



Church of Christ the Cornerstone
300 Saxon Gate West, Central Milton Keynes, MK9 2ES

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

Policy and Procedures

November 2024

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SAFEGUARDING PREFACE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

(September 2023)

This is a policy of *Christ the Cornerstone Ecumenical Partnership* and applies to all aspects of the Church of Christ the Cornerstone's work with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

This policy is the joint responsibility of The Ecumenical Council (CIO Trustees) and the Board of Directors of Cornerstone Trading (MK) Limited.

We use the term '*children and young people*' to mean any members of our church community under the age of 18, any visitors to our building under the age of 18 and any under 18s who attend events organised by individuals / organisations hiring or leasing our building.

We use the term '*vulnerable adults*' to mean any adult aged 18 or over who, by reason of disability (mental or physical), 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.

This policy and associated procedures will be reviewed annually by The Ecumenical Council of the Church of Christ the Cornerstone and Board of Directors of Cornerstone Trading (MK) Limited.

The following appointments will be confirmed annually:

A member of the Ministerial Team will be appointed annually to take the lead responsibility for this area of work. Rev. George Mwaura will take the lead in 2024/5. Throughout this document, this person will be referred to as the 'Lead Minister'.

The Ecumenical Council will annually appoint two 'safeguarding officers', usually lay members of the congregation with suitable experience, to assist with and monitor the implementation of this policy. The safeguarding officers will report at least annually to the Ecumenical Council. Nerys Steeds and Peter Cope are appointed to this role in 2024/5.
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The procedures for the safe recruitment of staff and volunteers organised through Cornerstone Trading will be the responsibility of Simon Lowson, Business Manager, in 2024/5.
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Each denomination in our covenant has its own set of procedures for safeguarding. As an ecumenical congregation, it is important that the Church of Christ the Cornerstone has clear procedures. It has therefore been agreed that the safeguarding procedures for **The Methodist Church** will be used. When advice is needed, the circuit or district safeguarding officers of the Methodist Church (Northampton District) will be contacted initially. District officers can be contacted at: safeguarding@northamptonmethodistdistrict.org.uk

Telephone numbers for circuit and district safeguarding officers are displayed on a poster in the church reception area, along with other emergency safeguarding numbers.

Safeguarding concerns that arise within the Catholic Congregation will be referred in the first instance to the RC Diocese of Northampton Safeguarding Co-ordinator at Bishops House (01604 792123) who will respond to the concern in line with the National Procedures for the Catholic Church of England and Wales (www.csas.uk.net). There will be liaison with the Safeguarding Officer at Christ the Cornerstone as is appropriate.

If any member of the Church of Christ the Cornerstone community wishes to seek advice about, discuss or report a safeguarding issue, they should contact, in confidence one of the following designated people:

- Rev. George Mwaura or any member of the ministerial team
- Nerys Steeds
- Peter Cope, Safeguarding Officer
- Mark Okor, Church Administrator

Important phone numbers:

Church of Christ the Cornerstone:	01908 237777
MK Council (main switchboard)	01908 691691
NSPCC helpline	0808 800 5000
Childline	0800 1111
Methodist Circuit Safeguarding Officer	07860780616

See poster in reception area for other emergency numbers.

The Safeguarding Policy for Christ the Cornerstone is printed on pages 4 to 11 of this document.

This Policy wording is quoted from the Methodist Church model safeguarding policy for churches, with minor amendments to reflect our ecumenical and organisational set up.

The other sections in this document are for guidance in our practice.

More detailed guidance is available on the Methodist Church website, safeguarding section.

www.methodist.org.uk

Policy Introduction - Principles:

The Ecumenical Council (CIO Trustees) of the Church of Christ the Cornerstone and the Board of Directors of Cornerstone Trading (MK) Limited agree to work within the following safeguarding principles:

(Source: Statement of Safeguarding principles for the Methodist Church)

It is our Church's intention to value every human being as part of God's creation and the whole people of God. At the heart of our 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 communities are called to be places 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 safe, caring communities, 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 social 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.

November 2024

General Policy Statement

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy for the Christ the Cornerstone Ecumenical Partnership and Cornerstone Trading (MK) Ltd.

(Together, these are referred to below as 'The Church of Christ the Cornerstone')

This policy was agreed at the Ecumenical Church Council held on 19th November 2024

And the Directors' Meeting of Cornerstone Trading (MK) Ltd on:

(This policy statement is based on the 'Model Safeguarding Policy of the Methodist Church' as of October 2024, which has been amended slightly to fit our Ecumenical status and the Trading Company's role in managing our building.)

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.

The Church of Christ the Cornerstone, 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.

The Church of Christ the Cornerstone 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.

The Church of Christ the Cornerstone recognises that it has a particular care for all who are vulnerable whether as a result 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.

The Church of Christ the Cornerstone 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.

The Church of Christ the Cornerstone 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 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 also acknowledge the shared responsibility of all of us for safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults who are on our premises.

The Ecumenical Church Council

Legal responsibility for safeguarding rests with the members of the Ecumenical Church Council (CIO Trustees). The safeguarding officer should be a member of the Church Council or have the right to attend at least annually to report on implementation of the safeguarding policy.

The Church of Christ the Cornerstone appoints Nerys Steeds and Peter Cope to be lay safeguarding officers for children and adults and supports 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 current safeguarding officers, national helplines and other suitable information. This must be renewed annually.
- 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.

a) Good practice

We believe that 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 date, time and place of visit.
- The Ecumenical Partnership and Cornerstone Trading (MK) Ltd. will work collaboratively to ensure the premises are safe especially for children, young people and vulnerable adults. (See section 10.)
- Any church-organised transport of children, young people or vulnerable adults will be checked to ensure that the vehicle is suitable and insured and that the driver and escort (where required) are appropriate. A record should be kept in the church file for each driver/car.
- 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.

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

b) Appointment and training of paid workers in the church / Cornerstone Trading (MK) Ltd

Workers will be appointed after a satisfactory criminal records check and following the safer

recruitment procedures of the Methodist Church. Each worker will have an identified supervisor who will meet at regular intervals with the worker. A record of these meetings will be agreed and 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 and lifting and handling).

c) Pastoral visitors

Any pastoral visitors 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.

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. This leaflet should be reviewed annually.

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

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 also be given to the Ecumenical Council clerk

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 Trading Company's letting terms and conditions include details of the hirer's responsibility for appropriate safeguarding procedures. (see section 10)

Where the building is to be hired out to other religious or church groups, the Lead Minister must be satisfied that the worship to take place would be in line with the religious beliefs, attitudes and practices of the sponsoring bodies of our Ecumenical Partnership. It will be a requirement that such groups must have either:

- Their own safeguarding policy which is detailed, satisfactory and in line with our own policy and practices or
- They must sign up to use this Cornerstone safeguarding policy, including the requirements for safer recruiting and DBS checks.

The hiring agreement should be reviewed every 3 years.

h) Complaints procedure

The Church of Christ the Cornerstone / Cornerstone Trading have a complaints procedure, 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.

Please see our complaints procedure for further information and details of how support may be obtained from our partner denominations.

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.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the CIO board of trustees of Christ the Cornerstone Ecumenical Partnership.

Next review date: September 2025

i) 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 The Church of Christ the Cornerstone, whether in a paid or voluntary capacity.*

Signed Chair of Church Council Trustees

Dated

Signed Chair, Cornerstone Trading (MK) Ltd.

Dated

The safeguarding practices and guidelines shown below in sections 1 to 11 are considered to be part of this policy.

More detailed guidance can be found at:

www.methodist.org.uk

Safeguarding section – policy, procedures and guidance

November 2024

Safeguarding Practices and Guidelines:

SECTION 1

Responding to Safeguarding Incidents and Concerns

This section identifies actions that should be taken when a **safeguarding concern** is raised. This may relate to allegations made about an officeholder, employee, member or volunteer or someone not connected with the Church where anyone is seeking help or support from someone in the Church. The concerns may be about current or past events, but the response should be the same. Past events can still give rise to current safeguarding concerns.

A **safeguarding issue / concern** is raised when there is an allegation of some kind of abuse. (Section 8 of this document gives more information about kinds of abuse.)

(Some allegations may not fall into a specific safeguarding category but may still be concerned with inappropriate conduct within the Church. The safeguarding team will pass these allegations on to the appropriate person/body to deal with. Consideration may need to be given to invoking disciplinary processes or handling by way of advice, supervision and/or training. In these situations, the employer/supervisor/line manager will need to decide the course of action.)

There are many situations in which a member of the Church, a staff member or a user of the building may have concerns, or be made aware of concerns, regarding a child or adult.

That person should consult one of the following **as soon as possible**:

- lead minister for safeguarding or member of the ministerial team
- one of the church lay safeguarding officers
- Methodist Circuit Safeguarding Officer (contact details on poster in reception area)
- Methodist District Safeguarding Officer (contact details on poster in reception area)

The lead minister or safeguarding officers will notify the District Safeguarding Team of any issues within one working day.

The only exception to informing any of the above is if one of them is the subject of the concerns. If that is the case, then they must be excluded from any communication. Under no circumstances, should the person who is the subject of the allegations be informed until after the allegations have been discussed and agreement reached with the statutory authorities / District Safeguarding team. Further action will be decided in discussion and agreement with the statutory agencies.

The regional safeguarding officers of our other denominations will be kept informed of any safeguarding concerns as appropriate.

If an allegation is made about a member of the ministerial team the safeguarding procedures for their own denomination will be followed.

The Church of Christ the Cornerstone recommends the following guidance if approached by anyone wishing to talk about a concern:

- Consider whether the time and place are appropriate for you to listen with care and security. Do not defer listening, but seek the other person's agreement to find a suitable place to listen.
- Stay calm and listen to the information very carefully, showing you are taking seriously what you are being told. Do not pass judgement, minimise or express shock or disbelief at what you are being told.
- Listen with undivided attention and help the other person to feel relaxed. Do not put words into their mouth.
- Take into account the person's age and level of understanding.
- Do not make promises you cannot keep.
- Do not promise confidentiality but explain who you will share the information with (in confidence) eg. lead minister, a lay safeguarding officer
- Find out what the person hopes for.
- If possible, reflect back key points of what has been said to confirm you have understood what has been communicated.
- *If you consider the person is at immediate risk, you should contact the emergency services.*
- Either during (if appropriate) or after, make brief factual notes of what was said, including the date, time, venue and the names of people who were present. Sign the record.
- If the person is *not* at immediate risk, as soon as possible, refer the matter to the lead minister or a safeguarding officer. They will take the matter on from there, but may need your help in doing so.
- The safeguarding team will make any necessary further referrals.
- Do not contact the person about whom allegations have been made.
- Offer reassurance that disclosing is the right thing to do.

Staff/volunteers should not investigate concerns or allegations themselves, but should report them immediately to one of the church officers listed on page 3 of this document.

SECTION 2

Safer Recruiting and Checks using Disclosure and Barring Service

The Church and Cornerstone Trading (MK) Ltd. have developed procedures for safer recruitment for staff and volunteers. We seek to ensure that our recruitment and selection processes are inclusive, fair, consistent and transparent. In addition, we shall take reasonable steps to prevent those who might harm children or adults who may be vulnerable from taking up positions of trust, responsibility or authority in our churches. A process of safe recruiting is essential for this.

The Church and the Cornerstone Trading Company have agreed to follow the 'Safer Recruitment' guidance as shown in

[Safer Recruitment Policy, Procedures and Guidance October 2022](#) on the Methodist safeguarding website.

Who needs to be recruited safely?

In summary, there are 3 main groups of paid posts/volunteers:

- A. People who work regularly with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults who carry out 'regulated activities' or have 'substantial contact'**
- B. People who have some, but not substantial contact with children and young people / vulnerable adults.** This group is not eligible for DBS criminal record checks, but the church needs to use safer recruiting procedures.
- C. A wider group of congregation and community members who volunteer for a wide range of activities not especially related to children, young people and vulnerable adults.** Safer recruitment procedures are not necessary for this group, with the proviso that it is the

responsibility of all church members to notify any safeguarding concerns to the safeguarding officer or member of the clergy team.

Sometimes volunteers move upwards from group to group. Care will be taken should someone move into a group that needs safer recruitment procedures to be undertaken, so that these procedures are followed carefully, and someone does not slide into a position of trust

Our safer recruitment procedure:

- Identify which roles will be carrying out regulated activity and those with substantial children and young people / vulnerable adult (CYP / VA) contact. Anyone recruited to these roles will need a DBS check.
- Prepare a job description (paid staff) or role description (for volunteers) outlining the duties to be undertaken.
- All applicants for paid posts should be asked to complete an application form. All volunteers should be asked to fill in a '**Volunteer enquiry form**' plus the appropriate '**Self-declaration form**'. (This is a form where they sign to say they are not aware of any reason why they are not able to undertake the work – or they declare any matters that need to be taken into account before any employment or voluntary appointment can be confirmed.) All applicants are asked for 2 references on the volunteer form. These references will be followed up.
- The lead minister / safeguarding officer / appointments panel should be made aware of the application and decide if he/she should be present at any interview.
- Arrange an interview. This can be formal or informal depending on the role applied for. Safeguarding procedures should be explained during the interview. A copy of the safeguarding policy should be given, or an indication of where to find it on our website. During the interview it should be ascertained that the applicant has the appropriate Christian ethos for the work involved. (Interviews are not necessary for volunteer posts such as Ecumenical Council members standing for election at congregational meetings, though all other safer recruitment procedures should be followed.)
- Carry out a DBS check (if necessary) and explain that the role cannot be started until this is completed and the person is cleared for appointment.

Appropriate training needs should be discussed. The Ecumenical Partnership will encourage all new appointments to attend a half day safeguarding training course, within the first 6 months of appointment.

Appointments Panel

The Ecumenical Council of the Church of Christ the Cornerstone has set up an Appointments Panel. The Panel's responsibility is to oversee the recruitment process of volunteers and staff of the Ecumenical Partnership.

The membership of the Appointments Panel comprises two ministers (currently the URC and Church of England clergy team members) and a safeguarding officer.

- The Panel aims to ensure that the church's safe recruiting policy is followed in all cases and all appointments are made in a fair and just way, being mindful of the church's and national policies on diversity and equal opportunities.
- The Appointments Panel, after due consideration will make recommendations about appointments to the Ecumenical Council. The Ecumenical Council will be asked to ratify the appointments
- The Appointments Panel can delegate the appointment decision making for some roles to others. However, decisions about any roles requiring a DBS check will not be delegated.
- The Appointments Panel will authorise the start of any recruitment process (except those specifically delegated) and will decide if the role needs a DBS check as part of the process.
- When required the Appointments Panel will have access to professional personnel advice and help.
- If a member of the panel is not available at a particular time, the Chair of Ecumenical Council can deputise for a Panel member.
- Decisions about appointments will be made on a majority basis.

DBS checks

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks should be carried out for all those working and/or volunteering within the Church or Cornerstone Trading Company with children, young people or vulnerable adults. (See Section 9)

A lay safeguarding officer will administer DBS checks for Cornerstone Trading staff members and its volunteers who may work with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

The safeguarding officer will administer DBS checks for those in paid or volunteer roles involved in the church and working with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

All DBS checks will be conducted through DDC (Due Diligence Checking Ltd), the provider contracted by the Methodist Church.

The Lead Minister for safeguarding, the church administrator and the safeguarding officer will all be registered as DBS verifiers' with DDC.

The DBS process has strict data protection and confidentiality rules. All officers of the Church will follow these rules closely. (see section 7)

The Lead Minister for safeguarding, Church Administrator and the safeguarding officer are responsible for ensuring that the following wording is included on all application forms for employees

and volunteers whose duties might involve work with children, young people and vulnerable adults. This wording makes clear to applicants that an enhanced DBS check may be carried out before employment / duties can start.

'This post meets the requirements in respect of exempted questions under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, any applicants for this post who are offered employment or who become volunteers at the Church of Christ the Cornerstone will be subject to a criminal record check from the Disclosure and Barring Service before the appointment is confirmed. This will include details of cautions, reprimands or final warnings as well as convictions. A criminal record will not automatically bar a person from successfully taking up this post.'

DBS certificates when issued may reveal a conviction not declared by an applicant. When a DBS check is completed, any 'blemishes' on the certificate will be reported to the Connexional Safeguarding Team of the Methodist Church, who will contact the applicant and advise them of what needs to happen next to be cleared for appointment to a paid or volunteer role. The DBS verifier, the Minister and the District Safeguarding team will also be informed that a blemished certificate has been identified through the checking process.

The Appointment Panel will consider all applications for a role, paid or volunteer, prior to appointment when a DBS certificate is returned with a blemish. However, this will only be after the Methodist Church has undertaken their procedures for clearing a person for a role when a blemished certificate is returned. The decision of the Appointments Panel is final and there is no right of appeal.

Who should have a DBS check?

The Ecumenical Council agrees that it will use the guidance in:

Safer Recruitment Policy, Procedures and Guidance November 2023 (**Methodist website**) to decide who will need a DBS check. All Ministers and all members of the congregation who engage in regulated / eligible activities will have a DBS check.

A list of who has current DBS checks will be securely kept by a lay safeguarding officer and also with the church safeguarding records. (The list contains the name, certificate number and date of issue only. The lead minister for safeguarding and the lay safeguarding officers have access to this list.)

New DBS checks should be completed every 5 years. The Cornerstone Trading Company (MK) Limited has agreed to fund the cost of DBS checks for paid employees.

DBS checks carried out by other organisations cannot be accepted, unless the DBS update service has been subscribed to.

If applicants subscribe to the on-line DBS update service, the safeguarding officer is able to confirm their DBS status without charge, with the applicant's permission.

Please see **section 9** for more details about DBS checks and who should have them.

SECTION 3

Supervision guidelines for children / young people's groups

The Ecumenical Council agrees the following:

Minimum staffing levels for children's groups:

Ages 0 to 2	1 adult for every 3 children
Ages 2 and 3	1 adult for every 4 children
Ages 4 to 8	1 adult for every 6 children
Ages 9 to 12	1 adult for every 8 children
Ages 13 to 18	1 adult for every 10 young people

Where individual children have particular physical or learning needs, the level of supervision will usually need to be increased.

Groups should have at least 2 adults at all times and it is recommended that there should be at least one male and one female.

Leaders of activities / Sunday School need to ensure that any volunteers under 18 years old are well supported and can always easily seek support and advice.

Leaders of children and young people's activities should be aware of the Church's health and safety policy and procedures and familiarise themselves with fire / evacuation procedures and the location of first aid equipment, etc. Appropriate risk assessments need to be carried out particularly for any physical and off-site activities.

SECTION 4

Codes of Safer Working practice

Guidelines for Individual Workers with children and young people

You should:

- be aware of and understand the local safeguarding policy
- treat all children and young people fairly and without prejudice, discrimination or favouritism
- respect differences in gender, sexual orientation, culture, race, ethnicity, disability and faith and challenge behaviour that demonstrates discrimination, prejudice
- ensure that your own language, tone of voice and body language is respectful
- always aim to work with or within sight and hearing of another adult
- ensure that 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 or contact if they need to speak to someone about a personal concern and encourage them to speak out if they feel uncomfortable or concerned. They should be made aware of organisations that can provide support.
- respond warmly to a child who needs comforting but this should not involve physical comfort e.g. cuddles.
- advise children, young people and their parent/carers/guardians in advance if any activity requires physical contact and provide an opportunity to opt out or agree alternative activities.
- administer any necessary first aid with others around
- obtain consent for any photographs/videos to be taken, shown or displayed via any medium. This should be from the parent, carer or guardian and the young person if 12 years or over. Images should not be taken or stored on personal devices.
- record any incidents that concern you or make you feel uncomfortable and give the information to your group leader in the first instance. Although you must also contact the church, circuit or district safeguarding officer immediately if you believe you have acted in a way which others may have interpreted as inappropriate or if a child has acted inappropriately towards you. Records must be signed and dated.
- always share concerns about a child or the behaviour of another worker with your group leader and/or the safeguarding officer.

You should not:

- invade a child's privacy whilst they are washing or toileting
- initiate physical contact and if this is initiated by the child, do not pull away abruptly but do so gently so physical contact is for the minimum amount of time.
- play rough physical or sexually provocative games
- use any form of physical punishment
- be sexually suggestive in the presence of or to a child, even as a joke
- touch a child inappropriately or forcefully
- scapegoat, ridicule, reject or ignore a child, group or adult
- allow abusive peer activities (eg 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 clearly physical or sexual in nature
- give lifts to children or young people on their own or on your own.
- smoke any substance, vape or consume alcohol in the presence of children or when responsible for them
- provide personal contact details to a child or young person such as mobile number, email or social media contact.
- share sleeping accommodation with children
- arrange social occasions with children or invite them to your home outside organised group occasions (other than with the consent of parent, carers or guardians and where at least one other adult is present)
- allow unknown adults access to children (visitors should always be accompanied by a known person)
- allow strangers and those who are not authorised to give children lifts.

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.

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.

Guidelines for individuals working with adults

You should:

- Treat all adults with respect and dignity
- Ensure that your own language, tone of voice and body language are respectful
- Record any incidents of concern and give the information to your group leader, sign and date the record.
- Always share concerns about an adult and the behavior of another worker / volunteer with your group leader and / or safeguarding officer.

You should not:

- Invade an adult's privacy when washing or toileting
- Use any form of physical restraint apart from an appropriate seat belt
- Be sexually suggestive, scapegoat, ridicule or reject an adult or group
- Permit abusive peer activities (eg ridiculing or bullying)
- Show favouritism to any one adult or group
- Allow unknown adults access to adults deemed at risk of harm (visitors should always be accompanied by a known person)
- Allow strangers to give lifts to adults in your group.

Additional guidelines for group leaders who work with adults and/or children and young people:

The group leader should:

- ensure that health and safety requirements are adhered to
- undertake risk assessments, take appropriate action, and record it
- keep the register (where required) and consent forms up to date
- be aware of what is taking place and who is present
- create spaces for talking – either formally or informally
- liaise with safeguarding officer over good practice for safeguarding
- always inform one of the church safeguarding officers of any specific safeguarding concerns that arise (the safeguarding officer will liaise with the District Safeguarding team as necessary)
- liaise with the Ecumenical Council if necessary.
- ensure that relevant privacy notices have been supplied where data is being processed

Visiting Adults at home

Most visits to adults in their own home will be straightforward as they will be well known to the church. However, when visiting someone new for the first time, visitors should let someone else know whom they are visiting (and when).

- Visiting in twos may be advisable, especially if the adult lacks capacity. It is also advisable to take a mobile phone.
- Do not call unannounced. Call by appointment, telephoning the person just before visiting if appropriate.
- Be clear about what support can be offered to the adult if they ask for help with particular problems and refer back to the church if uncertain.
- Do not make referrals to any agency that could provide help without the adult's permission, and ideally encourage them to set up the contact.
- Never offer 'over the counter' remedies to people on visits or administer prescribed medicines, even if asked to do so.
- Do not accept any gifts from adults other than token items, to avoid misunderstandings or subsequent accusations from the person or their family. If someone wants to make a donation to the church, put it in an envelope, mark it on the outside as a donation and obtain a receipt from the treasurer.
- Pastoral visitors are encouraged to note the date when they visit people, to report back about their visit to the pastoral secretary and say what is concerning or going well. The pastoral secretary will report safeguarding concerns to the minister and safeguarding officer as appropriate, agree what action should take place and who should record the incident.

Activity risk assessments

While the Church recognises that it is not possible to avoid all risk when working with vulnerable groups, it is possible to try and minimise those risks. This can be achieved through careful planning and preparation and by providing a written record of the thought processes and action taken. Activity risk assessments should be undertaken before any activity takes place, given approval by the event leader/minister and retained securely in case they need to be seen at a later date (eg as a result of an accident taking place).

Activity risk assessments should include:

- the nature of the activity
- the location
- transport needed and associated issues (eg insurance)
- staffing levels/gender

- experience of staff
- ages of the group attending, abilities, special needs
- medical and health needs of the group
- emergency planning
- any risks identified
- action needed to address the risk
- a named person for resolving risk issues.

Procedures for photographers at church events

Photography and video recording are important ways of recording church activity and providing a record – illustrating and validating important moments in people’s lives and the life of our Church. It is, however, a powerful and personal process, and we must respect the rights of everyone to **choose** whether or not to be photographed.

If event organisers plan to allow photography, videoing or similar recording of images they must:

- have approved the use of cameras and approve how the images will be used
- notify everyone attending that photography / recording will take place, preferably beforehand in publicity material, but at least by large posters at the entrance to the event
- ensure everyone who will be photographed in close up has given specific permission, especially performers
- provide a space where those not wishing to be photographed can sit

At children’s events (eg parties) parents taking photographs must sign a declaration that no image will be placed on social media without the specific permission of the parents of any child clearly identifiable.

Rules for photographers at events:

- Do not photograph any child who has asked not to be photographed or who is under a court order (where this is known).
- Photography or recording should focus on the activity, not on a particular young person.
- Images should focus on small groups rather than individuals.
- If a young person is named, avoid using their photograph.
- All children must be appropriately dressed when photographed.
- All people taking photographs or recording footage for official use at the event should register with the event organiser.
- All concerns regarding inappropriate behaviour or intrusive photography should be reported to the event organiser.

Permission to photograph children and young people:

Organisers of an event need to get permission from parents/carers/guardians before any child or young person can be photographed. This is often best done at the same time and on the same form that contact details are collected.

If the child is 12 or older, the child’s permission to use their image must also be obtained.

Please contact the church safeguarding officers for advice about permission forms.

SECTION 5

Responding to those who might pose a risk

The Church aims to provide pastoral care for all its members, including those who are suspected of causing harm or have caused harm to others. However, in this context, such care must be provided in a way that prioritises the safety of other church members, while enabling the person who poses a risk to worship and be a part of the church community.

Denominational Area Safeguarding Officers and/or the Police or Probation Service may notify the Lead Minister (Safeguarding) that someone who poses a risk of harm is seeking to attend worship or another activity at Christ the Cornerstone Church.

In such cases the procedures set out in the Methodist Church Safeguarding Policy and Procedures will be followed and a 'Safeguarding Contract' put in place. A safeguarding contract is an agreement made locally or following a Safeguarding Panel to facilitate involvement in roles, responsibilities or activities in the life of the Church or attendance at worship. A Safeguarding Contract will be put in place following risk assessment activity which will be undertaken by the District Safeguarding Team or an independent risk assessor on their behalf.

A Monitoring and Support group will be identified (4-5 people in the church) who can monitor the compliance with the contract and act as a support group to the subject. Safeguarding Contracts are reviewed regularly by the Monitoring and Support group and annually with the District Safeguarding team.

SECTION 6

Safeguarding records and data processing / GDPR

General principles

Careful attention should be paid to the storage, use and sharing of data held by the church relating to other people. This is critical to ensure that those who engage with safeguarding processes have confidence in the legitimacy and appropriateness of actions taken. The management of information is governed by law, statutory and government guidance including: *General Data Protection Regulation (2018)*

As an organisation using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to help assess the suitability of applicants for positions of trust, The Church of Christ the Cornerstone aims to comply fully with the DBS Code of Practice regarding the correct handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of Disclosures and Disclosure information. It also aims to comply with its obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation (2018) and other relevant legislation pertaining to the safe handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of all safeguarding records.

The Church of Christ the Cornerstone has a 'Data Protection Policy' (May 2019), which was devised using content from our parent churches data protection policies.

We aim for the storage of safeguarding records and safeguarding data processes to be in line with the Cornerstone's Data Protection Policy. The Methodist Church Safeguarding Policy is referred to when clarification of procedure is needed.

It should be noted that legal requirements about safeguarding records surmount GDPR regulation on occasions.

Retention

It is a requirement of the on-going national child abuse enquiry that all safeguarding records are kept for 75 years at present.

SECTION 7

Definitions of abuse and neglect

Abuse is any action that hurts or injures another person either through deliberate action or through acts of neglect. This can be intentional or unintentional: if the behaviour hurts or harms another, then abuse has occurred.

Abuse may manifest in a variety of ways, including:

- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- emotional or psychological abuse (*e.g. humiliation, isolation either in person or online*)
- bullying
- financial abuse (*e.g. theft of money/assets, extortion, predatory marriage*)
- domestic
- spiritual abuse

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of individual's health or development.

- ignoring medical, physical or emotional care needs
- failing to provide access to health, care and support or educational services
- withholding necessities of life, such as food, medication and heating
- self-neglect (this can cover a wide range of behaviour such as neglecting your personal hygiene, health or surroundings, and can include behaviours such as hoarding).

Child-on-child abuse and contextual safeguarding

The Methodist Church recognises that, as children move towards their teenage years, their circles of influence change. Peers and other external influences in the community and online may become more significant. The contextual safeguarding approach highlights the interaction between these different spheres and the potential for positive and negative outcomes. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and, therefore, all those engaging with the Church should remain vigilant for indicators of abuse and commit to working with community and statutory partners to create a safer environment. No individual agency or party is likely to have a full view of a particular situation. The Church can play a significant role in supporting young people who are at risk of peer-on-peer abuse, gang membership and sexual exploitation by sharing information and engaging with the community.

Child and Adolescent-to-Parent Violence (APV)

Child and adolescent to parent violence (C/APV) is defined as 'a form of family violence that falls under the cross-government definition (and forthcoming criminal offence) of domestic violence and abuse, most often (although not exclusively) directed towards mothers.' Research indicates that this has become more acute since the restrictions imposed because of the global pandemic. Often under-reported, it is an area of familial abuse that does not always see the victims receive the support that they should because of traditional views of authority within a family.

Abuse definitions

Physical abuse

The non-accidental infliction of physical force which results in pain, injury or impairment. This may include hitting, assault, slapping, pushing, pinching, kicking, hair-pulling, punching, forcing someone, inappropriate restraint, physical sanction, incorrect moving or handling technique which cause distress, isolation, confinement, avoidable deterioration of health, misuse of prescribed medication. Care and Support Statutory Guidance, Issued under the Care Act 2014 (Department of Health)

Sexual abuse

The involvement of an adult with care and support needs in sexual activities or relationships without informed or valid consent. This may involve offensive or inappropriate language (including sexual innuendo and sexual teasing), inappropriate looking, inflicting pornography on an individual, inappropriate touching, masturbation in public, indecent exposure, coercion into an activity, rape or sexual assault, photography, online and social media abuse.

Psychological/emotional abuse

Behaviour that has a harmful effect on an adult's emotional health or development. This can include scolding or treating like a child, making a person feel ashamed of involuntary behaviour, blaming someone for attitudes or actions or events beyond their control, use of silence, humiliation, bullying, harassment, verbal abuse intimidation, controlling behaviour or efforts to create over-dependence, lack of privacy or dignity, deprivation of social contact, threats to withdraw help and support, denial of cultural and spiritual needs, denial of choice or failing to respond to emotional needs.

Financial/material abuse

The denial of access of the individual to money, property, possessions, valuables or inheritance, or improper use of funds by omission, exploitation or extortion through threats. Although financial abuse can occur in isolation, where other forms of abuse occur, financial abuse is also likely. (*Care and Support Statutory Guidance, Issued under the Care Act 2014 (Department of Health)*)

This includes misuse, embezzlement or theft, or misappropriation of a person's money, property, possessions or benefits. Also, refusing a person access to their own money, property or possessions, failing to account properly for money, property or possessions or applying pressure in connection to wills, property and inheritance, or applying duress to a person in order to secure a loan.

Neglect and acts of omission

The repeated withholding of adequate care which results in the adult's basic needs not being met. It can be intentional or unintentional and includes acts of omission. This may include denial of educational, social, religious, cultural or recreational needs, lack of adequate heating, lighting, food or fluids. Also, the inappropriate use of medication, lack of attention to hygiene, toe and fingernails or teeth.

Self-neglect

This has to be balanced with an individual's wish to make decisions for themselves.

Discriminatory abuse

This exists when values, beliefs or culture result in the misuse of power that denies opportunities to some individuals or groups. *Equalities Act 2010*

Additional areas of abuse identified and recognised by the Methodist Church include:

Institutional abuse

This includes neglect and poor practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, or in relation to care provided in one's home. This may range from one-off incidents to ongoing ill treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice or a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation. *Care and Support Statutory Guidance, Issued under the Care Act 2014 (Department of Health)*

Spiritual abuse

Coercion and control of one individual by another in a spiritual context. The target experiences spiritual abuse as a deeply personal attack. This abuse may include manipulation and exploitation, enforced accountability, censorship of decision-making, requirements for secrecy and silence, pressure to conform, misuse of Scripture or the pulpit to control behaviour, requirement of obedience to the abuser, the suggestion that the abuser has a 'divine' position, isolation from others, especially those external to the abusive context'. *Oakley and Kinmond 2014 Journal of Adult Protection 16.2*

Domestic abuse

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- psychological

- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

Cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse (Updated 2018)

Controlling behaviour

A range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse (Updated 2018)

Human trafficking

The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Trafficking is broken down into three elements:

- the act (what is done)
- the means (how it is done)
- the purpose (why it is done).

Modern slavery

The process of coercing labour or other services from a captive individual through any means, including exploitation of bodies or body parts. *Siddharth Kara, Sex Trafficking: Inside the Business of Modern Slavery*

A social and economic relationship in which a person is controlled through violence or the threat of violence, is paid nothing and is economically exploited. *Kevin Bales, Slavery Today 2008*

Abuse using social media and/or mobile phones

Includes communications that seek to intimidate, control, manipulate, put down, falsely discredit or humiliate the recipient. It may also include threatening a person's earnings, employment, reputation or safety, and sexting.

Bullying

Bullying can take place in any environment where there is an imbalance of power and control. (Safeguarding Policy Methodist Church July 2020). This can have a devastating effect on those bullied and others inside and outside the church community. It may affect individuals of any age and circumstance. The Church is committed to responding effectively to any safeguarding concern resulting from bullying.

Definitions of abuse – for Children

From Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

Abuse

A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

Physical abuse

A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Emotional abuse

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child so as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children including interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Neglect

The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- * protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Sexual abuse

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. Child Sexual Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Domestic abuse

Includes any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults or young people, who are or have been intimate partners, family members or extended family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.

The categories identified above are those recognised in statutory guidance. However, the Methodist Church recognises other emerging forms of abuse as shown below.

Spiritual abuse

Coercion and control of one individual by another in a spiritual context. The target experiences spiritual abuse as a deeply personal attack. This may include manipulation and exploitation, enforced accountability, censorship of decision-making, requirements for secrecy and silence, pressure to conform, misuse of Scripture or the pulpit to control behaviour, requirement of obedience to the abuser, the suggestion that the abuser has a 'divine' position, isolation from others, especially those external to the abusive context. *Lisa Oakley and Kathryn Kimmond, 2014, Journal of Adult Protection*

Abuse using social media

Online abuse and any type of abuse that happens on the web, whether through social networks, playing online games or using mobile phones. Children and young people may experience cyber bullying, grooming, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or emotional abuse. *NSPCC Website. Online abuse definition accessed June 2016*

Child trafficking

The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered "trafficking in human beings". *Council of Europe, ratified by the UK Government in 2008 (See also Human Trafficking)*

SECTION 8

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) criminal record checks

So, who needs a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate at Cornerstone?

The requirement can best be described as needing all volunteers and staff who work with children / young people or vulnerable adults to have a DBS check. (Young people for this purpose are under 18 years old)

The following list shows the roles that currently the church requires a DBS certificate for. It is an indicative list and not exclusive. If you are not clear if a role needs a DBS check or not, please check with the Safeguarding Team.

- All ordained ministers (these checks are done by their own denominations)
- All others who are in charge of services (e.g. visiting preachers, lay preachers)
- Pastors of other churches who hire our building
- Cornerstone Youth leaders
- All creche and Sunday School volunteers
- Cornerstone Toddlers leaders and volunteers
- Music Director and volunteers supervising children's choir
- Business manager, Premises Manager, Administrator and Accounts Officer
- Café manager (vulnerable adults are volunteers)
- Pastoral Workers who work in the Reception Area
- Pastoral Workers who are **asked by the church** to visit members in their homes, or elsewhere. (the safeguarding policy governs the work of such visits)
- Volunteers who are **asked by the church** to give lifts to others, particularly the elderly or vulnerable. (It is also essential that these volunteers check with their car insurance companies that they are insured to do this.)

- Anyone **asked by the church** to mentor children / young people, whether this is on or off the church premises.
- Anyone who undertakes or is asked to look after / baby sit someone else's child (under 18) on or off the church premises as part of pastoral work to help the parent.
- Chair of Ecumenical Council
- Lay Safeguarding Officers
- Treasurer
- At least 3 other members of the Ecumenical Council

Confidential self – declaration form:

The Confidential Self-Declaration should be completed by the APPLICANT before any criminal record check is sent off, including renewal applications. It can be completed at the same time. The purpose is to offer the APPLICANT the opportunity to share any information before it is disclosed through the criminal record check. Many APPLICANTS with information to share have indicated that they have valued this opportunity to be honest from the outset of the process. This form has also proved extremely useful in the small minority of situations where the APPLICANT has indicated that there is no information, and the criminal record check proves the opposite.

Section 9

Children and Youth social media and communications guidance

This guidance is extracted from: 'The Methodist Church – Children and Youth social media and communications guidance for churches'

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/17148/children-and-youth-social-media-guidance-060520.pdf>

When used properly, social media is an excellent way to communicate with groups of parents or young people in order to provide information or make them aware of upcoming events and activities.

All contact and communications with members of organisations and group leaders must be seen to be open and transparent. This is the case whether communications are by traditional means or electronic means.

Leaders must not communicate with children or young people (0 to 18 years) via leader's personal social networking profiles or email accounts. Messages must be in a group format with more than one leader in the group. Only children / young people who are known should be involved with communication in this way.

Permission from the parent/guardian of any young person (under the age of 18) needs to be obtained before you can contact them, post pictures or videos of them etc. If the child is over 12 they are also required to sign the consent form.

If the young person is 16 or above and living independently/is estranged from their parents then the form must be signed by the young person and a social worker/youth work/appropriate adult.

If you see images posted by others that you wish to reshare, you cannot assume that the correct consent has been obtained. Only share images to channels you manage if you have signed consent forms for the children in the image.

Even in a closed group, do not post images that you do not have the appropriate consent for. This goes for images that are posted by other people in the group. Any images posted outside your control to a group you manage should be removed if they contain any individual whose consent has not been given.

If you work with children and young people you should already have been through a safer recruitment process to be employed to your role and this will include a DBS check.

However, it should be noted that regular moderation of an online forum (for example a facebook group) used wholly or mainly by children or young people requires an enhanced DBS check including barred list. (NB – all DBS checks done via Cornerstone include a barred list check)

Leaders should not add or accept requests to follow or friend young people (under 18) from personal profiles if your relationship with them is only as a leader (i.e. Church Minister, Youth Group Leader etc.). It is fine to be friends with your own children or Godchildren, for example. The only interaction must be in a space where two or more leaders are able to see what is being communicated.

Your personal accounts should have all its privacy settings set as high as they can be so that a young person cannot access your photos, posts etc, and you have to approve requests to friend/follow you.

Any posts made by leaders into any sort of group should be consistent with the tone and aims of the organisation.

If any posts, photos or videos mention names, ensure they mention first names only.

Any inappropriate posts by children or young people or leaders to a group should be removed by the admin/s of the site. The reasons must then be explained to the person who posted the content.

Examples of inappropriate post content could be:

- Racism
- LGBT+-phobia
- PREVENT issues
- Mental health worries
- Explicit personal images

If anything posted concerns you, you must take the additional step of talking to your manager or Church/Circuit Safeguarding Officer. Inappropriate posts on social media can be part of a larger spectrum of issues (family abuse, peer-to-peer abuse, severe mental health concerns etc.) that other organisations may be aware of, even if you are not.

Zoom

We recommend using **Zoom**, a video conferencing app that can either be accessed by website with a computer/laptop or downloaded on to a device, such as a phone/tablet.

This platform has a number of advantages when gathering children and young people virtually. It supports a conversation with many participants, allowing your whole youth group to meet in one place. It also has a share screen feature available during the call makes sharing videos, passages and questions with your group very easy.

Anyone over the age of 16 can sign up to Zoom and download it to their device using the free option, which is what we recommend parents/guardians are asked to do.

Zoom's advice around under 16s using the platform is: "Children under 16 cannot create a Zoom account. A parent or guardian may, however, permit the child to use that parent or guardian's account with their supervision."

As a leader, you schedule meetings and then invite participants via a link (for those under 16 the link must be sent to their parents/carers), which can be shared by text/email etc. It is advised that your group should meet at a regular set time – let everyone know when this will be.

IMPORTANT: Due to the increase in 'Zoombombing' it is vitally important that you only share the meeting invite link with the parents/young people in your group - and you must stress to them the importance of not sharing the link beyond the group.

Please note – Cornerstone has a Zoom account which it might be possible to use.

Facebook

If the young people you work with agree it would be useful, a Facebook group is an excellent way to have safe communication.

On Facebook, you can set up a Group or a Page. Of the two, you should use a Group as it allows for group chats (which means those with Messenger can be communicated), and those within the Group can post on the wall, comment on posts etc.

It is important to set it as private. This means that people outside the group or page cannot see the posts inside it, and they cannot join the Group without one of the admins giving them permission.

It is not appropriate to include a parent in a Facebook group with children, even if their child is not on Facebook and they want to be able to pass on information. If they want to be part of the group, they need to have a DBS check.

The Group should always have two or more leaders as admins. It is important to note that their personal accounts will be the ones visible in the group when they post, so personal account privacy settings are very important.

Twitter

It is not recommended that a church Twitter account is used by under 18s.

Snapchat

Snapchat is not an appropriate platform for leaders to communicate with children.

WhatsApp

WhatsApp provides an alternative to texting. It is possible to create group chats, which can be a useful way of communicating with a group. However, your mobile number is visible to everyone in a group chat, so this is only to be used if there are two leaders in the chat, and both of them have a non-personal phone number i.e. a church-issued phone if you are lay employees.

Under no circumstances should the leaders message young people directly outside this group. Alongside this, any young people in the group should have consent from their parents or guardians to be a part of the group and their consent for their phone number being added to a WhatsApp conversation. Good practice would be to inform parents on what the group is for and what you are communicating.

General points

Always conduct yourself the same way on the internet as you would face to face. Be aware of what you say and how you say it, as well as how it could be interpreted. Try not to use abbreviations, as these can sometimes be misconstrued. Never provide personal details of yourself, young persons or volunteers.

In the case of online video meetings, such as on Zoom or Skype, guidelines should be given and boundaries explained and agreed at each contact when facilitating virtual groups. These should include suitable attire during visual group meetings and consideration to the environment i.e. there are no personal or intimate items in view.

Leaders should keep a log of any group contact which includes the date and time, who was present, a brief outline of what was discussed and how long the contact lasted. This should be kept securely.

Do not communicate with young people outside of standard working day hours (9am – 5pm). The only exceptions to this would be if any evening activity is happening and reminder needs to be sent beforehand or closing message afterwards.

Only communicate with a young person in a group context involving two or more leaders. If you are contacted in a private setting, do not reply. If their communication needs responding to, add another leader to your conversation in order to remain accountable. Or if anything arises from this contact someone with authority to speak one on one with young people (a minister or safeguarding officer)

If you are contacted directly on a church or social media, alert the other admin or account holder that this has happened in order to remain accountable. Do not engage in conversation beyond responding to simple queries.

If a young person contacts you and appears to need urgent help or appears to be at immediate serious risk, contact 999, social services or other relevant services, and inform your Church safeguarding officer who may consult with the District Safeguarding Officer. If you are unable to contact the church/circuit safeguarding officer, please contact your District Safeguarding Officer.

If they do not seem to be at immediate risk, contact your minister or Church Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible. If you are unable to contact the church/circuit safeguarding officer, please contact your District Safeguarding Officer.

Via Social Media

Any communications made via social media posts should avoid tagging people or using full names. Generally, posts should be announcing events, wishing people luck with exams etc. If the social media in question is a closed Group on Facebook, then posts asking questions can also be appropriate. If asking for Prayer requests ensure you set boundaries around this.

Via Email

Any emails sent to multiple young people/parents should have their individual email addresses put into the BCC section so they won't be able to access each other's addresses. A second leader should be copied into email as a direct recipient or CC. Alternatively, send from an email address that multiple leaders have access to.

Via Texting/WhatsApp/Direct Message

Leaders involved in children and youth ministry should only have children's and young people's mobile numbers if they have been given on the consent form as a means of communication.

Texting should only be for communication, not conversation. With that in mind, it can be used for the purposes of reminding children and young people about meetings and events, or sending a general encouragement e.g. "Praying for everyone taking exams this week!" If it turns into conversation, make every effort to end it as soon as possible and let another leader know this has happened.

You should avoid texting one on one where possible. Group texts (MMS) are possible, but not all phones have the capability. A better option if you want to text is to use WhatsApp or Facebook.

(This section first added Jan 21)

November 2024

Section 10 – Lettings

Lettings and Tenancies in the building of Church of Christ the Cornerstone

Lettings and tenancies in the building are managed by Cornerstone Trading (MK) Ltd. and are subject to their terms and conditions. These are the responsibility of the Board of Directors and Business Manager.

The Methodist Safeguarding policy and procedures for lettings have recently been updated.

This section will be updated shortly once new procedures have been finalised.

November 2024