

Muswell Hill Methodist Church (MHMC)

Safeguarding Policy: Protecting Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults from Abuse

Approved by MHMC Council on 8th October 2014

Note: This is a working document. Further amendment may be made by MHMC Council at any time.

Aims of MHMC's Policy

- To ensure children, young people and vulnerable adults accessing church premises and/or taking part in any activities happening on church premises are protected from the risk of abuse.
- To enable church workers to be confident that their practice meets the requirements of government legislation and the Methodist Church in Britain in respect of safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults from the of abuse.
- To minimise risks to church workers of any allegations through the implementation of good practice.
- To protect the good reputation of MHMC as a safe place for all members of the community.

Principles

'Every person has a value and dignity which comes directly from the creation of female and male 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 it implies a duty to value all people as bearing the image of God and therefore to protect them from harm.'

The principles behind the Methodist Church of Great Britain's policy are: -

We (the Methodist Church in Britain) 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.

(Taken from 'Safeguarding Adults: Policy for the Methodist Church' 2010, page 5).

The actions set out in this policy seek to enact these principles within our day to day work. This policy pertains only to safeguarding in respect of risk of abuse as defined below. Measures to protect people from other potential harms (e.g. general health and safety) are not covered herein.

MHMC accepts the following definitions: -

Children: Anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.

Vulnerable Adult: Any adult aged 18 or over who by reason of: mental or other disability, age, illness or other situations, is permanently or for the time being unable to take care of themselves or to protect themselves from significant harm or exploitation.

Abuse: this may include physical, mental, emotional or sexual abuse, neglect, financial abuse as well as abuse in respect of a person's other possessions and activities that constitute grooming.

Workers or officers: anyone in the church who has a defined role or could be seen to be in authority, whether paid or unpaid.

Status of this document. This document endorses and complements the Methodist Church's policies in regard to safeguarding and sets out the specific steps that MHMC will take to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults from abuse. A shorter statement about safeguarding will be displayed within the church premises and on our website. This policy was approved by Muswell Hill Methodist Church Council on 8th October 2014. The document will be next reviewed and updated October 2017 unless it is necessary or helpful to do so before.

General actions to keep children, young people and vulnerable adults safe

1 General awareness and creation of a culture supportive of protective practices

Much of the work of safeguarding is achieved by general raising of awareness of the need for care around this area and open, supportive conversations which naturally promote the kind of culture which itself reduces the likelihood of abuse happening. Such a culture also serves to build resilience, helping children, young people and vulnerable adults to trust their own intuition about potential risk because of the shared implicit and explicit understanding about standards of behaviour. A child will be less vulnerable to grooming type of activities if they have learnt that adults, or even older children, who are safe to be with are those who do not suggest tricky or ambiguous situations (for example - a known adult male offering an unaccompanied young person a lift potentially puts that young person in a difficult spot if parents have not explicitly sanctioned this. Adults who appreciate this do not knowingly cause such a difficulty.) Such a culture is easily perceived by those intent on harm which in itself acts as a deterrent.

Building a culture which naturally reduces risks can be achieved by:

- Open and positive discussions about safeguarding and things we find difficult in all relevant church meetings. In areas where implementing policy is not always easy, open and frank discussions which help engender collective responsibility is more important than 'ticking boxes'.
- Open and positive conversations with children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- Modelling the value we place on this area and the behaviour and environment we wish to engender.
- Information and articles (in Wellspring for example) about related issues, risks and dilemmas as well as displaying standard safeguarding posters vital though this is.
- Training – so people to feel comfortable in their roles knowing what's required of them.

2 General use of the building and grounds

Everyone using the building and the grounds of MHMC should be clear that these are effectively a public space and that parents and carers are responsible for the behaviour and welfare of children, young people or vulnerable adults in their care at all times unless this is specifically delegated (for example children attending Junior Church or to organisations running activities on our premises). This will be made clear throughout the building and on information about church run activities.

3 Recruitment

The Methodist Church in Britain has specific requirements for the recruitment of staff and volunteers to specified roles which will be observed. These are set out in Safer Recruitment, The Church of England and the Methodist Church, June 2013).

Workers or volunteers who lead specific areas of activity (such as Junior Church, Vintage Club, Toddlers or one off events for example) are responsible for ensuring appropriate checks have been undertaken for other workers or volunteers recruited to support that activity with the exception of occasional volunteer helpers who are to be supervised at all times. A short description of role and responsibilities agreed is usually required. The person responsible for the work is required to obtain two references and ensure that MHMC carries out a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check before the person starts their work. They also need to keep a short record about this. Workers or volunteers who are not DBS checked are not allowed to be alone with children, young people or vulnerable adults at any time.

4 Training

The Methodist Church provides two training modules for creating 'safer space'. Those holding paid and unpaid positions within the church are required to undertake the **Foundation Module** and refresh their training every three years. Information about this can be obtained from MHMC's Safeguarding Officer, Evadne Cameron. There is also a **Leadership Module** for those with specific leadership responsibilities e.g. the Minister, the Leader of Junior Church, the Pastoral Coordinator and the Church Development Officer.

5 What to do if you have a concern

Chapter 6 of Safeguarding Children and Young People: Policy for the Methodist Church (Methodist Church in Britain. Revised edition 2010) sets out guidance about how to deal with situations where there is a safeguarding concern or allegation. All those 'holding an office' will have an opportunity to be trained on this area.

The key responsibilities of anyone who has a concern are to report this to either the Minister, the Safeguarding Officer or in the first instance to discuss this with the person responsible for their area of activity.

Whistle blowing. Everyone has a duty to report anything they are concerned about and if they feel their concerns have not been properly investigated to speak to the Minister and ultimately external agencies.

Specific actions

- Lettings will be required to comply with our safeguarding policy and the Lettings Officer will raise any concerns they may have about a potential let with the Minister.
- Every agency or person booking rooms will be made aware that the building is a public space and they are responsible for the safeguarding of individuals undertaking their activity, not MHMC.
- Those booking for community activities will be required to have their own safeguarding policy.
- Named individuals leading church run activities will be responsible for implementing MHMC safeguarding policy in respect of their activity. Rooms in which children's activities take place will have the vision panels clear or the doors left open.
- Parental written permission will be sought where responsibility for young children is given to a church worker.
- Registration of young children for whom responsibility is delegated is taken on each occasion.
- Those leading church run activities will keep records of checks and actions taken and provide reports to Church Council annually.
- Where one off events or happenings are organised, unless the person leading holds an established office within the church, they will secure the support of an established officer to be responsible for ensuring our policy is maintained.

Other requirements

Church council will appoint a Safeguarding Officer. This person currently holding this office is Evadne Cameron. Safeguarding policy handbooks will be made available for all workers and volunteers working with children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable. Safeguarding will be a regular item of the agenda of the Church Council.

Appendix A: Sources of further guidance

There is much written about safeguarding and the Methodist Church has provided comprehensive information and guidance on this topic. A number of documents are mentioned in our policy and will need to be referred to for specific situations.

The key current documents are: -

- a) Safeguarding Children and Young People: Policy for the Methodist Church. Methodist Church in Britain. Revised edition 2010 and
- b) Safeguarding Adults: A Methodist Response to the protection of adults when they are vulnerable. Methodist Church in Britain. 2010.

These provide a comprehensive overview of the area as well as detailed information about the Methodist Church's policy and the requirements for local churches. The appendices of these documents set out the duties of other people and bodies such as the Minister and the Circuit which adds to understanding and clarity about who is responsible for what. For clarity note that Appendix B and C of 'Safeguarding Children and Young People: Policy for the Methodist Church' Revised edition 2010 and Appendix B and D of 'Safeguarding Adults: A Methodist Response to the protection of adults when they are vulnerable' 2010 are duplicates of the two documents: - 'A local church safeguarding checklist' and 'A list of responsibilities' which includes the responsibilities of individual churches, the minister and the circuit.

Recruitment

Many of the requirements for safeguarding can be met by adherence to the Methodist Churches Safer Recruitment policy which covers the appointments of workers and volunteers to assigned roles. The relevant documents are: -

- a) Safer Recruitment. Church of England and the Methodist Church. June 13.
- b) Safer Recruitment Practice: 10 Steps Procedure for All Recruitment. Methodist Church and Church of England: - June 13.

These documents can be found in MHMC's Safeguarding Policy file – see Evadne or go to www.methodist.org.uk/ministers-and-office-holders/safeguarding.