



Statement of safeguarding principles

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

Principles

We are committed to:

- the care and nurture of, and respectful pastoral ministry with, all children, young people and adults
- safeguarding and protecting all children, young people and adults when they are vulnerable
- establishing safe, caring communities, which provide a loving environment where there is informed vigilance as to the dangers of abuse.

We will carefully select and train all those with any responsibility within the Church, in line with safer recruitment principles, including the use of criminal records disclosures and registration with the relevant vetting and barring schemes.

We will respond without delay to every safeguarding concern which suggests that a child, young person or adult may have been harmed, working in partnership with the police and local authority in any investigation.

We will seek to work with anyone who has suffered abuse, developing with them an appropriate ministry of informed pastoral care.

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We will seek to challenge any abuse of power, especially by anyone in a position of trust.

Working with the District Safeguarding Officer, we will support risk assessment of those who present a safeguarding risk within a church environment. We will ensure appropriate pastoral care is offered and measures are taken to address identified risks including referral to statutory agencies, suspension and the use of safeguarding contracts.

In all these principles we will follow legislation, guidance and recognised good practice.

Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy

For Church of the True Vine

Church of the True Vine, 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.

Church of the True Vine 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 and at risk are paramount.

Church of the True Vine recognises that it has a particular care for all who are vulnerable whether as a result of disabilities or 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 our wish 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.

Church of the True Vine 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, 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 promotion of welfare so that each of us can reach our full potential in God's grace.

Church of the True Vine 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 the church or in another context. It commits itself to challenge the abuse of power of anyone in a position of trust.
2. **IMPLEMENT** Procedures and Guidance; government legislation and guidance and safe practice in the church.
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.

It is the responsibility of the Elders of Church of the True Vine to appoint a Church Safeguarding Officer and there should be no gaps in this crucial provision. It is not appropriate for the minister to fill any gap, because of the potential conflict of roles. The role will usually be undertaken on a voluntary basis although expenses should be met.

Ultimate responsibility for safeguarding within the church lies with the elders of the church.

The Church safeguarding officer.

Role and responsibilities

- provide support and advice to the Pastor and the stewards in fulfilling their roles with regard to safeguarding.
- Ensure that any interested parties may have access to the safeguarding policy electronically via the website at all times.
- record all safeguarding issues that are reported to the church safeguarding officer, and promote the requirement for others to do the same.
- Identify and inform those who are required to attend safeguarding training and maintain records of attendance.
- attend training and meetings relating to the role
- *check* that safeguarding is included as an agenda item at all Annual General meetings.
- inform all those with responsibility for recruitment, whether paid or voluntary, of their obligation to follow safer recruitment procedures

a) Purpose

The purpose of the church 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

b) Good practice

We believe that good practice means:

- 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 record will be made and kept noting date, time and place of visit.

- iii) Any church-organised transport of children or vulnerable adults will be checked to ensure that the vehicle is suitable and insured and that the driver and escort are appropriate. A record to be kept in the church file for each driver/car.
- iv) 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/pastor. A written record of the assessment will be retained securely.
- v) Promotion of safeguarding is recognised to include undertaking those tasks which enable all God's people to reach their full potential. I 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 in the church

Workers will be appointed after a satisfactory DBS disclosure and following safer recruitment procedures. 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 basic safeguarding training, within the first 6 months of appointment. The other training needs of each worker will be considered (such as food hygiene, first aid and lifting and handling).

d) Pastoral visitors

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

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

A leaflet outlining good practice and systems should be given to everyone who works with children, young people and vulnerable adults. This leaflet will be reviewed annually

f) Complaints procedure

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

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.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Elders alongside the Safeguarding Officer.

g) 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 their status or entitlements to services or protection.
- ii) 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.
- iii) Safeguarding: protecting children or vulnerable adults from maltreatment; preventing impairment of their health and ensuring safe and effective care.
- iv) 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.
- v) Abuse and neglect may occur in a family, 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.

(Adapted from the Methodist Church UK safeguarding policies and guidance)