

# Safeguarding Policy for St Andrew's Methodist Church Halifax

## Purposes

The purposes of St. Andrew's Methodist Church's Safeguarding policy are

- to ensure procedures are in place and people are clear about their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding
- to promote children's welfare both in our care and using our premises.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Circuit and District Safeguarding Policies and 'Safeguarding-a policy for good practice in the care of children and young people, 2003'.

## 1.Connexional Statement

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. It is the responsibility of each one of us to prevent the physical, sexual or emotional abuse and neglect of children and young people.

## 2. What is Abuse and Neglect?

'Abuse and neglect are forms 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 a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children' Working Together to Safeguard Children, HM Government, 2006.

There are four categories of abuse: physical, emotional, sexual and neglect.

Any child or young person under the age of eighteen can suffer abuse.

## 3. Clarification of terms

Within this Safeguarding Policy all those termed 'workers' includes paid and voluntary positions.

A 'child' is anyone who has not yet reached their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

## 4. Good practice guidelines:

a) For good practice in our Church we should ensure that:

- all children and young people are treated with respect and dignity
- as far as possible, children's and youth workers or anyone else, are not alone with a child where their activity cannot be seen. On church premises this may mean leaving doors open, or two groups working in the same room
- in a pastoral situation with a child, where privacy is important, another adult knows the interview is taking place, and with whom it is taking place
- the church premises, and access to and from them, are safe and well lit.

All of us are responsible for observing the guidelines set out above. The following guidelines are designed for those appointing Children's and Youth Workers and for those working with children and young people.

## b) Appointing Children's and Youth Workers

### Appointing

The appointment of all workers is the overall responsibility of the Church Council.

All workers with children and young people must obtain a Disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau for this appointment. The Church Council is responsible for determining the level of Disclosure, based on guidance provided in *Safeguarding*, 2003, p. 15.

To appoint a new worker with children and young people the Church Council will:

- Ø identify the post to be filled
- Ø decide the level of Disclosure required. An Enhanced Disclosure will be required for Children's and Youth Workers, Junior Church teachers, leaders of holiday clubs and residential weekends, crèche and toddler group workers. A Standard Disclosure will be required for the Church Caretaker
- Ø facilitate an interview or conversation with the person to be appointed between the minister and the named person on the job description. During the conversation the applicant will be made aware of the Safeguarding Policy.
- Ø make sure that the new Safeguarding A, part 1, is completed by the applicant. These forms will be kept by the minister
- Ø make sure that the references obtained from the worker's referees are checked by the minister and the named person on the job description
- Ø offer the post subject to a satisfactory Disclosure. The worker will not be able to work unsupervised with children or young people until a satisfactory disclosure is obtained.
- Ø complete new Safeguarding A, part 2. The minister will retain the forms. The worker will be expected to inform the minister or the named person on the job description of any subsequent change in circumstances
- Ø explain to the applicant the process for obtaining a Disclosure
- Ø tell the applicant that the completed CRB form and cover sheet should be taken to the Minister in pastoral charge together with the necessary documents for personal identification

- Ø support the applicant through the process
- Ø receive from the Minister the decision of the CAS concerning the Disclosure after the application has been dealt with by the CRB
- Ø confirm the appointment, subject to a satisfactory probationary period of 6 months. At the end of the probationary period a meeting will take place with the named person on the job description.
- Ø A new disclosure will be required every 5 years.
- Ø Occasional helpers must be informed, by the person asking them to help, of the Church's Safeguarding Policy and never be left on their own with a child.
- Ø West Yorkshire District Safeguarding Policy cards will be given to all workers with children and young people.

#### Re-applying for Disclosures

It is the Minister's role to ask workers to re-apply for a Disclosure every five years or upon change of location, whichever is shorter.

#### S.O.010

It is the minister's responsibility to make sure all office holders or those carrying out a duty or responsibility cannot do so if they have been cautioned or convicted for sexual offences against children.

This includes people who have lone access to the church. When a person is appointed to an office or becomes a key holder the minister MUST check the person has signed either Form C or Form D

#### c) Good practice guidelines for workers with children and young people:

- at least two adults will lead any children's and young people's activities as far as possible, a worker will not be alone with a child or young person and never on a regular basis
- if a worker does find themselves on their own with children, eg. illness of another worker they must contact the minister, or Junior Church Superintendent to inform them and together undertake a risk assessment on what action to take, again this must not happen on a regular basis
- if privacy or confidentiality is required, another worker should be told, and doors left open
- We will not arrange to meet with children or young people off church premises unless two adults are present
- all children should be treated with respect and without discrimination
- avoid games whose rules do not prevent the possibility of physical aggression, or inappropriate touching
- refrain from any sexually suggestive comments, ridiculing, or rejection of a child
- avoid inappropriate touching of any form; exercise caution if comforting an injured or distressed child
- manage children's behaviour without physical contact, or aggressive or intimidating behaviour
- avoid if possible, giving lifts to individual children; if this is unavoidable, ask them to sit in the rear of the car
- follow Methodist Church guidance on camping and residential trips, residential settings and youth meetings at home (Appendix )

#### amongst children's and youth workers:

- All workers will have a clear job description and a named person to whom they are responsible.
- Each group will be encouraged to meet regularly to review and plan their work, to share their experiences, to receive training and to talk about their relationships with the children and young people.
- workers should support one another in ensuring these guidelines are followed
- if a worker has a concern about the behaviour or suitability of a colleague, they must speak to the minister or Junior Church Superintendent

If there is an allegation that a person who works with children has behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child, or has possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, or behaved towards a child in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children the minister must report it to the Local Authority Designated Officer via the Local Safeguarding Children's Board.

#### 6. What to do if you are concerned about a child

A worker or member of the church community may be concerned about a child for a number of reasons:

- a child has made an allegation about abuse or neglect
- information has been received from a third party
- observation, for example, of changed behaviour or unexplained injury.

#### a) If a child makes an allegation about abuse or neglect:

- ü listen, try not to question and never push for information
- ü accept what is being said calmly
- ü reassure the child they were right to tell you
- ü let them know you will need to pass the information on, don't promise confidentiality, and let them know what you are going to do next

- ü record concerns as soon as possible, including names of child, gender, age, date of birth, names of parents/carers (Incident Report Form in Appendix)
- ü discuss your concerns with the minister or Junior Church Superintendent
- ü make a decision together about what will happen next, record this
- ü keep a copy of the Incident Report form in a secure place and send a copy to the District Office, marked 'Safeguarding Referral'

b) There are visual, verbal and behavioural signs and indicators which could alert you to a child who may be being abused. These include:

- unexplained or untreated injuries or bruising
- sexually explicit language or actions
- a child describing an abusive act to you
- unexplained changes in behaviour
- a change observed over a long period of time
- a distrust of adults.

This list is not exclusive and the presence of one of more indicators is not necessarily proof that abuse is actually taking place.

If you are concerned about a child:

- ü record concerns as soon as possible, including names of child, gender, age, date of birth,
- ü names of parents/carers (Incident Report Form in Appendix)
- ü discuss your concerns with minister or Junior Church Superintendent
- ü make a decision together about what will happen next, record this
- ü keep a copy of the Incident Report form in a secure place and *send a copy*
- § to the District Office, marked 'Safeguarding Referral'.

The safety of the child is paramount, sending the form should not delay any action.

If a child alleges sexual abuse or you believe s/he is at risk of significant harm you must make a referral to Children's Social Care.

To make a referral to Children's Social Care, call Halifax 353279

The out of hours number is Halifax 365101

The telephone number for Childline and the NSPCC will be displayed on the notice board in the main corridor with a copy of this policy.

## 7. Training

Safeguarding training is available through the District Child Protection Advisory Group. From September 2008 Creating Safer Space, the Connexional Training Framework for Safeguarding will be implemented in a three year programme during which all presbyters/deacons, lay employees, children's and youth work volunteers and officer holders will be required to undertake training.

## 8. Other groups and activities on church premises

Groups hiring the church where children are present should be asked to sign Form E (Appendix).

This is the responsibility of the secretary of the Organisation Task Force

Leaders of Scouts and Guides will obtain Disclosures through their own organisations.

When any ecumenical (or other partnerships, agencies, colleges, mission events) activities take place on the church premises it is the Church Council's responsibility to ensure that workers have satisfactory CRB Disclosures and all personnel see and understand the procedures in this policy.

## 9. Monitoring and evaluation

This policy will be reviewed annually at the Annual General Meeting of the Junior Church and at the October Church Council meeting

.....Church Council

.....Date