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## **SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY FOR COPPLESTONE METHODIST CHURCH**

Copplestone Methodist 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.

Copplestone Methodist 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 we seek 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.

Copplestone 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.*

Copplestone 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.

Copplestone Methodist Church commits itself to:

- responding 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.
- ensuring the implementation of Connexional Safeguarding Policy; government legislation and guidance and safe practice in the circuit and in the churches.
- the provision of support, advice and training for lay and volunteers workers 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.

Copplestone church will appoint a church safeguarding representative and the Church Council will support them in their role which is to:

- support and advise the minister and the stewards in fulfilling their roles

- provide a point of reference to advise on safeguarding issues
- liaise with Circuit and District Safeguarding Coordinators
- promote safeguarding best practice within the local church with the support of circuit ministers.

### **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 used in conjunction with the Methodist Safeguarding Handbook (2010).

### **Good Practice**

Copplestone Methodist Church commends good practice with regard to matters of safeguarding and aims to demonstrate this by adherence in all activities to which this relates. We believe good practice means that:

- 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 such cases good practice may be especially important and a record will be made and kept, noting the date, time and place of the visit.
- The church premises will be assessed for safety for children and vulnerable adults and the risk assessment reports kept securely for reference. 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.
- 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.
- All DBS checks will be renewed within five years.

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

### **Appointment and training of workers\***

Workers will be appointed after a satisfactory DBS check has been completed. Each worker will be expected to undergo basic safeguarding training. The other training needs of each worker will be considered (e.g. food hygiene, first aid, lifting and handling, etc) and each paid worker will have an annual review conducted by a named member of the Church Council. The Church will adhere to the latest published Methodist Church Safer Recruitment Policy. New members of the congregation wishing to help in any area of church life must have attended the church for more than 6 months before undertaking 'one off' duties. Once they have attended for more than a year, training, role descriptions and the safer recruitment policy will be put in place and checks will be made taking up appropriate references.

*\*These procedures do not apply to workers (who are not necessarily part of the congregation) who have been encouraged to get involved as helpers in areas that are not safeguarding-sensitive (e.g. the Cafe). These helpers will be supervised at all times by the workers designated to lead the activity.*

### **Pastoral visitors/leaders**

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

### **Guidelines for working with children, young people and vulnerable adults**

- The Methodist Church Safeguarding overview leaflet will be given to all people working with children, young people or vulnerable adults.
- To give children the opportunity to talk to an independent person the Childline and NSPCC Helpline telephone numbers are to be displayed on the notice board of the meeting room.
- A register must be taken at all clubs where young people attend and a registration form must be completed by the parents of a child or young person.
- Details of any medical conditions and an emergency phone for every child/young person who attends a club must be recorded and accessible.
- There must be a minimum of two volunteers/workers at all groups where children and young people are present and it is recommended that there should be at least one male and one female. The recommended minimum staffing ratio levels of children groups are: 0 – 2yrs, 1:3; 2 – 3yrs 1:4; 3 – 8 yrs 1:8; Over 8 yrs 1 person for the first 8 children then 1 extra person for every extra 12 children).
- All volunteers or workers must sign a role responsibility form so they know what their role is within the church.
- All Local Preachers are required to complete Safeguarding Form B.
- All members of the Church Council are to comply with Standing Order 010(2ii).
- All Church key holders are required to complete Safeguarding Form D. Keys will only be issued to people who attend the Church and a register will be kept of those keyholders.

### **All Stars After School Club**

Copplestone Methodist Church is responsible for the All Stars After School Club, held at Copplestone Primary School. While the Copplestone Methodist Church Safeguarding Policy applies to the club, the All Stars Safeguarding Policy amplifies further how the policy is to be applied in the context of this church-run club held off the church premises.

### **Ecumenical events**

Where ecumenical events happen on church premises, safeguarding is the responsibility of this Church Council. Therefore the Church Council will need to ensure that the procedures of such events follow good practice before permission is given for the church to be used.

### **Events with church groups off the premises**

Adequate staffing will be ensured for such events.

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

Where the building is hired for outside use, the person signing the letting agreement [which should include Safeguarding Form E], will be given a copy of this policy. The lettings secretary will consider the various users of the building in making lettings.

### **Complaints procedure**

It is hoped that complaints can generally be dealt internally by the church. However all other complaints should go directly to the minister or superintendent of the circuit.

This policy was agreed at Church Council on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2015

Signed (Chair of Church Council) *Rev John Wilthshire*

Review Date: November 2017

*The Plymouth and Exeter Child Protection Policy can be obtained from the Youth Worker.  
A copy of the Safeguarding Handbook will be kept by the Safeguarding Church Representative.*