



ELVET METHODIST CHURCH

SAFEGUARDING

POLICY

October 2006

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References

(copies are available from the Minister or the Safeguarding Officer)

- **The Methodist Church, Safeguarding – A policy for good practice in the care of children and young people April 2003**
- **Note for Members of the General Public, Durham County Council**
- **What To Do If You're Worried a Child is Being Abused, Department of Health Publishing 2003.**

ELVET METHODIST CHURCH SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Introduction

Elvet Methodist Church will make every endeavour to safeguard the welfare of children who are involved in church based activities and will conform with the Home Office Code of Practice "*Safe from Harm*" and the "*Safeguarding*" Policy of The Methodist Church published in April 2003. Unless otherwise stated, the term children relates to all those under the age of 18.

This policy will be implemented with reference to other related policies eg 'health and safety' and 'equal opportunities'. The uniformed organisations of the church are also subject to their own policies in relation to safeguarding and child protection which conform to the requirements of this policy.

Elvet Methodist Church Safeguarding policy is based on guidelines 1-13 as laid down in the "Safeguarding" Policy of the Methodist Church.

1. POLICY STATEMENT

The people of Elvet Methodist Church are concerned with the wholeness and well-being of each individual within God's purpose for our world. We strive to safeguard all members of the church community whatever their age. We acknowledge each one of us is responsible for the prevention of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse of children and young people and ensuring that opportunities for such abuse to occur are minimised.

All groups who use our premises will be required to confirm their agreement with this policy.

2. Elvet Methodist Church will plan its work so as to minimise situations where the abuse of children may occur.

In order to achieve this the following procedures will be adhered to;

- As far as possible an adult will not be left alone with a child or young person where there is no likelihood of the activity being observed by others.
- All workers with children and young people, Pastoral Visitors and others will not meet a child or young person off church premises without a parent or other adult being present.
- At least two adults will be present with any group, particularly when it is the only activity taking place on church premises.
- Where children and young people have to be transported by car or minibus there should be more than one passenger in the vehicle. Where this is not possible a single passenger should sit in the rear seat.

- Adults should not work with an unknown group of children, or an individual child, unless someone is within calling distance.
3. Elvet Methodist Church will ensure that all members of the church, including children, will be given information on how to obtain advice, support and help if they suspect that they themselves are in need of this or they suspect that a child is being harmed. The following information will be prominently displayed on church notice boards
- NSPCC Child Protection helpline - Fax 020 7 825 2763
 - Child Line 0800 1111; Tel: 071 239 1000 Fax: 071 239 1001
 - Local Children's Services Child Protection Team
Emergency Tel: 01740 657796; Office hours - 0191 383 1010
 - Police – 0191 386 4222
 - CAS website <http://www.churchsafe.org.uk>
4. Elvet Methodist Church will apply agreed procedures for protecting children to all paid staff and volunteers within the church.
5. Elvet Methodist Church will ensure clarity with regard to the roles of all paid staff and volunteers.
- Paid workers employed by the Church will have job descriptions that spell out clearly their responsibilities for the protection of children and young people. Volunteers will be provided with a brief description in writing of the tasks they are expected to do. [see Safeguarding new form A Part 2 2003, Appendix 3].
6. Elvet Methodist Church will ensure appropriate supervision as a means of protecting children and young people. This will involve
- Regular opportunities for workers to meet together to review and plan their work and share their experiences.
 - Regular opportunities for training
 - Opportunities for workers to talk about relationships with the children and young people.
 - When possible, leaders of groups should take opportunities to observe those for whom they are responsible as they work with children and young people.

Special attention should be paid to any situation in which a child or young person is being either highly favoured or harshly treated as these could be signs of abuse.

7. Elvet Methodist Church will treat all would-be paid staff and volunteers as job applicants for any position involving contact with children or young people.
 - All existing and new workers wishing to work with children and young people in the church community will be asked to fill in Safeguarding Form A [Appendix 1 and 2] and apply for a Disclosure.

8. Elvet Methodist Church will gain at least one reference from a person who has experience of an applicant's paid or voluntary work with children or young people
 - Before a volunteer is accepted a written reference must be obtained. It must be made clear that the volunteer is to be working with children or young people and it is the referees' views on the volunteer's suitability for this work which are being invited. If replies are vague or ambiguous it may be necessary for them to be followed up in person on the telephone.
 - Confidentiality is an important issue at this point. If someone is deemed to be unsuitable to work with children and young people great efforts should be made to channel the person's offer in to some other more appropriate area of the church's work.

9. Elvet Methodist Church will explore all applicants' experience of working or contact with children in a meeting before appointment.
 - The meeting will be conducted by one or more experienced workers by agreement with the Minister.
 - If there is any doubt about the suitability of the volunteer this should be explored through searching questions.
 - If doubts remain regarding the suitability of an applicant they should not be offered the opportunity of working with children.

Experienced people in the church with designated responsibilities in this area may wish to consult with the Minister and/or the Safeguarding Officer for advice before making a final decision where doubts are raised.

10. Elvet Methodist Church, through its Minister and Safeguarding Officer, will ensure that appropriate procedures are in place to find out whether an applicant has a conviction for any criminal offences against children.
 - All situations which involve work with children and young people are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. This means that all convictions, however old, which relate to children and young people must be taken into consideration.
 - The Disclosure process as recommended in the Methodist Church Safeguarding document will be followed by the church and is designed to ensure that any such information is made available.

11. Elvet Methodist Church will make all paid and voluntary appointments conditional upon the successful completion of a probationary period. It is a requirement of the Methodist Church that all workers with children and young people should be properly trained and serve a probationary period. This is outlined in Standing Order 660. Which states

- Persons offering or being invited to serve as workers with children and young people shall be accepted as candidates by the Church Council.
 - They shall enter upon a probationary period. At Elvet Methodist Church the probationary period will normally be six months.
 - If a person is volunteering for short term tasks, such as a helper in a holiday club, they should be supervised as if they were undertaking a probationary period.
 - At the end of the probationary period a volunteer will meet with the person to whom she/he is responsible, that person must be satisfied not only of the person's competence in work with children and young people, but also of the volunteers commitment to prevent abuse.
12. Elvet Methodist Church will issue guidelines on how to deal with disclosure or discovery of abuse. As outlined on pages 36 to 39 of the 'Safeguarding' document This includes brief written guidelines to paid and voluntary staff outlining the course of action to be taken if a child or young person discloses abuse or if they discover evidence that abuse has taken place. [These guidelines are enclosed see Appendix 1]
13. Elvet Methodist Church will ensure the provision of appropriate training for paid staff and volunteers, their line managers or supervisors and policy makers in the prevention of child abuse. This will include
- Training in the prevention of abuse and the action to take if abuse occurs.
 - Methodist Standing Order 660 requires that all workers with children and young people shall agree to take preparation for service applicable to the work they wish to do.
 - Suitable training and awareness raising will be provided for all those who at any time come into contact with children and young people. These will include Ministers, members of the Diaconate, lay workers, caretakers key holders and those responsible for bookings.

Appropriate forms and declarations will be completed, monitored and updated in line with any changes of responsibility or new appointments.

Pro-formas of forms: A Part 1; A Part 2; B; C; D; E; F ; [Registration; Volunteer Agreement; Specimen Appointment, Key Holder, Safeguarding Users Declaration (Booking), Documentary Evidence sheet, Churches Agency for Safeguarding form are in Appendices 2-9.]

The Registration Forms and other related confidential documents will be kept securely by the Minister. Access will be restricted to the Minister and the Safeguarding Officer appointed by the Church Council.

Elvet Methodist Church will appoint one member of the Church Council as Safeguarding Officer with responsibility for coordinating the implementation of the church's Safeguarding Policy. The Church Council will endeavour to appoint a person experienced in child care or child protection and with a commitment to developing the role. The Church Council of Elvet Methodist Church will support the introduction, implementation and maintenance of the Safeguarding policy and undertake to review the working of the policy annually at the October Church Council meeting.

Appendix 1

Recognising abuse and taking action

Finding Out

The four main areas of abuse, physical, sexual, emotional and neglect, may come to the notice of a person in a number of different ways:

- **Disclosure** by the child or young person
- **Information** from a third party (eg friend, family member, another worker)
- **Observation** of unexplained injury or changes in behaviour

Disclosure

If a child or young person wants to talk about abuse:

Listen, do not question, never push for information.

Accept what the child or young person says, keeping calm and looking at them directly

- Reassure the child or young person that they are right to tell you and that you take them seriously
- Even when a child or young person has broken a rule, they are not to blame
- Be aware that the child or young person may have been threatened
- Let them know that you need to tell someone else, do not promise confidentiality
- Let the child or young person know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens
- Make notes as soon as is reasonably practicable, writing down exactly what was said, where possible using the child's own words. Record dates and times of the events, when you were told about them and when you made the record. Sign your notes. Always keep a copy for yourself.

Remember that you are not the investigating agency and that the child or young person may need to talk later to a specialist. Any probing may interfere with further investigations and make the child or young person repeat painful information.

Helpful things to say

I believe you

I am glad you told me

It is OK to tell

You are brave to tell

What happened was wrong

I am sorry that it happened

It is not your fault

I will try to help

Try to avoid

What? Why? How? When? Where? Who? Are you sure?

Why didn't you say before?

I can't believe it!

This is really serious...

Don't tell anyone

I am shocked

Never make false promises

Information

If another person wants to give you information about alleged abuse:

- Listen rather than question
- Accept what the person says and keep calm
- Ask them to make a note of what they were told or observed
- Reassure the person that they are right to tell you
- Let them know that you need to tell someone else, do not promise confidentiality
- Let the person know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens
- Make notes as soon as is reasonably practicable, writing down exactly what was said, where possible using the person's own words. Record dates and times of the events, when you were told about them and when you made the record. Sign your notes and keep a copy for yourself.

Observation

Some children and young people may display one or more of the following signs. There may be an innocent explanation but the signs can also be the key to identifying potential abuse.

- Bruising, cuts or burns on the child, particularly if these are on parts of the body not normally injured in accidents
- Changes in behaviour such as the child becoming very quiet and withdrawn
- Aggressive behaviour particularly with friends, severe tantrums, or lack of attachment to parents
- Loss of weight, which can be sudden or gradual and is not linked to illness
- Inadequate or inappropriate clothing
- Sexually explicit behaviour such as explicit games and showing an awareness which is inappropriate for the child's age
- Very frequent masturbation, aggressive and inappropriate sex play
- The child only seems happy with you
- The child is kept away from social activities and has few friends
- Lack of attachment or lack of trust towards parents and other family members
- Having strange secrets, telling untruths
- Persistent self comforting behaviour such as rocking
- Eating problems, including over eating or loss of appetite
- Disturbed sleep, nightmares and bedwetting
- Soreness or itching in the genital area, pain on urination or difficulty in walking

Taking Action

If you suspect abuse:

- Do not delay
- Consult with the person to whom you are responsible for work with children and young people (See your volunteer agreement/job description Safeguarding Form A) or with another appropriate person e.g. the minister in pastoral charge.
- The responsible person will contact the statutory services responsible for child protection in your area (Social Services, NSPCC or police)
- Advise the superintendent minister of your action.

Such action, even if it later proves to have been mistaken or unnecessary, is justifiable if based on concern for a child.

What happens next?

The superintendent minister will:

- Ensure that the person in pastoral charge of the church is aware of the situation and is given appropriate support.

The Area Child Protection Team will:

- Consider what you have told them together with any other information already held or received
- Assess the strength of the allegation. (The training of social workers helps them to differentiate between true and false allegations of abuse.)
- Investigate if they suspect a child or young person is suffering from harm. In many areas they will do this jointly with the police. This will involve:
 - o Visiting the child or young person's home
 - o Contacting other agencies who might have information on the child or young person and the family
 - o Holding a child protection conference where all the professionals can share their observations and to which the parents may be invited
 - o Informing the police if they suspect an offence may have been committed. This could lead to criminal proceedings
 - o Taking action, where necessary, to protect the child or young person.

It may be helpful to find out how your local Child Protection Team handles cases of abuse. Consider contacting your District Advisory (Taking Care) Group for information.

A Caring Church

In any church where a case of abuse has been disclosed or suspected there will be people needing different kinds of support. Some will require professional help. Some may need a sympathetic, listening ear. When an allegation is made, or when there is another issue relating to abuse, support and advice is available from District Taking Care/Child Protection Advisory Groups or from Methodist Church House. It is important to make use of this. Here we can only offer a brief indication of some of the people, issues and feelings involved.

The person who has been abused

Some feelings of those who have been abused are:

Loss of safety

Loss of trust

Loss of power

Loss of self-esteem

Guilt

Shame

Blame

Anger

Confusion about sexual behaviour

'Will anyone believe me?'

All people who have been abused need help. Unfortunately, counselling and other support may be seen as interfering with any investigations or criminal proceedings. At the same time, it is vital that an abused child or young person does not feel rejected by the church community. The investigating agency will be able to give advice on what support can be given which will not jeopardise any legal processes. It is also very important to arrange for additional pastoral care as soon as the investigations or proceedings are over.

Often, following a disclosure, there will be insufficient evidence to take any criminal proceedings. Full support for the child or young person can then begin straight away.

Adult Survivors of abuse

Long after the original abuse survivors may disclose their experiences to people within the church community. This can be because they are experiencing love and care for the first time.

Alternatively, discussion of the issues surrounding Safeguarding can revive their memories and cause them to speak out. Even though their disclosure may have no direct implications for the church community they will need sensitive understanding and pastoral support. The report *Time for Action* makes recommendations that will help churches to become more aware of how to respond appropriately to the needs of survivors.

The person who has abused. or against whom an allegation has been made

It is necessary to recognise that the person who has abused may be part of the same church community as the child or young person who has been abused. Reactions of others in the community can vary greatly. There may be great hostility, there may be an attempt to be understanding, there may be those who feel that the person has been unfairly accused. False and unfounded allegations have sometimes been made and great distress can be caused to individuals and families during the process of investigation and its implications. Whatever the reactions of other people, it is essential to recognise that the person accused of abuse needs pastoral support. However, this should **never** be offered by the person who is caring for the abused child or young person. Great care must be taken to ensure that nothing is done which might interfere with the judicial process.

The person accused of abuse needs to know where it is possible to turn for legal advice.

Other people involved

Any case of suspected abuse has repercussions on a wide group of people. These include, in addition to the abused child or young person and the abuser:

- the family of the child or young person who has been abused
- the friends of the child or young person, who may well be children or young people themselves
- members of any children's or youth group attended by that child or young person
- the whole church community - members, community roll, stewards, workers with children and young people, pastoral visitors, minister, member of the diaconate etc
- the school or college attended by the child or young person
- the family of the person against whom any allegation is made or proved
- their friends and colleagues

Often the issues are not clear-cut and people have divided loyalties. Frequently the local community becomes involved, not just the church. Sometimes the abuse takes place within the wider community but has repercussions within the church. If an investigation leads to a criminal prosecution, there may well be press coverage of the case and church officers or members of the local congregation may be approached for comment. The District press officer or Methodist Church House should be alerted as soon as possible and will be able to offer advice on how to deal appropriately with the media.

Offering pastoral support

Pastoral support

- is not the same as counselling, which should only be attempted by those who are professionally trained
- is not just the prerogative of the minister and the pastoral visitors
- is often to be 'a listening ear'
- is offered through the friendship and openness of children and young people as well as through adults

It is neither possible nor appropriate for the same person to provide pastoral support to all those involved where there is an allegation of abuse. It will be important for someone (usually the person in pastoral charge) to assess the various pastoral needs and how to make best use of the resources available to meet them.

Confidentiality

The 1993 report to the Methodist Conference, *Confidentiality and Pastoral Care*, recognised that the area of child abuse is one in which it is inevitable that the normal rules applying to confidentiality should be waived in the best interests of an abused child or young person. However, a balance must be obtained between those who have a need to know the facts of a situation as they are perceived and those who wish to know to satisfy their curiosity. It is vital to maintain an environment of trust and respect, avoiding a situation of half-truths and rumour.

If a person begins to indicate that they have been abused, are perpetrating abuse, or are aware of abuse taking place it must be explained immediately that absolute confidentiality cannot be maintained that there are some secrets that must be shared.

Appendix 2

Those who must complete Safeguarding Form A and apply for Enhanced Disclosures.

- Junior Church workers and Sunday School teachers
- Workers with children and young people
- Leaders of church-run music, dance and drama groups which include children or young people
- JMA secretaries
- All workers (full or part-time) employed under S O 438 (A)
- Officers and other workers in Boys' Brigade and Girls' Brigade groups (Scouts and Guides manage their own procedures, but should produce evidence to the church)
- Workers with families
- Leaders and workers in church run pres school groups (in certain situations this may be handled by Ofsted)

Those who must complete Safeguarding Form A and apply for a Standard Disclosure

- Regular helpers in work with children and young people
- Leaders and helpers in Parents and Toddlers groups (if children are gathered in a group separately from their parents)
- Organisers and helpers in shoppers' crèches

Those who work on a rota basis need to be included in these arrangements.

Please give details of any relevant qualification or appropriate training

Have you successfully completed one of the following training programmes?

Kaleidoscope Yes/No

Spectrum Yes/No

Are you prepared to undertake appropriate training? Yes/No

(Note: If you decline to undertake training the Church Council will be entitled to withdraw your authority to work with children and young people.)

For new workers only

Reference. Please give the name, address, telephone number and position or relationship of someone who knows you well.

Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

Because of the nature of the work for which you are applying, this post is exempt from the provision of Section 4(2) of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Ad 1974, by virtue of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Ad 1974 (Exemptions) Order 1975, and you are therefore not entitled to withhold information about convictions or cautions which for other purposes are 'spent' under the provision of the Act.

If you have previous convictions or cautions details of these will be made available through the Disclosure process provided by the Criminal Records Bureau in England and Wales and the Central Registered Body in Scotland.

Depending upon the nature of the caution or conviction this will not automatically prevent your service or employment except as follows:

Methodist Standing Order 010 states:

(2) Subject to the provision of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (or any statutory modification or re-enactment for the time being in force and any regulations and orders made or having effect thereunder)

(i) no person who has been convicted of or has received a formal caution from the police concerning an offence mentioned in the first Schedule to the Children and Young Persons Act 1933 shall undertake work with children and young persons in the life of the Church. A list of the offences covered is found in the Safeguarding handbook.

Declaration

I am not aware of any reason why I am not able to undertake the work being asked of me.

Upon receipt of the information about the Disclosure process, I will submit an application for a Disclosure or I will provide evidence of a recent Disclosure issued to me [delete as appropriate]

Signed:

Date:

For Church Council use

What training is now required? Kaleidoscope Spectrum

Further (please give details)

Contact your Training and Development Officer or District Training Secretary for details of training opportunities. Your Minister or Circuit Steward will be able to provide their contact details.

Volunteer & paid worker Agreement

Under Home Office Guidelines this form should be completed for all workers with children and young people. If the role changes substantially a new form should be completed. Copies should be retained by the worker, the Secretary to the Church Council (or other responsible body) and the person to whom the worker is responsible.

<p>Church Elvet Methodist Church, Durham</p>

To be completed on behalf of the Church Council (or other body)

Name of Worker

Name of group (e.g. Junior Church)

Where/when they meet

Person to whom responsible (e.g. Youth Group Leader)

Age Range

Work to be undertaken.

Group to whom responsible (e.g. Church Council)

Signed (on behalf of the church council or other body)

To be completed by the worker with children/young people

I have understood the nature of the work I am to do with children/young people. I have read the guidelines produced by the Church for safeguarding children and young people. I understand that it is my duty to protect the children and young people with whom I come into contact. I know what action to take if abuse is discovered or disclosed.

Signed:

Date:

Elvet Methodist Church

Safeguarding Form B

(For all those wishing to serve as a Local Preacher or whom the Methodist Conference has otherwise directed to complete this declaration)

Declaration in relation to sexual offences against children and young people

The Methodist Conference has directed that in accordance with Standing Order 010, that all those who wish to serve as Local Preachers (or who have been asked to undertake certain specified responsibilities) should complete a declaration concerning certain offences against children and young people under the age of 18.

Because of the nature of the church community, in which children and young people are often present and always welcome, the provisions of Section 4(2) of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 do not apply by virtue of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 as amended by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) (Amendments) Order 1986. Office holders are therefore not entitled to withhold information about convictions or cautions which for other purposes are considered 'spent'.

The relevant offences fall into the following categories:

- Sexual offences against a child or young person
- Taking or possession of indecent photographs of children or young people
- Possession or distribution of pornographic material involving children

A list of the offences covered is in Safeguarding (see page 35) and a copy is held by the circuit superintendent. (The new Schedule 4 of the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 applies here, details on the website.)

Anyone wishing to serve as a local preacher (or who has been asked to undertake one of the specified responsibilities) who is unable to make this declaration and who would like a pastoral conversation should contact their superintendent minister.

Office

Term of office

Circuit

Full name

Home address
Postcode

Date of birth

Declaration

I have never been convicted of a sexual offence against a child or young person, nor have I ever received a police caution concerning such an offence.

Signed

Date

Form for a person being appointed to an office, duty or responsibility. This form must be used for those who comply with the terms of Standing Order 010 concerning the holding of office duty of responsibility.

These will include

- Anyone who has lone access to church premises, eg key holders, flower arrangers, cleaners on the premises when children are not there
- Those who have fact to face contact with children and young people without the presence of another adult, eg church secretaries
- Those who carry out duties off church premises in which the person may be seen as a representative of the church, eg mini bus drivers, ecumenical representatives
- Members of the Church Council
- Worship leaders
- Organists pianists and choir leaders
- Pastoral visitors and class leaders
- Communion stewards
- NB Ministers, members of the diaconate and local preachers will already have completed documentation.

Name

Name of church Elvet Methodist Church, Durham

Office, duty or responsibility

Your name has been put forward for the position stated above. Having regard to the Safeguarding policy of the Methodist Church you are asked to sign the declaration below.

I am aware of the Church's policy to safeguard the welfare of children and young people and the terms of Standing Order 010. I know of no reason why I cannot fulfill the office, duty or responsibility named above.

Signed

Date

**Standing Order 010.
Qualification for appointment.**

**(2(ii))
no person who has been convicted of or has received a formal caution from the police concerning sexual offences against children shall be appointed to any office, post or responsibility or engaged under any contract to which this sub-clause applies.**

A copy of this agreement should be retained by the person and by the local church

This form may be photocopied

Form for a key holder

Name of church Elvet Methodist Church, Durham

Name of nominated key holder

Your name has been put forward as a key holder to our premises on behalf of

Before the keys can be issued you are asked to sign the declaration below and acknowledge the conditions of issue. This is to help carry out the policy of the Methodist Church to safeguard the children and young people in its care.

I have never been convicted or cautioned concerning a sexual offence against children or young people.

Signed

Date

These keys are issued to you under the following conditions.

1. You shall not have any copies made from these keys.
2. These keys should not be lent to anyone else.
3. On completion of your term of office these keys shall be returned to the Church Council Secretary and not handed over to another person.

I accept the above conditions of issue.

Signed

Date

A copy of this agreement should be retained by the person and by the local church

This form may be photocopied

Safeguarding users declaration - Premises

As the people of the Methodist church we are concerned with the wholeness of each individual within God's purposes 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 physical, sexual or emotional abuse of children and young people.

The Methodist Church is obliged to comply with the Home Office Code of Practice, *Safe from Harm*, which is pursuant to The Children

Act (1989) and also with its own *Safeguarding* policy (copy available on request). **Church Councils are therefore requested to ensure that those who use its premises under licence or who hire the premises for regular or occasional use declare their familiarity with the Home Office Code of Practice and the Safeguarding policy of the Methodist Church.**

Name of church Elvet Methodist Church, Durham

Date/s of use

Time/s of use

Nature of use *(please give brief details of activities)*

Age range of participants

Number of adult leaders/helpers

Address

I declare that I am familiar with the Home Office Code of Practice, *Safe from Harm* and the Safeguarding policy of the Methodist Church

Signed

Date

Telephone number