting.
13. Supporting the Circuit Superintendent with the annual review the circuit safeguarding policy and sending a copy to the District Safeguarding Officer.
14. Maintaining a record of all people within the circuit who have received Foundation Module training, Foundation Module Refresher training (prior to 2020), together with dates of attendance.
15. Ensuring that training is offered to those working with children and vulnerable adults, holding an office of responsibility, or are in other applicable roles as defined in Appendix III of the Methodist Church Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance.
16. Overseeing timely delivery of appropriate training, in liaison with the Church Safeguarding Officers and accredited Circuit Trainers.
17. Advising all churches in the circuit of the requirement to adopt a safer recruitment policy and to carry out required procedures when appointing staff or volunteers.
18. DBS verification on behalf of the circuit.
19. Retaining records of names of those at circuit level who have DBS checks.
20. Providing reminders to Church Safeguarding Officers about the need to apply or reapply for checks in accordance with the Methodist Church policy (for updates, the period is currently every five years).
21. Assisting the DSO with setting up Monitoring and Support Groups (MSG) for those subject to safeguarding contracts and reminding the chairs of groups when reviews are due.
22. Maintaining a directory of useful names and contact details.

Where a Circuit Safeguarding Officer carries out the above activities, there is requirement for supervisory oversight, which will be arranged by the Superintendent Minister and carried out by them or a nominated substitute. Records of oversight meetings will be signed and agreed. Supervision will include consideration of wellbeing and discussions of the areas of activity included within the role on a regular basis.

3.2 Superintendent

1. Ensure all churches have appropriate and up-to-date safeguarding policies in place.
2. Support those in pastoral charge in exercising responsibility for the implementation of safeguarding policy and practice.
3. Ensure the provision of pastoral support for those involved in issues of abuse and in the management of those who present a safeguarding risk.
4. Ensure training opportunities are in place for all workers with children, vulnerable adults, for staff of the circuit and for members of the local churches in the circuit, in accordance with Appendix 9 of the Methodist Church Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance.
5. Ensure the Circuit Meeting appoints a Circuit Safeguarding Officer and that the details of that person are passed to the District Office.
6. Ensure the Circuit Meeting reviews this policy annually
7. Support the Circuit Safeguarding Officer (Adults and Children) in their work, providing access to resources to enable them to fulfil their functions.

Safer Working Practice

[Refer to ‘Appendix D Code of Safer Working Practice’](#AppendixD), [Appendix 2 ‘Safer Working Practices When Managing Children’s Activities](#Appendix2)’, ‘[Safeguarding Quick Reference Guide’](#QRefGuide), ‘[Guidance on Lone Working’](#LoneWking), ‘[The Methodist Church Children and Youth Social Media and Communications guidance for Churches’](#media) and ‘[Domestic Abuse Charter/Policy’ documents](#DomAbuse) (attached to the policy document).

Key concepts and definitions

1. A child is anyone who has not yet reached their eighteenth birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, a member of the armed forces, in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change his/her status or entitlements to services or protection.
2. **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 themselves.
3. **Safeguarding and protecting children or vulnerable adults** from maltreatment; preventing impairment of their health and ensuring safe and effective care.
4. **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.
5. **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 a child. It may be an infliction of harm or a failure to prevent harm.

**Dated ………………………………………… Signed ……………………………… Chair of Circuit Meeting**

**SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE**

APPENDIX D Code of Safer Working Practice

1. Guidelines for Individual Workers

2. Additional guidelines for group leaders

3. Responding to child protection concerns

- imminent risk

- what to do if you suspect a child is at risk or has been abused

4. Good practice guidelines for church sponsored activities for children and young people

- special needs

- consent

- registration

- recommended staffing levels

- safe environment

- e-safety

- transporting children on behalf of the church

- Important telephone numbers

Terminology used in this Code:

* the word ‘child’ refers to any child or young person under the age of 18.
* The term ‘group leader’ is used to refer to the person with overall responsibility for a group

or activity, who is answerable to the Church Council/Circuit meeting.

For guidance and good practice support resources and free downloadable forms for work with

children, visit: [www.childrenandyouth.org.uk](http://www.childrenandyouth.org.uk)

1. Guidelines for Individual Workers

**You should**:

* Treat all children and young people with respect & dignity.
* Ensure that your own language, tone of voice and body language is respectful.
* Always aim to work with or within sight of another adult.
* Ensure another adult is informed if a child needs to be taken to the toilet. Toilet breaks

should be organised for young children.

* Ensure that children and young people know who they can talk to if they need to speak to

someone about a personal concern.

* Respond warmly to a child who needs comforting but make sure there are other adults around.
* If any activity requires physical contact, ensure that the child and parents are aware of this

and its nature beforehand

* Administer any necessary First Aid with others around.
* Obtain consent for any photographs/videos to be taken, shown or displayed.
* Record any incidents of concern and give the information to your Group Leader. Sign and

date the record.

* Always share concerns about a child or the behaviour of another worker with your group

leader and/or the safeguarding representative.

**You should not**:

* Initiate physical contact. Any necessary contact (e.g. for comfort, see above) should be
* initiated by the child.
* Invade a child’s privacy whilst washing or toileting.
* Play rough physical or sexually provocative games.
* Use any form of physical punishment.
* Be sexually suggestive about or to a child even in fun.
* Touch a child inappropriately or obtrusively.
* Scapegoat, ridicule or reject a child, group or adult.
* Permit abusive peer activities e.g. initiation ceremonies, ridiculing or bullying.
* Show favouritism to any one child or group.
* Allow a child or young person to involve you in excessive attention seeking that is overtly

physical or sexual in nature.

* Give lifts to children or young people on their own or on your own.
* Smoke tobacco in the presence of children.
* Drink alcohol when responsible for young people.
* Share sleeping accommodation with children.
* Invite a child to your home alone.
* Arrange social occasions with children (other than family members) outside organised group occasions.
* Allow unknown adults access to children. Visitors should always be accompanied by a known person.
* Allow strangers to give children lifts

**Touch**

Church sponsored groups and activities should provide a warm, nurturing environment for children and young people whilst avoiding any inappropriate behaviour or the risk of allegations being made. Child abuse is harm of a very serious nature so that it is unlikely that any type of physical contact in the course of children and youth work could be misconstrued as abuse. All volunteers must work with or within sight of another adult.

Very occasionally it may be necessary to restrain a child or young person who is harming her/ himself or others. Use the least possible force and inform the parents as soon as possible. All such incidents should be recorded and the information given to the Church or Circuit Safeguarding Representative.

All physical contact should be an appropriate response to the child’s needs not the needs of the adult. Colleagues must be prepared to support each other and act or speak out if they think any adult is behaving inappropriately.

2. Additional guidelines for group leaders

* In addition to the above the group leader should:
* Ensure any health & safety requirements are adhered to
* Undertake risk assessments with appropriate action taken and record kept
* Keep register and consent forms up to date
* Have an awareness, at all times, of what is taking place and who is present
* Create space for children to talk – either formally or informally
* Liaise with safeguarding representative over good practice for safeguarding.
* Always inform the safeguarding representative of any specific safeguarding concerns that

arise. The safeguarding representative will liaise with the district safeguarding coordinator.

* Liaise with the church council/circuit meeting.

3. Responding to child protection concerns

Do not try to deal with any child protection concern on your own. Always tell your group leader and/or safeguarding representative. Agree between you who will take what action and when.

If you are not sure if child abuse is involved, or if you have concerns about a child and you need someone to talk things over with, then again you should contact your group leader or safeguarding representative. The Local Authority Children’s Services Duty Officer can also be a source of advice.

Always make notes about a possible child protection incident or disclosure as accurately as possible, as soon as possible. These should cover what has happened, in what context, and anything that seemed particularly significant. Quote the child’s words exactly where possible.

Try if possible to note from the register the child’s full name, age/date of birth, address, telephone number and GP. Remember to sign the record and add your name, role, date of incident and date of the recording.

Ensure all notes are kept in a safe place.

If a child asks to talk in confidence do not promise confidentiality – you have a duty to refer a child/young person who is at risk to the statutory agencies. Always explain that you may have to get other people to help.

* Stay calm.
* Listen to the child attentively.
* Maintain eye contact.
* Allow the child to talk but do not press for information or ask leading questions.
* Tell the child that they are not to blame for anything that has happened.
* Reassure the child that they were right to tell.
* Let the child know that other people will have to be told and why.
* Try to explain what will happen next in a way the child can understand.
* Reassure the child that he or she will continue to receive support during the difficult time to come.

**Imminent risk**

* If you encounter a child in a situation where the child is in imminent danger, you should act immediately to secure the safety of the child. Seek the assistance of the police and then make a referral to Local Authority Children's Services.
* If a child needs emergency medical attention, this should be sought immediately and directly from the emergency services. Parents, if available, should be kept fully informed.

**What to do if you suspect a child is at risk or has been abused**

* Agree with your group leader or safeguarding representative, who will make the referral.
* Make an immediate telephone referral to the Local Authority Children’s Services. Make it

clear from the first point of contact that you are making a child protection referral.

* Describe the event or disclosure and give information about the child and family e.g. the

child’s name, date of birth, address, telephone number and GP (if known).

* Follow up your telephone call with a completed referral form (sometimes available on the

Local Authority web site) or letter. If there is no acknowledgement within 48 hours, chase it.

* Remember that the child & family should, wherever possible, be informed about and

consent to the referral unless this would put the welfare of the child or another person at

further risk. If you have serious concerns, the absence of consent should not prevent a

referral. The Duty Social Worker will give you advice over this if necessary.

* Be prepared to have further discussions with the social work team or the police investigation team.
* Say if you do not want your details disclosed to the family.
* For out of hours referrals, call the Emergency Social Work Team or where urgent, the police.

4. Good practice guidelines for church sponsored activities for children and young people

**Special needs**

Welcome children and young people with special needs to the group. Try to make the premises, toilets and access suitable for people with disabilities. Ask the parent about how best to meet the child’s special needs, and do not see this as the responsibility only of the child’s parent. If premises are being designed or refurbished, take the opportunity to anticipate the possible special needs of future children and adults; advice is available. Disability legislation requires organisations to take reasonable steps to meet the needs of disabled people and this includes children.

**Consent**

Consent needs to be from a parent or person with parental responsibility. It can be from the child/young person if he/she has sufficient age and understanding in relation to the specific issue. So for example, whilst parental consent is always required for a group residential holiday, a teenager would usually be able to consent to the photos from the holiday being

displayed in church. You should record who has given consent for any specific activity.

**Registration**

A Registration Form should be completed for every child or young person who attends groups or activities. The form should be updated annually and include the following:

* Name and address
* Date of birth
* Emergency contact details
* Medical information
* Any special needs including activities which the child is unable to take part in
* Consent for emergency medical treatment
* Consent for photographs/videos if relevant.

Separate consent should be obtained for one off events and activities e.g. swimming and

also for outings, weekends away, etc.

All personal details and consent forms must be stored securely.

Any group that includes children who are under 6 years old and that meets regularly for more

than 2 hours in any one day or for more than 14 days a year must register their group. Please

contact your local branch of OFSTED for advice.

**Recommended staffing levels**

The recommended minimum staffing levels for children’s groups are given below: More

help may be required if children are being taken out, are undertaking physical activities or if

circumstances require it.

0 – 2 yrs 1 person for every 3 children 1 : 3

2 – 3 yrs 1 person for every 4 children 1 : 4

3 – 8 yrs 1 person for every 8 children 1 : 8

Over 8 yrs 1 person for the first 8 children then 1 extra person for every

extra 12 children

* Each group should have at least 2 adults and it is recommended that there should be at

least one male and one female.

* If small groups are in the same room or adjoining rooms with open access between them

then it is possible to have only one adult per group, dependent on the nature of the activity.

* Young people who are being encouraged to develop their leadership skills through helping,

should always be overseen by an appointed worker who will be responsible for ensuring

that good practice and safeguarding procedures are followed and the work they are doing

is appropriate to both their age and understanding.

* Adults who assist on one or two occasions must be responsible to an appointed worker.

Thereafter they should become part of the team and be properly appointed through the

normal recruitment process.

**Safe Environment**

Display both the Childline telephone number in a prominent place where children & young

people can see it and the Parentline Plus number for parents.

Undertake a risk assessment for each activity and in greater detail for an unusual activity or

when away from the usual location.

Insurance, First Aid Kit and fire precautions should be checked and a Health and Safety

Check should be completed regularly with reference to the following minimum standards:

**Venue**

* Meeting places should be warm, well lit and well ventilated. They should be kept clean and

free of clutter.

* Electric sockets should be covered.
* Toilets and hand basins should be easily available with hygienic drying facilities.
* Appropriate space and equipment should be available for any intended activity.
* If food is regularly prepared for children on the premises, the facilities will need to be

checked by the Environmental Health Officer and a Food Handling and Hygiene Certificate acquired.

* Children’s packed lunches should be kept refrigerated. Drinks should always be available.
* Groups must have access to a phone in order to call for help if necessary.
* Adults should be aware of the fire procedures. Fire extinguishers should be regularly

checked and smoke detectors fitted throughout the premises. A fire drill should be carried out regularly.

* Unaccompanied children and young people should be encouraged not to walk to or from

your premises along dark or badly lit paths.

* A First Aid kit and accident book should be available on the premises. The contents of the

First Aid Kit should be stored in a waterproof container and be clearly marked. Each group

should designate one worker to check the contents at prescribed intervals.

* All staff and volunteer workers should be encouraged have some First Aid knowledge and

the church or circuit should encourage access to First Aid training. A list of first aiders

should be compiled and kept available.

* All accidents should be recorded in an Accident Book or Incident/Accident/Near Miss report sheet.

**E – Safety**

* Ensure all electronic communications are appropriate and professional.
* If using e-technology as a group activity, ensure that an adult worker knows and

understands what is happening within the group.

* Do not make any relationship with a child (other than family members) through a social

networking site.

* Maintain a log of all electronic contact with individuals or groups including messaging and texting.

**Transporting children on behalf of the church**

**Drivers**

* All those who drive children on church-organised activities should have held a full and clean

driving licence for over two years.

* Drivers who are not children’s workers should be recruited for the task through the normal

recruitment process.

* Any driver who has an endorsement of 6 points or more on their licence should inform the

group leader and the church/circuit safeguarding representative.

* Any driver who has an unspent conviction for any serious road traffic offence should not

transport children for the church.

* Drivers must always be in a fit state i.e. not over-tired; not under the influence of alcohol;

not taking illegal substances; not under the influence of medicine which may induce drowsiness.

**Private Car**

* Children & young people should not be transported in a private car without the prior

consent of their parents or carers. This also applies to formally arranged lifts to and from a

church activity.

* All cars that carry children should be comprehensively insured for both private and

business use. The insured person should make sure that their insurance covers the giving

of lifts relating to church sponsored activities.

* All cars that carry children should be in a roadworthy condition.
* All children must wear suitable seat belts and use appropriate booster seats. If there are

insufficient seat belts additional children should not be carried.

* At no time should the number of children in a car exceed the usual passenger number.
* There should be a non-driving adult escort as well as the driver. If in an emergency a driver

has to transport one child on his or her own, the child must sit in the back of the car.

**Minibus/Coach**

* Workers/helpers should sit amongst the group and not together.
* If noise or behaviour appears to be getting out of control, stop the vehicle until calm is restored.
* Before using a minibus, ensure you know the up-to-date regulations for its use and have

had a trial drive.

IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS:

LOCAL AGENCIES

Police (all non-emergency enquiries) 101

Local Police Child/Family Protection Unit 01392 384964

MASH Devon 03451551071

Local Council Children’s Services/Social Care 01392 384444 (after hours 08456000388)

Local General Hospital Torbay 01803 614567

CHILDLINE 0800 1111

PARENTLINE PLUS/FAMILY LIVES 0808 800 222

DISTRICT CONTACTS

District Safeguarding Coordinator Chrissie Slaney 07794133797

CHURCH and CIRCUIT CONTACTS

Superintendent Minister Rev Kevin Hooke 01626 832369 mobile: 07772571647

Church Minister Rev Gill Daniel 01626 200655 mobile: 078378016

 Rev Paul Weir 01626 330154

 Sharon Hurlow 07979 848327

Circuit Safeguarding Officer Mr Andy Sinden 01626 203678 mobile: 07749885090

August 2020

APPENDIX 2 SAFER WORKING PRACTICES WHEN MANAGING CHILDREN’S ACTIVITIES

1. Staffing levels

It is the responsibility of the group leader to consider individual circumstances and arrange sufficient supervision to ensure the safety and effective management of all activities.

The following issues must be considered when determining appropriate numbers of helpers:

·      the gender of the group if mixed, then staff members should also be mixed, where possible

·      the duration of the activity

·      the competence and experience of the staff providing oversight and support.

·      the age of the group staff should have the appropriate skills for the age they are working with.

·      children with additional support needs, such as physical disabilities, behavioural or mental health problems extra staff may be necessary.

·      the size and layout of the room or outdoor area and any issues that may be relevant to that location.

·      young people attending who are being encouraged to develop their leadership skills through helping. They should always be overseen by an appointed worker who will be responsible for ensuring that good practice and safeguarding procedures are followed and the work they are doing is appropriate to both their age and understanding. Only those over 18 can be counted as part of the staff to child ratio.

·      first aid cover

·      the nature of the activity, what this involves and what tasks there will be for children.

·      There should be a minimum of two adults present at any activity (it is recommended that there be at least one male and one female) in line with the ratios below. Staff ratios should also be based on a risk assessment e.g. increased ratios for outdoor or activities.

|  |
| --- |
| Required Adult to Child Ratios (as recommended by the NSPCC) |
| 0 – 2 years | 1 adult to 3 children | 1:3 |
| 2 – 3 years | 1 adult to 4 children | 1:4 |
| 4- 8 years | 1 adult to 6 children | 1:6 |
| 9 – 12 years | 1 adult to 8 children | 1:8 |
| 13 – 18 years | 1 adult to 10 children | 1:10 |

2. Unaccompanied Children

The Methodist Church welcomes those of all ages and is keen to appeal to children and young people.

It is advisable that children under the age of 11 years should be taken to and collected from church or a church activity. If a child is over 11 years of age, it remains the responsibility of their parent/carer to ensure they are cared for, arrive and leave church safely.

2.1 Action on arrival of an unaccompanied child

On occasion, a child may be sent to church on their own without prior arrangement or decide to attend an activity themselves. Where possible, the following step should be taken by a party who has been cleared to work with children in regulated activity.

The following actions should be taken if an unaccompanied child arrives on church premises:

1.     Make them welcome and reassure them that they are not at fault.

2.     Confirm their name(s) and try to find out who the parent/carer is and their contact details.

3.     If the child says anything that suggests there may be a safeguarding issue, the district safeguarding officer should be contacted for guidance.

4.     If there are no safeguarding concerns that involve the parent/carer, contact them and discuss the following topics:

·      Confirm the child’s location and that they are safe.

·      Provide details of the party who is looking after them and the activity the child has come to attend.

·      Get permission for the child to remain.
Provide a consent form and request that they complete it as soon as possible.

·      Obtain contact information for the child’s next of kin and details of allergies or other health conditions.

·      Ensure that the parent/carer is made aware of the time the activity finishes and encourage them to collect their child at this time. Highlight the normal dropping off and pick up points for the activity.

2.1.1 Children not collected from an activity

Church leaders should not be expected to be responsible for, or transport, children unless this has been arranged and agreed beforehand. The required provisions around the transportation of children must be followed if this becomes necessary.

Where a child is not collected from an activity without prior agreement, the following steps should be taken:

·      The parent or carer should be contacted to confirm whether it is safe for them to go home unescorted.

·      If both the parent/carer and activity leader deem it is safe for them to go alone, the child should be given details of the activity. The parents/carers should be invited to discuss future arrangements.

·      In the event the parent/carer cannot be contacted, follow the above steps 1-3. The police should be called and the child reported as missing from home. If there are safeguarding concerns explain these to the police. Keep trying to contact the parent/carer unless the police advise you otherwise.

·      Two church leaders should always remain with a child in these circumstances if it is not possible to contact parent/carer.

Please note: If there is a risk that the child may run away before a parent/carer or social care staff arrive then do not share with child that parent/carer has been called. Make a note of their physical appearance including what they are wearing in case they run away and the police have to search for them. Also, consider moving to a place in the building that is less open so they cannot easily abscond, and try to think of something to occupy them in the meantime. If the child leaves the building or premises, it is not advisable to follow the child as this can make their behaviour more unpredictable and therefore dangerous e.g. with traffic etc. in their attempt to get away. Church staff should not leave until all children have departed.

2.1.2 Involving other agencies

In certain situations, there may be a need to involve other agencies. If a child were very young, it would not be appropriate for them to attend church or any activities on their own. This would be regarded as neglect on the part of their parent or carer. If a child is already at church or the activity and the parent/carer is insistent that their child can attend and return home on their own and you do not feel that this is appropriate you should contact your DSO. They will give you advice on what to do next. If you are unable to get in touch with your DSO, advice. Firstly, however you should let the parent/carer know of your intention t
This will help to maintain a positive working relationship with the family and may encourage the parent/carer to collect their child.

There may be occasions when a child tells you something that means they may be at risk of harm/further harm and you need to respond immediately. For example, if a child has a visible bruise or injury and tells you a parent/carer caused this, or if they disclose another form of abuse. In these circumstances, you should contact your DSO immediately for advice and support. Should you be unable to contact your DSO, or if the situation requires urgent action,
are unable to get in touch with them, phone the police who will be able to give you guidance. Always make sure you inform your DSO.

2.1.3 Children under 11 who regularly attend on their own without prior arrangement

If there do not appear to be any safeguarding issues and the child is routinely attending church on their own, parents/carers should be contacted so a discussion can take place. The reasons for their lone attendance should be discussed and any safety implications. Other options for escorting them should be explored.

If it is not possible to avoid lone attendance, a risk assessment should be undertaken in conjunction with parents/carers and the DSO to consider whether this can be supported in the local church. The following areas should be considered:

·      how the child would get to and from church.

·      their level of maturity.

·      the child’s wishes and feelings.

·      the views of parents/carers

·      the availability of staff or volunteers who are cleared to undertake regulated activity to escort the child.

·      any risks that may arise from lone attendance and how they might be minimised.

·      consideration of any persons who might present a risk on site e.g. those with relevant safeguarding contracts.

Where the outcome of the assessment suggests that the organisers of the activity can support lone attendance, arrangements should be agreed and recorded. Parents/carers should provide written consent for these arrangements. If the outcome suggests that lone attendance cannot be supported, other alternatives in the locality should be considered.

2.2 Mixed-age activities

Care should be taken to ensure that children in mixed-age activities such as choirs, music and drama groups are supervised. DBS/PVG checks are not required for adults in those groups who do not have specific responsibility for children.

Separate changing facilities should be provided when needed for adults and children and different genders. Children should be supervised only by those authorised to do so.

2.3 Safe environment

In a prominent place where children and young people can see it, the ChildLine telephone number (0800 1111) and, for parents, the Family Lives number (0808 800 2222) should be on display. Undertake a risk assessment for each activity and in greater detail for an unusual activity or when away from the usual location.

Insurance, first aid kits and fire precautions should be checked and a health and safety check should be completed regularly with reference to the following minimum standards.

When evaluating a venue, the following should be considered:

·      The meeting place should be warm, well-lit and well ventilated. It should be kept clean and free of clutter.

·      Fire exits should be checked regularly and clearly marked. The fire exits should not be blocked or obstructed.

·      Electric socket covers must never be used as they present a safety hazard. UK sockets are supplied to the rigorous safety standards of BS 1363 but safety covers are unregulated and can cause permanent socket damage including:

o   socket contact damage - results in overheating and possible fire.

o   socket shutter damage - the shutters will not be able to protect children.

o   some socket covers make it possible to poke pins and paper clips into the live parts.

o   broken plastic pins stuck in the earth hole - prevents shutters from closing.

o   wrong size pins can make covers easy to remove, some even pop out by themselves.

o   children like to play with socket covers - plugging in upside down opens the shutter and exposes live contacts.

·      Toilets and hand basins with hygienic drying facilities should be easily available.

·      Appropriate space and equipment should be available for any intended activity.

·      If food is regularly prepared on the premises, the facilities will need to be checked by the Environmental Health Office and a Food Handling and Hygiene Certificate acquired.

·      Children’s packed lunches should be kept refrigerated.

·      Drinks should be available.

·      Groups must have access to a phone in order to call for help if necessary.

·      Adults must be aware of the fire procedures.

·      Unaccompanied children or adults deemed vulnerable should be discouraged from walking along dark and badly lit paths in or outside of the premises.

·      Suitable provision for first aid must be available.

2.4 Special and additional needs

If a child or adult has special/additional needs, welcome them to the group. Try to make the premises, toilets and access suitable for their needs. Ask the parents/carers how best to meet the person’s needs. If premises are being redesigned or refurbished, take the opportunity to anticipate the possible special needs of future children and adults.

Disability legislation requires organisations to take reasonable steps to meet the needs of disabled people, and this includes children.

2.4.1 Children and young people who self-harm or who have mental health needs

Some children and young people self-harm to help them express their emotions. Others may express thoughts of self-harm or suicidal intent. If any child or young person expresses thoughts of suicide, advice should be sought immediately. The group leader should be informed and discussions should take place about the need to inform parents/carers and involve other services. If the situation is not urgent, consideration should still be given to contacting parents/carers and referring to appropriate agencies who can offer support.

2.4.2 Vulnerable Children and Young People

Some children and young people are more vulnerable than others to being victims or child sexual exploitation, human trafficking and modern-day slavery. If it is suspected that a child or young person is affected by any of these issues, the group leader should be informed and further advice sought from the DSO and statutory authorities.

2.5 Whistleblowing

Concerns about safer practice and behaviour should always be raised as soon as possible. If any member, volunteer or employee feels that any adult is or has behaved inappropriately towards a child, they should speak to a group leader of an activity in the first instance or a church, circuit or district safeguarding officer or statutory services.

See link to the Methodist Whistleblowing Policy: Discipleship & Ministries document ([methodist.org.uk](http://methodist.org.uk/))

2.6 Drug and Alcohol Use

Drugs and alcohol are strictly forbidden while participating in Methodist activities for young people. This applies to staff, volunteers, visitors, children and young people. If drug or alcohol use is suspected, the group leader and DSO must be informed and a discussion should take place about informing parents/carers. Consideration should be given to the need to inform the police and for a referral to appropriate support services.

August 2023

Safeguarding Quick Reference Guide

**What to do if you have concerns about possible abuse**

1. Consult the person to whom you are responsible.

2. Decide together whether to seek advice or to make an immediate referral.

3. Keep a record of what happened, your concerns and your actions.

4. Tell your minister and/or safeguarding representative.

5. Only tell others who need to know. In an emergency respond immediately.

**Responding to a child, young person, parent or other adult who shares with you about abuse**

1. Never promise to keep a secret.

2. React calmly; be aware of your non-verbal messages.

3. Don't stop someone who is talking freely about what has happened.

4. Don't ask leading questions.

5. Reassure the person they have done the right thing by telling you.

6. Avoid making comments or judgements.

7. Tell the person what will happen next.

8. Record using the person's own words and noting any important dates and times.

9. Report to the person to whom you are responsible, your minster and/or safeguarding representative.

**Remember good practice**

Treat everyone with respect, setting a positive example.

Respect people's personal space.

Ensure your actions cannot be misinterpreted.

Challenge unacceptable behaviour in a constructive way.

Do not put yourself or other people in vulnerable situations.

Do not have inappropriate physical contact with others.

Always share safeguarding concerns.April 2015

**Lone Working Policy**

The **Methodist** Church

**Plymouth** & **Exeter** District

**for**

**TeignbridgeCircuit**

***Reviewed June 2020***

This guidance is for **those working in an employed or voluntarily position** for the Teignbridge Circuit of the Methodist Church who, on occasion, work alone. It aligns closely with the advice to employed staff which can be sourced from https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/employees-and-volunteers/lay-employment-advisory-information/ regarding Lone Working [Section 13.3].

Additional guidance in respect of Home Working may be found in the adoption by Methodist Council of the Connexional Team Homeworking Policy [MC/10/61] <http://www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/coun-1061-homeworking-policy-290310.pdf>. Both are available on the Methodist Church website.

As part of the *Safer Recruitment* policy of the Methodist Church everyone undertaking an office, employed position or voluntary role needs a written **Job/Role Description** of the role they are undertaking and a named person who regularly reviews the work undertaken and any changes which need consideration (Supervisor/Line-manager). It follows from this that the anticipation of any vulnerabilities or risks will be made when the role is first assigned and be repeated at each review. **This task is a joint one never one to be undertaken by the employee or volunteer alone.**

Starting from the principle that **‘If it isn’t safe don’t do it’** this guidance encourages:

* Anticipating vulnerabilities and risks
* Assessing identified risks
* Taking steps to eliminate or minimize risks

**Anticipating vulnerabilities and risks**

The Circuit Meeting **should have a clear understanding of the actual working situations of the employees and volunteers who are involved with their duty of care**. If this entails any periods of lone working for staff or volunteers, it is essential that this is acknowledged and that this Lone Working Policy is accepted and that the Procedures are implemented. **The employee/volunteer has a responsibility to give attention to their own safety.**

**Assessing identified risks**

It is not possible to provide a comprehensive list of the risks which will be encountered in undertaking work alone. A **Risk Assessment for Lone Working** needs to be written and continually reassessed as a working ‘live’ document, which is jointly owned by the employee/volunteer and the supervisor/line-manager, a draft form is supplied at the end of this policy. It is helpful to note that Risk Assessment is not just a written task but a developing mental awareness of environment. The written assessment simply proves that risk has been thought through and all possible eliminations/controls have been put in place.

Each situation needs to be considered separately. The following points are intended to help identify reasonably foreseeable risks:

* Insecure facilities: e.g. can callers be identified before they are invited onto premises or into an office?
* Unnecessary isolation: e.g. if there is a problem, can the volunteer call for help and receive it speedily?
* Poor communication: e.g. when a volunteer is working alone, who knows they are safe and how?
* Unnecessary lone working: e.g. has consideration been given to more than one person undertaking the work? Can a home visit be done by two people?
* Misuse of social media: e.g. are volunteers clear about how to respond to invitations to use *Facebook* or other social media?
* Poor preparation: e.g. has work been planned?
* Health and Safety concerns: e.g. have any H&S matters been identified? Does the worker know when and how to complete the Accident Book? Is insurance cover in place?

# Taking steps to eliminate or minimize risks

**Training**

Training for Lone Workers is an essential part of Induction, ensuring all employees/volunteers are sufficiently experienced and trained, and understand all risks and procedures before starting to work alone is the responsibility of the line-manager/supervisor.

Training should heighten staff awareness with regard to:

1. Up to date an appropriately levelled Methodist Safeguarding Training (Foundation/Advanced) including the procedures, emergency arrangements and after-hours working contact points.

2. Risk Assessment Training - the writing of formal Risk Assessments and Risk Management including personal risk assessment technique - the continual awareness of potential risks of violence, verbal/ physical aggression and allegations ensuring the maintenance of a safe environment for staff and young people at all times, including practical issues such as the use of personal alarms (where appropriate) and mobile phones.

3. Recording of concerns and incidents.

4. Being aware and actively willing to adhere to the Methodist Social Media Guidelines <https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/guidance-for-churches/digital-communication-guidance-for-churches/social-media-guidelines/> and the Methodist Online Working Guidelines

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/children-youth-family-ministry/being-a-community-when-you-cant-meet/creating-safe-virtual-communities-with-children-and-young-people/before-you-begin-some-safeguarding-pointers/> **These should be adopted when working with Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults.**

5. Other training considerations may be: First Aid, Conflict Resolutions, Mental Health First Aid.

**The supervisor/line manager** on behalf of the Circuit has a responsibility to put in place arrangements which support employees/volunteers’ safety. It is helpful to consider the following points:

* The remoteness of the workplace
* Potential communication problems
* Potential for verbal and physical abuse
* Vulnerability of lone workers to feelings of isolation, stress and depression
* Whether or not all the plant, equipment, materials to be used can be handled safely by one person
* Whether or not the person is medically fit and able to work alone
* How the lone worker will be supervised/ mentored?
* How the lone worker will obtain help in an emergency such as assault, vehicle breakdown, accident or fire?
* Whether or not there is adequate first aid cover

**The responsibility of the volunteer/employee** is to support their own work and that of other volunteers/employees. Individuals should consider the points below and any other matters they can identify which will anticipate predictable risks.

Take reasonable care for your own safety

Report any incidents of violence or aggressive behaviour

Arrange to meet unknown individuals in a public place and preferably with another person present

If making a home visit, make sure that someone knows where you are going and that you have a mobile ‘phone with you that is turned on

Tell someone where you are going and when you anticipate being back

Consider a 'buddy system' when you let a colleague or friend know that you have arrived at a visit/premises and when leaving a visit/ premises

To consider carrying a Personal Shriek Alarm

To always be 'streetwise' and vigilant, taking note of what is going on around you

**Scenario for consideration:**

The following scenario offers opportunity to reflect on appropriate responses to situations where lone working, appropriately or inappropriately, is one of the options.

**Pat and Maria**

Pat is a pastoral visitor for her church. She has been visiting some church members on and off for three years. It is generally acknowledged that she has a gift in this area and, as she lives alone and with few family commitments, she has the time available to do this.

Over the last year the church congregation has been steadily growing and the need for pastoral visits has increased. Pat was recently asked by the Minister to visit Maria, a relatively new person to the Church after the Minister had received a ‘phone call to say that this person was feeling low.

On arrival, Pat found that Maria had not been taking good care of herself. She was invited in and offered a cup of tea. Maria had locked the door behind her and seemed agitated. As time went by, Pat became increasingly uneasy. Every time she mentioned leaving, Maria got up and barred the way to the door. She noticed that her pupils were dilated. When her hands were not in her dressing gown pocket where she had the door key, she could see that her hands were shaking.

Eventually, with the promise of going to get Maria a pint of milk from the local shops, she made her escape. No one knew Pat was doing this visit at this time and no one was expecting her home at any specific time.

*What issues arise and how may they be addressed?*

***June 2020***

*To be reviewed in June 2022*

**Useful links to Methodist Policy and Guidance**

**Methodist Social Media Guidelines**

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/guidance-for-churches/digital-communication-guidance-for-churches/social-media-guidelines/>

**Methodist Online Working Guidelines**

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/children-youth-family-ministry/being-a-community-when-you-cant-meet/creating-safe-virtual-communities-with-children-and-young-people/before-you-begin-some-safeguarding-pointers/>

**Methodist Lay Employment Advice**

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/employees-and-volunteers/lay-employment-advisory-information/>

**Sample Job/Role Descriptions**

<http://www.catshillmethodists.org.uk/03-2019%20CMCC%20Volunteering%20Roles.pdf>

**Teignbridge Circuit**

**Lone Working Risk Assessment**

*(boxes will expand to suit each assessment)*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name of Employee/Volunteer | Xxxxxxxx (Volunteer) |
| Name of Supervisor/Line Manager | Xxxxxxxx (Supervisor) |
| Date Written |  | Date Reviewed |  |
| Activity to be Assessed | Pastoral Home Visit of xxxxx |
| Signed |  | Signed |  |
| Employee/Volunteer |  | Supervisor/ Line Manager |  |
| Risk Identified | Who could potentially be harmed by the Risk? | How will the Risk be managed or eliminated? | When will the management measure be in place? |
| No-one aware of where Volunteer is during a pastoral home visit | Volunteer | Supervisor to be informed by email of scheduled pastoral visitsBuddy to be given text when arrive at the home and when volunteer leavesBuddy to have contact number of Supervisor in case of an emergency | Ongoing – Weekly schedule to be sentNeed to find Buddy before commencement of visitsAs Above |
| Previous Pastoral Visitor indicated an unhealthy reliance on them from the person to be visited | Volunteer | Good use of Mentor/Pastoral Visiting Coordinator/ Supervisor – Including debriefing and being aware of previous situation.Rotation of people having contact with this person. | CompletedOngoing |

CHILDREN/YOUTH SOCIAL MEDIA / COMMUNICATIONS







Teignbridge Circuit Domestic Abuse Charter

The Charter

Domestic abuse is extremely serious, and contrary to a Christian way of living.

The churches in the Teignbridge Circuit seek to support those affected by domestic abuse, and their families.

The Teignbridge Circuit:

* holds that domestic abuse, in all its forms, is unacceptable
* believes domestic abuse is inconsistent and incompatible with the Christian faith
* acknowledges that domestic abuse is a serious and widespread problem that occurs in church families as well as in wider society
* undertakes to listen to, support and care for those affected by domestic abuse
* seeks to ensure the safety of survivors and children affected by domestic abuse
* works with specialist agencies, learning from and supporting them in appropriate ways, and publicising their work
* will play its part in teaching that domestic abuse is unacceptable and contrary to God’s purposes and the teachings of the Bible.

Contact numbers: National Domestic Abuse Service Helpline: 0808 2000 247 (This is a freephone, 24-hour service. )

Local numbers: Devon Domestic Abuse Service Helpline: 0345 155 1074

 Stop Abuse for Everyone: 01392 667145

E-Mail: Devon Domestic Abuse Service: referrals.devon@splitz.org.cjsm.net

 Stop Abuse for Everyone: hello@safe-services.org.uk

 August 2023

Teignbridge Circuit Policy for Domestic Abuse

Aims and intentions

 This policy aims to ensure that domestic abuse is acknowledged and responded to appropriately within the Methodist Church.

To do this we will:

1 raise awareness about domestic abuse and its impact on individuals, children, the wider family and community

2 ensure that the safety of individuals suffering abuse or seeking help is a priority, and be aware of the need for confidentiality (unless there are safeguarding concerns)

3 consider how best to provide support and information for anyone seeking help, including working with specialist agencies.

4 encourage discussion of how our church can be a safer space for victims and survivors of domestic abuse.

5 regularly discuss the Domestic Abuse policy, procedures, theology and principles that underpin it.

6 adopt the Domestic Abuse Charter and display this in our churches and on other media outlets.

7 discuss domestic abuse with church leaders, including at the Church Council/Trustee and Circuit Meetings.

8 review this policy annually and monitor it continually.

This policy was adopted by: Circuit meeting on 14th September 2023

Next review date is: September 2024