

Safeguarding Policy for the Middlesbrough & Eston Methodist Circuit

This policy was agreed at the Circuit Meeting held on Wednesday 11th September 2019. It will be reviewed annually.

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 Middlesbrough & Eston Methodist Circuit is committed to the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults and affirms that the needs of children or of people when they are vulnerable and at risk are paramount.

The Middlesbrough & Eston Methodist Circuit recognises that it has a particular care for all who are vulnerable whether by disability or by reduction in capacity 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 and designed 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 Middlesbrough & Eston Methodist Circuit fully agrees with the 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 Middlesbrough & Eston Methodist Circuit acknowledges the serious issue of the abuse of children and vulnerable adults and recognises that this may take the form of physical, emotional, sexual, financial, spiritual, discriminatory, domestic or institutional abuse or neglect, abuse using social media or human trafficking (slavery). 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 Middlesbrough & Eston Methodist Circuit commits itself to:

1. 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 and to providing informed pastoral care to those in need, including the supervision of those who have committed criminal offences.
2. Ensure the IMPLEMENTATION of Connexional Safeguarding Policy, HM Government legislation and guidance and safe practice in the circuit and in the churches.
3. 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.
4. AFFIRMING and giving thanks for those who work 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.

Policy purpose

The purposes of this safeguarding policy are to ensure that 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 Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church (2017). Full implementation of this policy and procedures should achieve the Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church and ensure that our churches (and all associated activities) are safer places for everyone and so that the communities we serve have confidence that children and vulnerable adults are as safe as possible and that their wellbeing is enhanced in the life and ministry of the church.

It is also designed to ensure that people in the church are alert to unsafe practices and are able to challenge them, that office holders are safely recruited, trained for their roles and are accountable for their activities and that 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 their risk may be managed while they are supported and challenged to address their motivations and behaviour.

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 any minister to fill any gap, because of the potential conflict of roles. The role will usually be undertaken on a voluntary basis although expenses should be met. The Middlesbrough & Eston Methodist Circuit appoints **Mark Braithwaite as Circuit Safeguarding Officer** 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 in fulfilling their roles.
2. Ensuring the safety and well-being of all children and vulnerable adults within the circuit is maintained.
3. Being a point of reference for individual Church Safeguarding Officers throughout the circuit to guide and advise them upon Methodist Church safeguarding policy requirements.
4. Liaison with the district safeguarding group.
5. Provision of support to the superintendent, making sure that any incidents and allegations are followed up or referred as necessary.
6. Prompt and appropriate response to safeguarding concerns raised about children, young people and vulnerable adults and those at risk or believed to be suffering harm, including immediate referral to statutory agencies where appropriate and liaison with the district safeguarding officer.
7. Recording of all safeguarding issues and retention of appropriate records.
8. Reporting (in conjunction with the superintendent and relevant minister) any concerns to the district safeguarding officer within 24 hours on the required referral form (please see the Safeguarding Records: Joint Practice Guidance for the Church of England and the Methodist Church - 2015).
9. Acting on behalf of and consultant to the Superintendent with regard to reports required by the district or Connexion.
10. Ensuring that safeguarding is on the Circuit Meeting agenda as a 'standing' item and present a report to each meeting about safeguarding matters (noting the need for relevant confidentiality regarding specific cases).
11. Receipt of risk assessments, policy and training schedules from churches across the circuit for sharing with the circuit meeting annually.
12. Attendance at relevant circuit staff meetings as necessary to discuss any relevant safeguarding matters.
13. Liaison with the individual church safeguarding officers to make sure that they are compliant with connexional policy, procedures and guidance.
14. Partnership work with the superintendent minister, ministers and the district safeguarding officer regarding any safeguarding concerns.
15. Agreement with the superintendent minister about how and where records are stored and who should have access.
16. Meeting with the church safeguarding officers at least annually.
17. Attendance at and co-ordination of safeguarding training as necessary.

18. Attendance at district safeguarding events.
19. Membership of and active participation in district safeguarding group meetings as called by the district safeguarding officer
20. Work with local ecumenical partners and their safeguarding representatives.
21. Review of the circuit safeguarding policy at least annually and the provision of an updated copy to the district safeguarding officer.
22. Provide advice to churches where necessary on their safeguarding policies.
23. In conjunction with church safeguarding officers, review of the safeguarding policy for each church in the circuit each year after any amendments that may be required.
24. Provide a source of up-to-date knowledge of current policies and practice in statutory services and within the Church.
25. Organisation of and contribution to safeguarding training for all those working in voluntary and paid roles within the circuit.
26. Maintenance of a record of all people within the circuit who have received Foundation Module training, Foundation Module Refresher training together with dates of attendance.
27. Ensuring that all persons receive appropriate training when working with children and vulnerable adults, hold an office of responsibility, or are in other applicable roles as defined in the Methodist Church policy.
28. Overseeing timely delivery of appropriate training, in liaison with the Church Safeguarding Officers and accredited Circuit Trainers.
29. Ensuring that all circuit churches adopt a safer recruitment policy when appointing staff, or volunteers.
30. Assist in the DBS verification process on behalf of the circuit.
31. Retaining records of names of those at circuit level who have DBS checks.
32. Provision of 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).
33. Assisting in setting up Monitoring and Support Groups for those who may be engaged in Safeguarding Agreements and ensuring periodic reviews take place.
34. Maintenance of a directory of useful names and contact details.

Signed Superintendent Minister

Date 11th September 2019