

Highgate Methodist Church

Safeguarding Policy

Adopted: 4th March 2009

To be reviewed: March 2010

Minister: Rev. Albert Gayle
Named Person: Patricia Astwood

Purposes:

The purposes of this policy are:

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

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the circuit and district's 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 18th birthday.

4. Good practice guidelines:

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

- all children and young 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 and confidentiality are 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 for designed for those appointing children's and youth workers and for children's and youth workers.

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 be able to provide a satisfactory disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau. The Church Council is responsible for determining the level of disclosure, based on guidance provided in Safeguarding, 2003, p. 15. The Church Council will ensure all sections on Form A parts 1 & 2 (Appendix) are completed and the minister/church council secretary will retain copies in a secure place.

For those people who already have a disclosure from other organisations (portability)

The decision about portability is for the Church Council to make, the Connexion does not insist that those volunteers who have an Enhanced Disclosure from elsewhere have a new one. The Church Council is responsible for the safe recruitment of volunteers and lay staff, including BB leaders. Guidance on accepting disclosures is on page 13 of Safeguarding 2003. They should be for a relevant position (eg. with children) and should have been issued within the last twelve months. Employed lay staff working with children, young people or vulnerable adults may not use disclosures obtained from elsewhere; neither may presbyters or deacons..

The Church Council of Highgate Methodist Church agrees that; providing safe recruitment procedures have been followed, and that the volunteer is in possession of an enhanced disclosure for working with children issued within the previous twelve months, then no further disclosure will be required.

Re-applying for disclosures

It is the church council secretary/minister's role to ask workers to re-apply for a disclosure every five years or upon change of location, whichever is shorter.

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It is the minister's responsibility to make sure all office holders or those carrying 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 (Appendix)

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

- 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 either the **minister or the named person** to inform them and together make 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
- 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, where 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:

- 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
- workers must be given the a regular opportunity to meet and review the work they have done and plan future work
- Leaders should discuss with workers their role and any concerns they have about their work with children, this is supervision.

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 that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children then either the **named person, leader, or 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:

- listen, try not to question and never push for information, accept what is being said, calmly reassure the child they were right to tell you
- 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
- record concerns as soon as possible, including names of child, gender, age, date of birth, names of parents/carers (Incident Report Form in Appendix)
- discuss your concerns with named person, leader, minister
- make a decision together about what will happen next, record this
- 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:

- record concerns as soon as possible, including names of child, gender, age, date of birth, names of parents/carers (Incident Report Form in Appendix)
- discuss your concerns with the minister
- make a decision together about what will happen next, record this, 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:

- Initial Response Team
- Ground Floor, Northgate House
Northgate
Halifax

To make a referral, call this phone number 01422 353279 It may also be the case that you need advice about what to do next in a situation; it is possible to phone the Initial Response Team for advice and consultation on the same number. The Emergency Duty Team operates at night, weekends and during Council holidays and can be reached on 01422 365101, if you feel that the situation cannot wait until the next working day. You will be asked for your telephone number so that a qualified and experienced social worker can call you back.

For further information see

<http://www.calderdale.gov.uk/socialcare/family/childprotection/index.html>

7. Training

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 workers and office 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 room bookings manager

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 a Church Council meeting. The date of the next review is **March 2010**