

# Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults Policy 2023-24

## *Oakham Methodist Church in Rutland*

This policy was agreed at a Church Council held on **12<sup>th</sup> June 2023**

Signed:  **Rev'd Bekkie Wright** \_\_\_\_\_ (Chair of Church Council)

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## **Statement of Safeguarding Principles**

It is the Methodist Church's intention to value every human being as part of God's creation and the whole people of God. At the heart of the Methodist 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.

## **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 Methodist Church, along with the whole Christian community, believes each person has a value and dignity which comes directly from God's creation in God's own image and likeness. Christians see this as fulfilled by God's re-creation of us in Christ. Among other things, this implies a duty to value all people as bearing the image of God and therefore to protect them from harm.

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

Oakham Methodist Church 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.

Oakham Methodist Church recognises the serious issue of the abuse of children, young people and vulnerable adults and recognises that this may take the form of physical, emotional, sexual, financial, spiritual, discriminatory, domestic or institutional abuse or neglect, abuse using social media, child sexual exploitation or human trafficking (slavery). It acknowledges the effects these may have on people and their development, including spiritual and religious development. It accepts its responsibility for ensuring that all people are safe in its care and that their dignity and right to be heard is maintained. It accepts its responsibility to support, listen to and work for healing with survivors, offenders, communities and those who care about them. It takes seriously the promotion of welfare so that each of us can reach our full potential in God's grace.

Oakham Methodist Church commits itself to:

1. RESPOND without delay to any allegation or cause for concern that a child or vulnerable adult may have been harmed or may suffer harm, whether in the church or in another context. It commits itself to challenge the abuse of power of anyone in a position of trust.

2. IMPLEMENT the Methodist Church 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.

### **Church Council**

Legal responsibility for safeguarding rests with the members of the Church Council. 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. Where an individual covers 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.

Oakham Methodist Church appoints **Vanessa Turner** as Church Safeguarding Officer (Adults) and **Vanessa Turner** as Church Safeguarding Officer (Children) 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 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 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.

Safeguarding should also feature on every meeting agenda of the following groups:

- Stewards
- Pastoral Visitors
- any other event/group planning committees.

### **Good practice**

We believe that good practice means:

- i) All people are treated with respect and dignity.
- ii) Those who act on behalf of the church should not meet or work alone with a child or vulnerable adult where the activity cannot be seen unless this is necessary for pastoral reasons, in which case a written record will be made and kept noting date, time and place of visit.
- iii) The church premises will be assessed by the Church Safeguarding Officer with the property steward and/or their representatives at least annually for safety for children, young people and vulnerable adults and a written risk assessment report will be given annually to the Church Council. This will include fire safety procedures. The Church Council will consider the extent to which the premises and equipment are suitable or should be made more suitable.

iv) 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.

v) 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.

vi) 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.

### **Disclosure and barring service checks**

Our church follows the rules and guidance set out in the *Practice Guidance on Carrying Out Disclosure and Barring (DBS) Checks as part of Safer Recruitment (2018)* which can be found online: <https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/7253/safer-recruitment-guidance-january-2018.pdf>

For example, the following are expected to undergo a DBS check:

- The safeguarding officer
- All paid staff/workers
- All local preachers/worship leaders and superintendents
- All those leading/managing groups or events whether one off or regular
- All those who have contact with children and/or vulnerable adults in their role where parents/carers are not present.

Any children or vulnerable adults volunteering in a role must be mentored/supported by someone with DBS clearance.

Each church determines how many members of the Trustees must have a DBS. The number or percentage for Oakham Methodist Church is **75%**.

### **Appointment and training of workers in the church**

Workers will be appointed after 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; in the meantime, they will be expected to read and sign the “Safeguarding Information Leaflet and Agreement” annually (see appendix i). Advanced Module training will be required for some staff, dependent on their role. The other training needs of each worker will be considered (such as food hygiene, first aid and lifting and handling).

### **Appointment and training of volunteers, including pastoral visitors**

Volunteers new to a role will be asked to read and sign a job description before commencing the role. Volunteers will be supported by their group/event leader. If their role involves working with or alongside children, young people and/or vulnerable adults, they will need to complete the basic level of Methodist safeguarding training (known as ‘Creating Safer Spaces – Foundation Module’) at a minimum of every four years; however, where that is not possible, they will be expected to read and sign the “Safeguarding Information Leaflet and Agreement” annually (see appendix i). If they are undertaking tasks for which a DBS would be required (most notably: alone with children or vulnerable adults), this will be undertaken prior to appointment/tasks undertaken.

### **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. It can be found in appendix i.

### **Ecumenical events**

Where ecumenical events happen on church premises, safeguarding is the responsibility of this Church Council.

### **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 church council secretary: **At present this is Rev’d Bekkie Wright.**

### **Other groups on church premises**

Where the building is hired for outside use, the Church Safeguarding Officer should be informed. The **Bookings Secretary** will keep the records and take advice as appropriate from the Circuit Safeguarding Officer.

## Lone Working

For volunteers and staff members who are on the church premises, it is advised they are not alone in the building as this puts them at risk. Where this is unavoidable, volunteers/staff members should make their group/event leader/manager aware of the situation and have access to a phone at all times. Where possible, they should lock the entrance door/s and make use of any signing in/out facilities available.

For volunteers who are off premises and undertaking their role, such as Pastoral Visitors, it is advised that their group/event leader aware of the situation and have access to a phone at all times. Keep notes of any home visits should any questions arise in the future.

## Safeguarding procedures

An information poster on how to report concerns to the Church Safeguarding Officer will be displayed throughout the church. It will also be shared directly with church groups and regular lettings groups. See appendix ii for the latest poster.

A flow diagram of how safeguarding concerns are handled in church will be displayed in the church vestries and shared with key church group leaders as necessary. See appendix iii for the flow diagram.

## Complaints procedure

There is a formal complaints procedure within the Methodist Church, which allows concerns to be raised about actions or behaviour by a member or officer of the Church. In addition, employed staff will be subject to relevant contractual procedures. All complaints will be responded to with care, diligence and impartiality.

A complaint should be addressed to the superintendent minister, the **Revd. Andrew Hollins at [stamfordmethodistsuper@gmail.com](mailto:stamfordmethodistsuper@gmail.com) or c/o Stamford Methodist Church, Barn Hill, Stamford PE9 2AE**. If a complaint is made to another person, it should be referred to the superintendent. Meetings will be arranged with the person making the complaint and, usually, the person against whom the complaint has been made, in an attempt to resolve it. If the complaint is against the superintendent, it should be sent to the District Chair, **the Revd. Canon Helen D. Cameron at [helen.cameron.d23@gmail.com](mailto:helen.cameron.d23@gmail.com) or Bouverie Court, 6 The Lakes, Bedford Road, Northampton NN4 7YD**.

Safeguarding officers must be informed of any complaint or issue relating to the potential abuse of children, young people or adults who may be vulnerable. They will support prompt action to respond to the circumstances of any safeguarding concern, whether or not any party involved wishes to make a formal complaint through the Methodist Church.

## Policy Review



This policy will be reviewed annually by the Church Council.

Next review date: **June 2024**

### **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 Oakham Methodist Church, whether in a paid or voluntary capacity.

**Appendices:**

Appendix i: Safeguarding Information Leaflet and Agreement (pages 11-12)

Appendix ii: Safeguarding Concerns poster (page 13)

Appendix iii: Safeguarding procedure flow diagram (page 14)

## Safer Premises, Procedures and People

It is the role of the church's Property Committee to ensure our church premises are as safe as possible, and group/event leaders to ensure the people and procedures keep volunteers and attendees safe too (with the support of the Safeguarding Officer). However everyone should be part of that responsibility, so when volunteering consider:

- ◆ Has the leader undertaken a Risk Assessment that you need to be aware of?
- ◆ Do you know the procedures in case of a fire or emergency?
- ◆ Is the building and/or room secure as possible?
- ◆ Is there anything unsafe about the building or equipment that you can solve now, or that needs reporting as soon as possible to the Property Committee?
- ◆ Do you know who is in the building/room at all times?
- ◆ Does your leader have the contact details for all those children, young people or vulnerable adults that are in your care, and knows their medical needs? Does your leader know about your medical needs (if applicable)?
- ◆ If you are visiting somewhere away from church such as someone's home, do you know how to keep yourself and others safe in that place?

We advise that you do not work alone at any time when on the premises for your own safety. Ensure you know who is in the building with you and have a phone with you where possible.

## Be curious

Something you see ... *does it look right?*

Something you hear ... *does it sound right?*

Something that troubles you ... *does it feel right?*

Recognise



Respond



Record



Refer

## Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

Church Safeguarding Officer:

📞 Vanessa Turner ☎ 01572 723770  
📧 vandbt@btinternet.com

Church Minister:

📞 Rev'd Bekkie Wright ☎ 01572 720721  
📧 revbekkiewright@gmail.com

Rutland Children's Social Care: 01572 758 407  
Rutland Adults Social Care: 01572 758 341  
When there is immediate risk of harm, call 999.

If you make a referral to social services or the emergency services, please inform our Church Safeguarding Officer or Minister as soon as possible.

You can find more information by reading our Safeguarding Policy, which can be found on the church noticeboards.

# Safeguarding Information Leaflet



Oakham Methodist Church

Version: April 2022

# Safeguarding Agreement

We require all volunteers who may have contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults to either:

- ◆ read and sign the following agreement annually, or
- ◆ attend regular safeguarding training.

Name:
Group(s), Role(s) and/or Event(s):  <i>e.g. Pastoral Visitor / Sunday Club etc</i>
Address:
Telephone:

*Please tick all that apply:*

<input type="checkbox"/>	I have read and understood the 'Safeguarding Information Leaflet'.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I know who to report any safeguarding concerns to, and how, and how soon
<input type="checkbox"/>	I give permission for the church's safeguarding officer to retain this form and its data securely in accordance with safeguarding policy and GDPR policy.

Signed:
Date:

Please complete this and return to your group/event leader, or directly to our Safeguarding Officer Vanessa Turner.

## Safeguarding Information

Safeguarding is about the action the Church takes to promote a safer culture. Here at Oakham Methodist Church, we believe that safeguarding is **everyone's** responsibility, to:

- ◆ protect children, young people & vulnerable adults;
- ◆ prevent risks and dangers through good practice;
- ◆ promote well-being and demonstrate God's love.

Churches are unique places as we welcome all from the general public to enter, which can make us vulnerable to those who may abuse our trust, and also because of the varied (and not always known) vulnerabilities of those who enter our building.

We want to ensure that both you and those who you work alongside are as safe as possible, which is why we ask all volunteers to read and sign this *Safeguarding Information Leaflet*, or to attend regular safeguarding training.

### Safer Practice: Protecting Yourself & Others

When you support children, young people or vulnerable adults, consider how to keep both *you* and *them* safe. Times of risk include:

- ◆ Being alone with a child, young person or vulnerable adult;
- ◆ Administering first aid;
- ◆ Giving or receiving affection e.g. hugs;
- ◆ Providing intimate personal care e.g. toileting;
- ◆ When you are unclear about procedures/policy;
- ◆ When there is a poor safeguarding culture.

We advise that you avoid being alone with a child or vulnerable adult to avoid putting you or them at risk. That includes home visits and giving people a lift.

## Disclosures/Signs of Abuse

Our volunteers are the eyes and ears of the church; it is you who may spot signs of abuse which, if reported, could mean that child or adult is supported to be safer. You may have knowledge about a person that, together with what we and/or other services know, makes up a bigger picture. Even the smallest worry could be significant in exposing the abuse someone is experiencing.

Abuse can be in many forms, including but not limited to:

- ◆ physical
- ◆ psychological
- ◆ neglect/self-neglect
- ◆ sexual
- ◆ spiritual/ritual
- ◆ modern slavery
- ◆ child sex exploitation
- ◆ financial/material
- ◆ domestic
- ◆ institutional
- ◆ discriminatory
- ◆ online abuse
- ◆ radicalisation

When working alongside children or adults, they may feel safe enough to disclose to you that they have been a victim of abuse. If this is the case, you need to:

- ◆ Stay calm;
- ◆ Do not promise confidentiality;
- ◆ Listen and be supportive;
- ◆ Avoid leading questions;
- ◆ Make use of open-ended questions e.g. **TED**: tell me... explain... describe what happened;
- ◆ Tell them what you will do next;
- ◆ Record what was said straight away;
- ◆ Inform the Safeguarding Officer/Minister immediately;
- ◆ Seek support for yourself.

**Do you have a worry or concern about:**

 **a child**

 **a young person, or**

 **a vulnerable adult**

**who attends this church or uses the premises?**



**Please report your concerns as soon as possible  
to one of our trained safeguarding officers:**

 **Vanessa Turner**

 **01572 723770**

 **vt91991@gmail.com**

 **Rev'd Bekkie Wright**

 **01572 720721**

 **revbekkiewright@gmail.com**



**If you have an immediate concern for someone's safety and/or welfare and  
you are unable to reach one of our safeguarding leads, please call:**

**01572758407 (Rutland Children's Social Care)**

**01572 758 341 (Rutland Adults' Social Care)**

**You can read our church's safeguarding policy on the church  
noticeboards**

Safeguarding concern reported to  
Safeguarding Officer/Minister  
(Vanessa Turner/Rev'd Bekkie Wright)

Is there an immediate  
risk to someone's  
safety or welfare?

yes

Call 999 or  
01572 758407  
(children)  
01572 758 341  
(adults)

no

Is a dynamic risk  
assessment needed to  
mitigate or reduce risk  
today?

yes

Carry out a  
dynamic risk  
assessment and  
act accordingly

no

Safeguarding Officer/Minister completes an  
'Enquiry, Notification & Referral Form' within  
24 hours

[http://www.northamptonmethodistdistrict.org.uk/  
content/pages/documents/1531915015.pdf](http://www.northamptonmethodistdistrict.org.uk/content/pages/documents/1531915015.pdf)

and email to  
[safeguarding@northamptonmethodistdistrict.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@northamptonmethodistdistrict.org.uk)

Follow advised procedures of district  
&  
securely file any referrals/emails/notes

