

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy for Kidlington Methodist Church

The propose of the Church's safeguarding policy is to check that procedures are in place and provide clarity about the roles and responsibilities of those trusted with promoting the church as a safe space for all its users.

This policy was agreed at a Church Council held on: 1st July 2025

The Methodist Church, along with the whole Christian community, believes each person has a value and dignity which comes directly from God's creation of people 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.

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

Kidlington Methodist Church recognises that none of us is invulnerable but that there is a particular care for those whose vulnerability is increased by situations, by disabilities or by reduction in capacities. 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 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.

Kidlington 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 or institutional abuse or neglect, abuse using social media, child sexual exploitation 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.

Kidlington Methodist Church commits itself to **respond** without delay to any allegation or cause for concern that a child or vulnerable adult may have been harmed, whether in the church or in another context. It commits itself to challenge the abuse of power of anyone in a position of trust.

Kidlington Methodist Church commits itself to ensuring the **implementation** of the Methodist Church Safeguarding Policy; government legislation and guidance and safe practice in the circuit and in the churches.

Kidlington Methodist Church commits itself to the **provision** of support, advice and training for lay and ordained people that will ensure people are clear and confident about their role and responsibility in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults who may be vulnerable.

Kidlington Methodist Church **affirms** and gives thanks for those who work with children, young people and vulnerable adults and also acknowledges the shared responsibility of all of us for safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults on our premises.

Legal responsibility for safeguarding rests with the members of the **Church Council**. The safeguarding officer should be a member of the Church Council or have the right to attend at least annually to report on implementation of the safeguarding policy.

Where an individual covers the role in more than one location, they must be able to cover the activities identified in the relevant role outline and be facilitated to attend meetings to report on safeguarding in each location.

Kidlington Methodist Church appoints Clare Winterbottom as Church Safeguarding Adults Representative and as Church Safeguarding Children Coordinator and support her in her role which is to:

1. support and advise the minister and the stewards in fulfilling their roles with regard to safeguarding
2. ensure that a suitable, signed church safeguarding policy is displayed at all times in the church on a safeguarding noticeboard, along with names of current safeguarding officers, national helplines and other suitable information. This must be renewed annually.
3. record all safeguarding issues that are reported to the church safeguarding officer, according to Methodist policy and procedure.
4. promote appropriate routes for reporting of concerns
5. identify and inform those who are required to attend safeguarding training and maintain records of attendance. Work with the circuit safeguarding officer and DSO to arrange training.
6. attend training and meetings relating to the role
7. work in partnership with the lettings officer, stewards and user groups to promote good safeguarding practice on church premises. This will include gaining written confirmation that hirers of church premises are aware of the church safeguarding policy or are using an appropriate policy of their own.
8. check that safeguarding is included as an agenda item at all Church Council meetings and report to the Church Council annually.
9. inform all those with responsibility for recruitment, whether paid or voluntary, of their obligation to follow safer recruitment procedures.
10. advise the circuit safeguarding officer and/or DSO of any issues with compliance with safeguarding training, policy or safer recruitment requirements and respond promptly to any request from them about audit of safeguarding activities.

a) 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 (where required) are appropriate. An agreed record to be kept in the church file for each driver/car.

v) Activity risk assessments will be undertaken before any activity takes place to minimise the risk of harm to those involved. Approval will be obtained from the event leader/minster. A written record of the assessment will be retained 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.

These things are to safeguard those working with children, young people and those adults who may be vulnerable.

c) Appointment and training of workers

Workers will be appointed after a satisfactory criminal records check (DBS) and following safer recruitment procedures of the Methodist Church. Each worker will have an identified supervisor who will meet at regular intervals with the worker.

A record of these meetings will be agreed and signed and the record kept. Each worker will be expected to undergo safeguarding training, within the first 6 months of appointment.

The other training needs of each worker will be considered (eg food hygiene, first aid, lifting and handling, etc).

d) Pastoral visitors

Pastoral Visitors will be supported in their role with the provision of safeguarding training upon appointment. If they are undertaking tasks for which DBS would be required, this will be undertaken prior to this appointment.

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

A link to Methodist guidance outlining safer practice when managing activities with children and young will be given to anyone in the church leading a group with children or young people.

A guidance leaflet outlining good practice and systems will be given to anyone in the church leading a group with vulnerable adults.

This will be reviewed annually with this policy and updated as necessary.

f) Ecumenical events

Where ecumenical events happen on Kidlington Methodist 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, Emma Huber

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 the leaflet. The lettings secretary will consider the various users of the building in making lettings. All lettings will be notified to the church safeguarding officer who will keep records and take advice as appropriate from the Circuit Safeguarding officer.

i) Complaints procedure

There is a formal complaints procedure within the Methodist Church, which allows concerns to be raised about actions or behaviour by a member or officer of the Church.

In addition, employed staff will be subject to relevant contractual procedures.

All complaints will be responded to with care, diligence and impartiality.

A complaint should be addressed to the superintendent minister, the Revd. Miriam Moul

If a complaint is made to another person, it should be referred to them. Meetings will be arranged with the person making the complaint and, usually, the person against whom the complaint has been made, in an attempt to resolve it. If the complaint is against the superintendent, it should be sent to the District Chair, the Revd. Dr Sonia Hicks at Methodist Church Northampton District Office, Bouverie Court, 6 The Lakes, Bedford Road, Northampton, NN4 7YD Email: pa@northamptonmethodistdistrict.org.uk

Safeguarding officers must be informed of any complaint or issue relating to the potential abuse of children or adults who may be vulnerable. They will support prompt action to respond to the circumstances of any safeguarding concern, whether or not, any party involved wishes to make a formal complaint through the Methodist Church.

j) Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Church Council. The next review date will be **July 2026**

k) Key concepts and definitions

A child: 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.

Vulnerable Adults: any adult aged 18 or over who, owing to disability, mental function, age or illness or traumatic circumstances, may not be able to take care or protect themselves.

Safeguarding: protecting children or vulnerable adults from maltreatment; preventing impairment of their health and ensuring safe and effective care.

Adult/child protection is a 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.

Abuse and neglect may occur in a family, in a community or 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 : 1st July 2025

Signed

Paul Carter, Chair of Church Council

