The Methodist Church

## Statement of Safeguarding Principles

It is the Methodist Church's intention to value every human being as part of God's creation and the whole people of God. At the heart of the Methodist community is a deep sense of the place of welcome, hospitality and openness, which demonstrates the nature of God's grace and love for all.
Our church communities are called to be places where the transformational love of God is embodied and life in all its fullness is a gift, which is offered to all people.

## Principles

Safeguarding is about the action the Church takes to promote a safer culture. This means we will:

- **promote** the welfare of children, young people and adults.
- work to **prevent** abuse from occurring.
- seek to **protect** and respond well to those that have been abused.

We are committed to:

- the care and nurture of, and respectful pastoral ministry with, all children, young people and adults
- the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults when they are vulnerable.
- the establishing of 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 checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and The Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme in Scotland.

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 social services in any investigation.

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

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

Working with the Circuit 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 Buxton Methodist Church

## 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.

This policy was agreed at a Church Council held on 11th November 2026.

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.

Buxton 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.

Buxton 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 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.

Buxton 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, 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.

The Buxton 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 the church or in another context. It commits itself to challenge the abuse of power of anyone in a position of trust.

2. **IMPLEMENT** the Methodist Church Safeguarding Policy, government legislation and guidance and safe practice in the circuit and in the churches.

3. **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, young people and adults who may be vulnerable.

4. **AFFIRM** and give thanks for the work of those who are workers with children, young people and vulnerable adults and also acknowledge the shared responsibility of all of us for safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults who are on our premises.

**Church Council**

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.[1]

Buxton Methodist Church Council appoints Mrs Sue Anfield as Church Safeguarding Officer (Adults) and Church Safeguarding Officer (Children) and supports her in her role, which is to:

i) provide support and advice to the minister and the stewards in fulfilling their roles with regard to safeguarding.

ii) 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.

iii) record all safeguarding issues that are reported to the church safeguarding officer, according to Methodist policy.

iv) promote appropriate routes for reporting concerns.

v) identify and inform those who are required to attend safeguarding training and maintain records of attendance. Work with the Circuit Safeguarding Officer and Regional Officer for Safeguarding to arrange training.

vi) attend training and meetings relating to the role.

vii) 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.

viii) check that safeguarding is included as an agenda item at all Church Council meetings and report to the Church Council annually.

ix) inform all those with responsibility for recruitment, whether paid or voluntary, of their obligation to follow safer recruitment procedures.

x) advise the Circuit Safeguarding Officer and/or Regional Officer for Safeguarding 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.

*[1]It is not appropriate for the minister in pastoral charge to hold the Church Safeguarding Officer role because of the potential conflict with their own responsibilities.*

## 1. 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 note of this will be made and kept noting date, time and place of visit.

iii) The church premises are assessed regularly, and a risk assessment report presented to the Church Council. 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. A record to be kept in the church file for each driver/car.

v) Activity risk assessments will be undertaken before any church-organised activity takes place to minimise the risk of harm to those involved. Approval will be obtained from the event leader/minister. 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.

## 2. Appointment and training of workers

Workers will be appointed after satisfactory criminal records checks 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. 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 (e.g., food hygiene, first aid, lifting and handling). Each group is encouraged to maintain open communication for on-going feedback between the group leader and their team of volunteers.

## 3. Pastoral visitors

In terms of safeguarding, pastoral visitors will be supported in their role with the provision of safeguarding training upon appointment. If they are undertaking tasks for which a criminal records check would be required, this will be undertaken prior to appointment.

## 4. *Guidelines for working with children, young people and vulnerable adults*

A Connexional leaflet outlining good practice and systems will be given to anyone who works with children, young people and vulnerable adults. This includes contact details for Church Safeguarding representatives and Local Authority Services.

## 5. Ecumenical events

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

## 6. 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 minister, Rev Andrew Parker.

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.

## 7. *Other groups on church premises*

Where the building is hired for outside use, the hirer signing the letting agreement (www.tmcp.org.uk/property/letting-property-and-third-party-use) will be given a copy of that agreement and of the church safeguarding policy. The lettings secretary will consider the various users of the building in making lettings. Any lettings of concern will be notified to the Church Safeguarding Officer who will keep the records and take advice as appropriate from both the Regional Officer for Safeguarding and Circuit Safeguarding Officer.

## 8. Complaints procedure

There is a formal complaints procedure within the Methodist Church, which allows issues 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. Andrew Parker. If a complaint is made to another person, it should be referred to the superintendent. 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 Heather Fergusson, District Secretary for Administration and Compliance. Email: fergussonh@nwedmethodists.org.uk. She will then inform the relevant Deputy Chair / Mission Area Lead.

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.

## 9. Review

The date of the next review is Autumn 2027.

## 10 Key concepts and definitions

**10.1**. 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.

**10.2**. 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 or protect themselves.

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

**10.4.** Adult/child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity which is undertaken to protect children, young people and/or adults who are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm, including neglect.

**10.5.** 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.

**10.6** Worker: anyone working with children or vulnerable adults in the name of Buxton Methodist Church, whether in a paid or voluntary capacity.

Signed: *A. Parker,* Chair of Church Council

Dated: 11/11/2026