

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy for Redhill Methodist Church

This policy was reviewed at a Church Council held on 19th October 2023.

The Methodist Church, along with the whole Christian community, believes each person has a value and dignity which comes directly from God's creation in God's own image and likeness. Christians see this as fulfilled by God's re-creation of us in Christ. Among other things, this implies a duty to value all people as bearing the image of God and therefore to protect them from harm.

The Redhill Methodist Church is committed to the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults and affirms that the needs of children or of people when they are vulnerable are paramount.

The Redhill Methodist Church recognises that it has a particular care for all who are vulnerable whether by disabilities or by reduction in capacities or by their situation. 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 seeks 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 be a dynamic policy. 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.

The Redhill Methodist 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.

The Redhill Methodist 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, discriminatory, domestic or institutional abuse or neglect, abuse using social media or human trafficking (slavery). 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

The Redhill Methodist Church commits itself to:

1. **RESPOND** without delay to any allegation or cause for concern that a child or vulnerable adult may have been harmed or may suffer harm, whether in church or in another context. It commits itself to challenge the abuse of power by anyone in a position of trust.
2. **IMPLEMENT** the Methodist Church Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance, government legislation and guidance and safe practice in the circuit and the churches.
3. **PROVIDE** support, advice and training for lay and ordained people to ensure that people are clear and confident about their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults who may be vulnerable.
4. **AFFIRM** and give thanks for those who work with children and vulnerable adults and also acknowledge the shared responsibility of all of us for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults who are on our premises.

The Redhill Methodist Church appoints Rosemary Willock and Helen Greaves as Church Safeguarding Officers and supports them in their role.

a) Purpose

The purposes of this safeguarding policy are to ensure procedures are in place and people are clear about roles and responsibilities for children, young people and vulnerable adults in our care and using our premises. It is to be read in conjunction with the *Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church (2020)*.

b) Good Practice

We believe good practice means that:

- i) All people are treated with respect and dignity.
- ii) 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 which case a written note of this will be made and kept noting date, time and place of visit.
- iii) The church premises will be assessed for safety for children and vulnerable adults and the risk assessment report will be given annually to the Church Council in written form. 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.
- iv) 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. An agreed record to be kept in the church for each driver/car.
- v) Risk assessments will be undertaken before any activity takes place to minimise the risk of harm to those involved. Those for church activities will be submitted to the Safeguarding Officers. Those for outside groups submitted to the Facilities Manager. Assessments will be stored securely.
- vi) Promotion of safeguarding is recognised to include undertaking those tasks which enable all God's people to reach their full potential. The Church Council will actively consider the extent to which it is succeeding in this area.

c) Appointment and training of workers

When the role requires it workers will be appointed **after** a satisfactory DBS disclosure and all workers will be expected to undergo basic safeguarding training within six months of appointment. The other training needs of each worker will be considered (e.g. food hygiene, first aid, lifting and handling, etc.)

d) Pastoral visitors

In terms of safeguarding, Pastoral Visitors will be supported in their role with the provision of basic safeguarding upon appointment.

e) Guidelines for working with children, young people and vulnerable adults

Appropriate information will be given to each worker outlining good practice and systems. This information will be reviewed annually with this policy.*

f) Ecumenical events

Where ecumenical events happen on church premises, safeguarding is the responsibility of this Church Council.

g) Events with church groups off the premises

Adequate staffing, a risk assessment and notification of the event to be given to the church safeguarding officer **prior** to the agreement for any event or off- site activity. Notification of the event will be given to the church council secretary. If the activity is unusual or considered to be high risk the church safeguarding officer will contact the circuit safeguarding officer in order that it can be ratified, or any queries raised.

h) Other groups on church premises

Where the building is hired for outside use, the person signing the letting agreement will be given a copy of this policy and where necessary asked to provide a copy of their policy. The facilities manager will consider the various users of the building in making lettings, notifying the church safeguarding officer when necessary.

i) Complaints procedure

It is hoped that complaints can generally be dealt with internally by the organisations. However, a complaint may be made to a person who will be appointed by the Church Council and who is currently Rosemary Willock or Helen Greaves. If a complaint is made to another person, it should be passed to Rosemary Willock or Helen Greaves who will arrange to meet with the complainant and attempt to resolve the complaint. If the complaint is regarding either of the safeguarding officers it will be referred to the minister. If the complaint relates to the minister it will be referred to the superintendent minister. If the complaint cannot be resolved, consideration will be given to invoking the complaints system of the Methodist Church which will involve initially speaking with the Local Complaints Officer who is Rev. Gillian Baalham.

*The Code of Safer Working Practice can be found at Appendix V1 of the Methodist Church Safeguarding Policies, Procedures and Guidance page 171.

j) Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Church Council. The date of the next review is October 2024.

k) Key concepts and definitions

- i) A child** is anyone who has not yet reached their eighteenth birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, a member of the armed forces, in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change his/her status or entitlements to services or protection
- ii) Vulnerable adults:** any adult aged 18 or over who, due to disability, mental function, age or illness or traumatic circumstances, may not be able to take care or protect themselves
- iii) Safeguarding and protecting children or vulnerable adults** from maltreatment; preventing impairment of their health and ensuring safe and effective care.
- iv) Adult/child protection** is part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity which is undertaken to protect children/specific adults who are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm, including neglect.
- v) Abuse and neglect** may occur in a family, in a community and in an institution. It may be perpetrated by a person or persons known to the child or vulnerable adult or by strangers; by an adult or by a child. It may be an infliction of harm or a failure to prevent harm.

Dated Signed.....

