



The Methodist Church

North Staffordshire Circuit (11/22)

Silverdale Methodist Church

Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy

This policy was agreed at the Church Council held on 19th February 2024.

1. THE POLICY

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.

Silverdale 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 and at risk, are paramount.

Silverdale 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. As such, **Silverdale Methodist Church** seeks to affirm the gifts and graces of all 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.

Silverdale Methodist Church fully agrees with the 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.

Silverdale 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 affects 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.

Silverdale Methodist Church commits itself to:

- i) **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.
- ii) **IMPLEMENT** the Methodist Church Safeguarding Policy – including procedures and guidance, government legislation, and guidance and safe practice in the Circuit and in the churches.
- iii) **PROVIDE** support, advice, and training for lay and ordained people that will ensure people are clear and confident about their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults who may be vulnerable.
- iv) **AFFIRM** and give thanks for those who work with children and vulnerable adults, and also acknowledge the shared responsibility of us all for safeguarding children, young people, and vulnerable people who are on our premises.

2. ROLES and RESPONSIBILITIES

Church Council

It is the responsibility of each Church Council to appoint a Church Safeguarding Officer, and there should be no gaps in this crucial provision. It is not appropriate for any 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 Church Council.

Silverdale Methodist Church Council appoints **LaToya De Freitas** as Church Safeguarding Officer for adults and children, and supports *her* in this role, which is to:

- i) Provide support and advice to the minister and the stewards in fulfilling their roles with regard to safeguarding.
- ii) Check that a copy of the current, signed safeguarding poster with related contact number and information is displayed. Copies of the signed policy can be given to individuals upon request.
- iii) Ensure proper records are kept of all incidents/concerns according to Methodist policy and practice.
- iv) Liaise with the Circuit Administrator concerning safeguarding training to ensure it is undertaken by those in post and appropriate records are made and kept.
- v) Attend training and meetings organised to support the role.
- vi) Promote safeguarding best practice within the local church with the support of Circuit ministers.
- vii) Report to the Church Council annually.
- viii) Liaise with the minister and stewards to ensure the church follows safer recruitment procedures for all posts.
- ix) Advise the Circuit Safeguarding Officer and/or District Safeguarding Officer of any issues regarding compliance of safeguarding training, policy, or safer recruiting, and respond promptly to any request from them of safeguarding matters.

3. PURPOSE

The purpose of the church safeguarding policy is to check that procedures are in place, and to provide clarity about the roles and responsibilities of those trusted with promoting the church a safe space for all its users. It is to be read in conjunction with the Methodist Church safeguarding Policy, Procedures, and Guidance (2019).

4. 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 reason, 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 with regard to the safety of children and vulnerable adults by the church safeguarding officer, with the property steward and/or their representatives, at least annually, and a 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 adults. An agreed record is to be kept in the church records for each driver/car.
- v) Promotion of safeguarding is recognised to include undertaking those tasks which enable 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.

5. PASTORAL VISITORS

In terms of safeguarding, 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.

6. ECUMENICAL EVENTS

Where ecumenical events take place on Methodist Church premises, safeguarding is the responsibility of the local Church Council.

7. COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

It is hoped that complaints can generally be dealt internally by the local church in liaison with their minister. However, there is a formal complaints procedure within the Methodist Church, which allows issues to be raised about the actions or behaviour of 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. The provisions of Part 11 of the Constitutional Practice and Discipline (CPD) of the Methodist Church will be followed.

A complaint should be addressed to the Superintendent Minister, Rev'd Liz Singleton. If a complaint is made to another person, it should be referred to the Superintendent Minister. Methodist Church procedure will then be followed as the complaint is investigated.

If the complaint is against the Superintendent Minister, it should be addressed to the District Chair, Rev'd Helen Kirk.

Safeguarding Officers must be informed of any complaint or issue relating to the potential abuse of children, young people, 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.

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Church Council. The date of the next review is February 2025.

KEY CONCEPTS and DEFINITIONS

1. 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.
2. 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 of, or protect, themselves.
3. Safeguarding and protecting children or vulnerable adults from maltreatment; preventing impairment of their health, and ensuring safe and effective care.
4. Adult/child protection is part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity undertaken to protect children/specific adults who are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm, including neglect.
5. Abuse and neglect may occur in a family, in a community, or in an institution. It may be perpetrated by a person or persons known to the child, or vulnerable adult, or by strangers. It may be perpetrated by an adult or a child. It may be an infliction of harm or a failure to prevent harm.

Dated 19th February 2024

Signed,

Rev. Christine Legge (Chair of the Church Council Meeting)