

‘SAFEGUARDING’ – BRACKNELL METHODIST CHURCH POLICY DOCUMENT

Safeguarding Principles

Every person has a value and dignity which comes directly from the creation of male and female in God’s own image and likeness. Christians see this potential 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.

Principles

We are committed to:

- the care and nurture of, and respectful pastoral ministry with, all children, young people and adults
- the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults when they are vulnerable
- the establishing of 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 disclosures and registration with¹ the relevant vetting and barring schemes.

We will respond without delay to every complaint made which suggests that an adult, child or young person may have been harmed, cooperating with the police and local authority 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.

We will seek to offer pastoral care and support, including supervision and referral to the proper authorities, to any member of our church community known to have offended against a child, young person or vulnerable adult.

In all these principles we will follow legislation, guidance and recognised good practice.

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy for Bracknell Methodist Church

This policy was agreed at a Church Council held on 26th September 2011

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 male and female 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.

Bracknell Church is committed to the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and vulnerable adults and affirms that the needs of children or of people when they are vulnerable are paramount.

Bracknell Church recognises that none of us is invulnerable but that there is a particular care for those whose vulnerability is increased by situations, by disabilities or by reduction in capacities. It is recognised that this increased vulnerability may be temporary or permanent and may be visible or invisible, but that it does not diminish our humanity and seeks to affirm the gifts and graces of all God’s people.

This policy addresses the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults. It is intended to be a dynamic policy. It is intended to support the Church in being a safe supportive and caring community for children, young people, vulnerable adults, for survivors of abuse, for communities and for those affected by abuse.

Bracknell Church fully agrees with the Connexional statement reiterated in *Creating Safer Space 2007*:

“As the people of the Methodist Church we are concerned with the wholeness of each individual within God’s purpose for everyone. We seek to safeguard all members of the church community of all ages”.

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

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

Bracknell Church commits itself to ensuring the implementation of Connexional Safeguarding Policy; government legislation and guidance and safe practice in the circuit and in the churches.

Bracknell Church commits itself to 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.

Bracknell Church affirms and gives thanks for the work of those who are workers with children and vulnerable adults and acknowledges the shared responsibility of all of us for safeguarding vulnerable adults who are on our premises.

Bracknell Church appoints a Church Safeguarding Adults Representative and a Church Safeguarding Children Coordinator and supports him in his role which is to:

- i) support and advise the minister and the stewards in fulfilling their roles
- ii) provide a point of reference to advise on safeguarding issues
- iii) liaise with Circuit and District Safeguarding Coordinators
- iv) promote safeguarding best practice within the local church with the support of circuit ministers.

a) Purpose

The purposes of this safeguarding policy are to ensure procedures are in place and people are clear about roles and responsibilities for vulnerable adults in our care and using our premises. It is to be read in conjunction with the Methodist Safeguarding Handbook (2010).

b) Good Practice

- i) All people are treated with respect and dignity.
- ii) It is strongly advisable that at least two adults are present with a group, particularly when it is the only activity taking place on church premises or when there is little or no opportunity of the activity being observed by other people. Do all that you can to avoid an adult being left alone with a child or young person.

(An adult is a person who is at least 16 years of age for work with Children and at least 18 years of age for work with young people.)

- ii) The church premises will be assessed for safety for children and vulnerable adults and the risk assessment report will be given annually to the Church Council in written form. 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.
- iii) It is advisable that any group with boys and girls in attendance have a male *and* female leader present with the group.

The recommended ratio of adults to children is as follows:

0-2 years	1 adult to 3 children
2-3 years	1 adult to 4 children
3-8 years	1 adult to 8 children
8+ years	1 adult to 10 children

Some activities, vigorous sports, journeys and work with young people with special needs may require a higher ratio of adults to children.

iv) Always prepare as thoroughly as possible in advance of your meeting so that once the children and young people are present you can be well organised.

v) Any church-organised transport of children or vulnerable adults will be checked to ensure the vehicle is suitable and insured and that the driver and escort are appropriate.

iv) 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.

The following directives are offered with a view to creating the safest possible environment for children, young people and their leaders.

- i) Always ensure that the lights are switched on in all corridors and rooms where children and young people are meeting or passing through and in those places accessible to any other casual user of the premises, BEFORE allowing children to enter the premises
- ii) Ensure appropriate arrangements are in place to bar access to unwanted visitors.
- iii) The CHILDLINE number should be posted on the notice board readily accessible by all children and young people.

c) Appointment and training of workers

Employed Workers will be appointed after a satisfactory CRB disclosure. Each worker will be expected to undergo basic safeguarding training, within the first year of appointment. The other training needs of each worker will be considered (e.g. food hygiene, first aid, lifting and handling, etc.) and each worker will have an annual review conducted by a named member of the Church Council and another worker within the organisation. Under the guidelines of the Methodist Church all disclosures should be rechecked every five years.

Volunteers Workers will be appointed after a satisfactory CRB disclosure or completion of an appropriate safeguarding declaration form whichever is appropriate for their role and involvement.

Volunteer workers who have regular contact with children in their role, will be required to attend child protection training within 6 months of their appointment. This can be within the Methodist Church or a recognised denominational body.

There is also an expectation that leaders and adult helpers of groups will take seriously their need for on-going training and development.

- i) From time to time the Church Council may indicate their wish for further training to be undertaken by those authorised to serve as workers with children and young people and it is hoped that such suggestions will be received positively.
- ii) When group leaders identify training needs for themselves or their colleagues, the Council in its turn will seek to look favourably upon applications for assistance with costs/resources. Such requests should be made to the Church Council through the Minister.

d) Pastoral visitors

In terms of safeguarding, Pastoral Visitors will be supported in their role with the provision of basic safeguarding training upon appointment.

e) Guidelines for working with children, young people and vulnerable adults

A leaflet will be produced and reviewed annually to be given to each worker with vulnerable adults outlining good practice and systems. The leaflet will be reviewed annually with this policy.

f) Ecumenical events

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

g) Events with church groups off the premises

- i) never take a group off the premises with less than two adults and in appropriate ratio to the number and age of children.
- ii) Please be aware of the Insurance implications of any activities your group undertakes – particularly those off Church premises. Many activities will be covered by the host 'company' or organisation, and others will be insured through the Church. Do not undertake any activity with your group unless you are sure that adequate Insurance is in place.

Parental/Guardianship Consent

Consent forms should be used in the following circumstances:

- i) When the group is meeting outside Church premises
- ii) When the group may be involved in a potentially hazardous activity.

Consent forms are also required for 'whole Church' events such as outings when the parents/guardians are not present. You are advised to keep all consent forms for a period of 18 months following the event.

h) Other groups on church premises

Where the building is hired for outside use, the person signing the letting agreement will be given a copy of this policy. The lettings secretary will consider the various users of the building in making lettings.

i) Authorised workers and officer holders not directly in contact with children, young people & Vulnerable adults.

The Church Council requires that Office holders and workers (as defined by 'Safeguarding' and subsequent authorised publications and Standing Orders) not directly in contact with children and young people, complete the appropriate declarations and training in accordance with Methodist Connexional

Guidelines. Failure to do this may prevent that person from continuing in or being appointed to an office or position within the Bracknell Methodist Church and/or South East Berkshire Circuit.

j) Complaints procedure

It is hoped that complaints can generally be dealt with internally by the organisations. However, a complaint may be made to a person who will be appointed by the Church Council. If a complaint is made to another person, it should be passed to this person or the minister in pastoral charge who will arrange to meet with the complainant and attempt to resolve the complaint. If the complaint cannot be resolved, consideration will be given to invoking the complaints system of the Methodist Church which will involve initially speaking with the Circuit Complaints Office.

k) Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Church Council.

SUSPICION OR ALLEGATION OF ABUSE – WHAT TO DO AND WHO TO TELL

It is important that all authorised workers with children and young people have a working knowledge of the procedure that should be followed if an accusation of abuse is made or abuse suspected.

WHERE ABUSE IS ALLEGED

- a. If a child or young person makes an allegation of abuse, treat the matter seriously and do not minimize or dispute their account.
- b. Absolute confidentiality should never be offered, as the information may need to be passed to the Police or Social Services. A criminal offence may have been committed and other children may also be at risk.
- c. The allegation might concern a person within or outside the church community. In either instance the allegation should not, at this stage, be shared with the adult about whom the child has made the allegation.
- e. If the allegation is made about someone outside of the church community, a decision will have to be made as to whether the child/young person is at immediate risk of harm, i.e. returning home at the end of the session. In taking this decision the Group Leader AND the Minister in Pastoral Charge should be consulted wherever possible.
- f. If the allegation is made about someone within the church community, other than an authorized worker or Group Leader, the Minister in Pastoral Charge should be contacted.
- g. If the allegation is made about an authorized Worker, the appropriate group leader should be contacted immediately. If the allegation is made about a Group leader, the appropriate Minister should be contacted immediately. In the case of an allegation against a Minister or Deacon, the Church safeguard officer should be notified immediately. S/he should contact the Chair of the District as a matter of urgency. If s/he is unavailable the District Methodist District Child Protection Officer should be informed.
- h. In the case of any allegation the Methodist District Child Protection Officer should be contacted as soon as possible.

WHERE ABUSE IS SUSPECTED

There may well be occasions when you suspect that a child may be experiencing abuse, either within or outside the church context.

- a Discuss your concern with the Group Leader and Minister/Church Council Safeguard Officer. It may well be appropriate for them to pass your concerns on to the statutory authorities and/or other bodies, which will be able to make wider enquiries as to the child's well being. This contact should normally be made by the Minister, Church Council safeguard Officer or the District Child protection Officer.
- b Make a record of any conversations and action as soon as possible after the events, keep a copy and pass information to Group leader or / Minister in Pastoral Charge

If you have concerns or anxieties about a child - always do something - share your concerns with the appropriate people in your Church

PLEASE NOTE In cases of suspected abuse or of accusations of abuse, it is vital that those in charge of groups consult with the Minister and/or Church Council Safeguard Officer as a matter of extreme urgency, so that an appropriate course of action can be determined. Delaying this initial conversation IS NOT acceptable.

Vulnerable Adults

*"Vulnerable adult", in the context of a Standard Disclosure, means a person aged 18 or over who has a condition of the following type: i) a learning or physical disability; ii) a physical or mental illness, chronic or otherwise, including an addiction to alcohol or drugs; or iii) a reduction in physical or mental capacity.

And which leads to:

- a) a dependency upon others in the performance of, or a requirement for assistance in the performance of, basic physical functions,
- b) severe impairment in the ability to communicate with others, or
- c) impairment in a person's ability to protect him or herself from assault, abuse or neglect;

And requiring

- a) accommodation and nursing or personal care in a care home,
- b) personal care or support to live independently in his or her own home,
- c) any services provided by an independent hospital, independent clinic, independent medical agency or National Health Service body,
- d) social care services; or
- e) any services provided in an establishment catering for a person with learning difficulties.

Pastoral care Good practice

Premises

Bracknell Methodist Church is responsible for ensuring that the church environment and those who are offered support and pastoral care are safe. Consideration must be given to buildings and equipment; regular risk assessment will assist in highlighting areas where changes would be advisable.

Pastoral Care

- Respect a person's independence. Consider the appropriateness of initiating or receiving physical contact.
- Ask about personal preferences. Do not assume the use of a first name.

- Wherever possible, ensure participation and inclusion. A person who has difficulty in one area may be perfectly capable in others.
- Use an appropriate level of language in conversation and positive words such as 'disability', rather than 'handicap'. Where communication skills are impaired, seek advice from carers or family.
- Be aware of and respect a person's need for personal space and privacy. Particular consideration should be given when assisting someone to use the toilet; balance the need for space with the possibility of someone coming in.
- If possible, avoid visiting alone, especially at night.
- If possible, take appropriate steps/ advice to ensure that a safe environment is created for vulnerable adult and church workers. In particular when a church worker is involved in the only activity taking place on church premises or when there is little or no opportunity of the activity being observed by other people.
- Sensitivity to a person's beliefs and faith is needed. There should be no attempt to 'force' religious ideas or values onto people.
- Honesty, integrity and transparency are vital in all dealings concerning a person's financial affairs. No personal financial gain or material gift should be sought or accepted.
- Dress appropriately
- Be aware of the dangers of dependency in vulnerable adults and seek advice or supervision if concerns arise. This may be a particular concern in ministry to adults who are 'temporarily vulnerable'.