

GODALMING UNITED CHURCH

SAFEGUARDING

POLICY

AND

PROCEDURES

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INTRODUCTION

During the course of a week, a large number of people including many children, 0 to 16 year olds, and young people, 16 to 18 year olds, (hereafter known as children) as well as vulnerable adults * are present on the premises of the United Church. Some are there to participate in church organised activities whilst others attend groups hiring the premises. On some occasions people will be part of an activity away from the church premises but which is being organised in the name of the church. The purposes of the following policy and procedures is:

- ❖ To provide a safe environment for all people and to ensure that they are protected from harm
- ❖ To establish guidelines for good practice to help all those who come into contact or work with children and vulnerable adults within the church framework
- ❖ To ensure that if there is an accusation of abuse the matter is dealt with correctly, sensitively and expeditiously.

**(A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 years or over who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation. (Who decides? 1997 Lord Chancellor's Department and 'No Secrets' 2000).*

POLICY STATEMENT

We, the people of Godalming United Church, value everybody within the life of the church. We respect the wishes and feelings of all and their right to be heard. We especially seek to safeguard all children and vulnerable adults who come on to the church premises for whatever purpose or attend activities off site organised by the church from harm and protect them from abuse. We recognise that it is the responsibility of the whole church to prevent the abuse of any person and to keep everyone safe from harm.

PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES FOR SAFEGUARDING GOOD PRACTICE

1. SAFEGUARDING OFFICERS

Whilst the overall responsibility for implementing these policies and procedures lies with the church council, two people will be appointed as safeguarding officers by the church council, with the approval of the church meeting. They will have a particular responsibility for the implementation of these policies and procedures. Any suspicions or alleged cases of abuse must be referred to the safeguarding officers or minister.

2. CHURCH PREMISES

2.1 The Church

The church is committed to provide a safe and welcoming environment for all. It will ensure that its premises, furnishings and equipment are well maintained to meet a high standard of health and safety.

In particular it will ensure that:

- ❖ all electrical, gas and fire fighting equipment is well maintained
- ❖ all hazardous substances are kept, when not in use, in a locked cupboard
- ❖ no item of equipment or furniture is placed or stored in a position where it creates a hazard
- ❖ the first aid box is kept adequately stocked
- ❖ the designated fire exits are kept clear
- ❖ appropriate risk assessments are in place

2.2 Groups using the church (either church organisations or lettings)

Groups using the church premises have a responsibility to ensure that

- ❖ any equipment used by that group is well maintained and not placed or stored in such a way to cause a hazard
- ❖ leaders are aware of the position of the first aid box, accident book, fire exits and extinguishers in the proximity of the area where the group is meeting and of the telephone to call the emergency services
- ❖ leaders have a known plan for the safe and orderly evacuation of their group in the case of an emergency
- ❖ children under five are not allowed in the kitchen except when participating in an organised activity with adequate adult supervision and older children only with adequate supervision
- ❖ all accidents and injuries occurring on the premises are recorded in the accident book.

2.3 All users of the premises

It is the responsibility of everyone using the premises to report immediately any defective or unsafe equipment, furnishings or fittings to either the Lettings Officer or chairman of the property committee.

Everyone accessing the premises should be aware that the external vestibule door should not be left unlocked when there are children on site as this creates a major safety hazard. The Church Council is aware that this is difficult to implement and hirers must take full responsibility to ensure that any children in their care are fully protected. If the door is not locked, adult supervision should be maintained in the vestibule area.

All users of the premises should be aware that the River Wey flows very close to the church premises and ensure that they take all measures possible to ensure that children and vulnerable adults are protected from any risk that this proximity entails.

All premises users should be cognizant of any risk assessments for the areas in which they operate.

3 Internet

A If there are computers with internet access on the church premises, all and, particularly those supervising the use of the internet, must be aware that the internet produces three types of hazard for children and vulnerable adults:

1. **Content** This concerns the internet's facility to serve up age inappropriate and sometimes illegal images or content. This includes not only pornography but web sites which promote racism, self harming, xenophobia etc
2. **Contact** This concerns the facility to enable people or organisations with bad intentions towards children or vulnerable adults to make contact with them and help groom them to a point where they are open to sexual abuse or other exploitation
3. **Commerce** This is connected to unscrupulous and illegal exploitation of children or vulnerable adults e.g. gambling web sites

To keep children and vulnerable adults safe therefore –

- 1 Children and vulnerable adults must not be allowed online until they have been advised of the hazards and how to avoid them and how to react if they are confronted by anything undesirable.
- 2 The importance of typing web addresses correctly and using age appropriate search engines, of not giving out personal information, meeting up with strangers etc must be stressed
- 3 The computer is in a room where it is easy to supervise what is going on and screens should be facing the middle of the room

B No identifiable images of children shall be displayed on the church's web-site. By 'identifiable' it means providing personal information by which children could be traced – see appendices 2 and 3 of this document.

C In the event of someone in the church being investigated by the police for an internet sex offence, the church must respond quickly to police requests for IT equipment if the person under investigation has access to church computers with internet facility.

D The Church WiFi facilities are available to hirers who wish to use it for their activity and church members who need it for church purposes. The WiFi agreement form at Appendix 4 must be completed before using this facility.

4 Photography

No photograph, film or other image of a child or vulnerable adult will be taken for church purposes or used in a church's publication without his or her consent or a parent's or guardian's consent in the case of children. Where consent has been obtained, care will be taken that the images are used only for the purpose for which consent was given. All images must always protect the dignity of the individual.

5 Church Workers with children/vulnerable adults

5.1 Staffing

All groups organised in the name of the church shall have adequate adult supervision and leadership for the numbers of children/vulnerable adults in the group, the type of activity and where the activity is taking place. While older children are to be encouraged to help with groups of younger children, they should only be in the role of helpers with adults supervising.

5.2 Criminal Records

There is currently a requirement that all workers with children/vulnerable adults should obtain a disclosure through the Disclosure and Barring Service.

The Safeguarding Officers have the responsibility to ensure that

- a) DBS disclosures are obtained as required
- b) The Church Secretary has the responsibility to ensure that DBS disclosure application forms have been completed correctly and the documentary evidence verified
- c) The Safeguarding Officer has the responsibility to ask to inspect a person's new or renewed disclosure when received from DBS and to refer any disclosure which contains information to the Churches Agency for Safeguarding (CAS) to determine whether the applicant is able to perform their role or not. The Safeguarding Officer will notify church council if the DBS disclosure indicates that a person is deemed unsuitable for the post for which they have applied. The Safeguarding Officer must notify CAS of all approvals when a paper DBS application form is used so that a central record is maintained.

Anyone whose name is on the Disclosure and Barring List Service (DBS) barred list cannot by law work with children and/or vulnerable adults.

No-one who has been convicted of or has received a formal police caution concerning an offence against children as listed in the First Schedule of the Children and Young People's Act 1933 or convicted or cautioned for an Internet sex offence shall work with children in the life of the church

5.3 Recruitment of new workers

The church undertakes to select all new workers with care. All new workers will be required to complete a registration form (Form A Part 1), which includes the provision of a reference. Leaders of groups should inform the Church Secretary if they are taking on new workers.

New workers will be provided with an agreement completed on behalf of the church council for their signature (Form A Part 2). New and existing workers will be asked to sign a form confirming that they have read the church's policy and procedures on safeguarding and committing them to care and protect children from harm in accordance with the policy of the church.

5.4 Training

The church will encourage and create opportunities for all workers with children/vulnerable adults to undertake training and refresher courses both locally, ecumenically and through links into the Methodist circuit and the URC Synod.

The Church Safeguarding Officers will ensure that this training takes place.

6.Key holders

All key holders to the church premises must sign a declaration that they have not been convicted or officially cautioned for a sexual offence against children (Form D). These forms will be held by the Lettings Officer.

7. Record keeping

Good record keeping is an essential element of safeguarding. The following records need to be kept:

- 1) A register of all children in church groups kept by the Youth Forum Chairman
- 2) A register of all church workers with children kept by the Youth Forum Chairman
- 3) A list of all key holders to the premises by the lettings secretary
- 4) A register of children and workers present at each meeting of a group kept by the group leader
- 5) A record of any unusual or untoward happening or untoward behaviour of a child /children at a group meeting should be kept by the group leader
- 6) Group leaders of vulnerable adults should keep a record as in (5).

In the event of a suspicion or allegation of abuse very detailed records need to be kept and this subject will be covered under the section on Abuse. (Section 9)

8. Hirers of the premises

8.1 Hirers of the premises for an activity involving children or vulnerable adults (on a regular basis)

The church is not able to apply the same controls or supervision on outside organisations but nevertheless has the responsibility to do all it can to ensure that those who attend these activities are safe from harm.

Anyone hiring the premises for an activity involving children or vulnerable adults will be required to read this document, which is available on the church website and in the church foyer. If there is an allegation of abuse on the church premises, the hirer will inform the safeguarding officers. As part of the hiring agreement the hirer must sign that he/she has read the document and agrees to abide by its requirements.

Any allegations or instances of abuse could lead to the church cancelling the hiring agreement.

8.2 Hirers of the premises for an activity involving children/vulnerable adults on a one off occasion will read and sign the short-term hirers contract.

9. Abuse

9.1 Classification of Child Abuse

I. Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs e.g. failure to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failure to protect a child from physical harm or danger, also neglecting a child's basic emotional needs.

II. Physical

Physical abuse may include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning or otherwise causing physical harm to a child

III. Sexual

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities whether or not the child is aware of what is happening

IV. Emotional

Emotional abuse is the persistent ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. This may involve conveying to the children that they are worthless or unloved or inadequate. It may involve causing children to feel frightened or in danger.

(These definitions are taken from the Surrey Area Child Protection Procedures)

9.2 Classification of Vulnerable Adult abuse

I. Physical

The non-accidental infliction of physical force that results (or could result) in bodily injury, pain or impairment.

II. Sexual

Direct or indirect involvement in sexual activity without consent.

III. Neglect

Ignoring or withholding physical or medical care needs

IV. Psychological

Psychological abuse is that which impinges on the emotional health and development of individuals.

V. Financial

The unauthorised, fraudulent obtaining and improper use of funds, property or any resources of a vulnerable person.

VI. Individual rights

Abuse of individual rights is a violation of human and civil rights by any other person or persons

VII. Professional

Professional abuse is the misuse of therapeutic power and abuse of trust by professionals.

(These definitions are taken from the Surrey Multi-Agency Procedures – protecting vulnerable adults)

9.3 Signs of Abuse

The following is not an exhaustive list of the signs of abuse but ones that are more likely to be identified in the church setting

- Bruising
- Burns and scalds
- Bone and joint injuries
- Changes in mood
- Withdrawal
- Temper, aggression, disobedience, attention seeking
- Lack of trust in adults
- Inappropriate sexual knowledge in young children
- Fear of undressing
- Self injury

9.4 What to do if abuse is alleged or suspected

- a) Take the matter seriously and do not ignore the information.
- b) Record in as much detail as soon as possible everything, which is said or has been noticed. Try and accurately record the actual words, which were said. If you cannot remember the words verbatim, then say so e.g. “I cannot remember the exact words A. said but it was something like...” Be factual and do not express opinions.
- c) Make it clear to anyone making an allegation that you will need to share the information with the church Safeguarding Officers or the minister. Do not promise confidentiality.
- d) Do not ask any further questions (beyond seeking clarification) nor attempt to investigate or take any direct action
- e) On no account say anything to the alleged abuser
- f) Refer the matter to one of the designated church Safeguarding Officers or the Minister **immediately** – do not wait until you next conveniently see him or her.

- g) Remember allegations of abuse are extremely serious both for the alleged victim and the alleged abuser and absolute confidentiality must be maintained
- h) You must not discuss the allegation with the family of the alleged victim or any other person.
- i) Any enquiries from the media regarding an alleged abuse should be referred to the minister or the church secretary who will be advised by the church's parent denominations' press officers.

9.5 Responsibilities of the Safeguarding Officers when an allegation is referred to them

- a) Their first responsibility is to ensure, if it is possible, that the alleged victim is not at any further risk of abuse.
- b) If the allegation of abuse is of a criminal nature the matter must be referred to the Police Child Protection or Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer in this area.
- c) If the alleged abuse is not of a criminal nature but is suspected to be taking or has taken place away from the church and disassociated from any church activity then the matter should be referred to the appropriate section of Social Services for this locality.
- d) If the abuse is not of the nature detailed in sections b) or c) then the Safeguarding Officers should consult with the Methodist circuit safeguarding officer and URC synod link person to determine whether the allegation should be referred to Social Services or not and inform Church Council of the decision.
- e) The Safeguarding Officers must keep detailed records of all their actions and conversations etc, from the moment they received an allegation of abuse.
- f) The Safeguarding Officers will make Church Council aware of any allegations/suspensions of abuse and the actions they have taken, in as far as confidentiality allows.
- g) If the alleged abuse takes place on church premises or in connection with church based activities away from the premises then the Methodist Superintendent or Circuit Safeguarding Officer and the URC Safeguarding Link Person for the Wessex Synod must be informed.

- h) If the alleged abuser is the minister then the matter must be referred immediately to either the Methodist Superintendent/Chair of District or the URC Synod Moderator depending on the denomination of the minister.
- i) The Safeguarding Officers, in consultation with the minister and/ or the pastoral assistant should ensure that the alleged victim, the alleged abuser and both families should be given sensitive and appropriate pastoral support. This is especially important when the alleged abuser is also a child or a vulnerable adult.
- j) To record any abuse involving a group hiring the premises.
- k) The Safeguarding Officers should liaise with the Minister and the Church Secretary about any alleged abuse and follow the abuse reporting procedures of the church's parent denominations.

9.6 Role of the Church Council

- 1) To have overall responsibility for the implementation of the policy and procedures for safeguarding.
- 2) To appoint the safeguarding officers with the approval of the church meeting
- 3) To ensure that any safeguarding allegation referred to the church council is kept confidential (excepting the previously mentioned officers)
- 4) To ensure that the policy and procedures are reviewed annually.
- 5) To refer to the DBS information about individuals working with children or vulnerable adults where it considers them to have caused harm or pose a risk of harm

9.7 Role of the Whole Church

The whole church has a responsibility to ensure that **everyone** who uses the church premises or attends a church organised activity is safe from harm and abuse. Anyone seeing or hearing anything that causes them concern should inform one of the **safeguarding** officers as soon as possible.

10. Guidelines for Good Practice when working with children/vulnerable adults

Many of these guidelines are common sense but their practice helps to keep children and vulnerable adults safe and protects adults from the suspicion of abuse.

10.1 Treatment of children

- Treat all children with respect
- Treat all children fairly and do not show favouritism
- Any necessary personal care administered must be appropriate to the age and needs of the child

- Young children often want physical contact with an adult particularly when they are unsure, upset, hurt or unwell. When responding to this need, be careful as to what contact is made, that it is in public and it is what the child wants
- Do not ridicule or reject a child
- Do not touch a child inappropriately or intrusively
- Do not make sexually suggestive comments about or to a young person even in fun
- Never physically discipline a child

Supervision

- Where possible, no worker with children should be alone with a child. Sometimes this may be necessary e.g. the child wants to talk privately. Then make sure there is someone else nearby, tell that person what is happening. Avoid being in a place where you cannot be seen from outside. It is advisable to leave doors open when seeing a child alone.
- Children attending a group should not be left unsupervised at any time
- Leaders should keep a register and have emergency contact numbers if a parent/guardian is not on-site.
- Be aware of who else is using the premises at the same time as your activity and consciously consider whether they present any risk.
- Make sure someone the children know accompanies any visitors to the group.
- If you are organising an offsite activity this may involve more safety risks than an on site activity. It may need more adult helpers. Before you go, assess the risks and put in place measures to minimise the risks.
- Avoid giving lifts to children on their own, particularly if you are alone. If this is unavoidable ask the child to sit in the back of the car (this is good road safety practice too).

10.2 Treatment of vulnerable adults

- Treat vulnerable adults with dignity and respect especially if they require assistance with their personal care
- Allow and support vulnerable adults to make informed choices except where their incapacity makes this impossible
- Within their capacity allow vulnerable adults to be independent.
- Ensure where possible there are aids to assist them in being independent e.g. ramps, loop system, large textbooks and notices etc.
- Respect vulnerable adults' property and possessions, in particular their finances
- Recognise that vulnerable adults are valued members of the church and their opinions carry as much weight as others in the church community
- In groups run specifically for vulnerable adults ensure there are sufficient helpers to assist them and keep them safe.

Summary

1. The whole church is committed to safeguarding.
2. Two safeguarding officers will be appointed to implement these procedures and to deal with allegations of abuse
3. The church will maintain its premises, furnishings and equipment to a high standard of health and safety and expect groups using the premises to similarly maintain their equipment
4. Church groups will be adequately staffed. Leaders and helpers will be selected carefully, DBS checked and provided with opportunities for training.
5. Relevant records will be maintained accurately.
6. Any allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and be referred to the safeguarding officers or the minister who will report to the persons as previously indicated in 9.5.
7. The safeguarding officers will report any allegations and actions they have taken to the Church Council (subject to confidentiality).
8. The church council will determine whether any further action needs to be taken if referral to social services or police has not be initiated on the advice of the Methodist District or URC synod safeguarding officers.
9. Hirers of the church premises will be required to agree to measures to safeguard children and vulnerable adults as part of their hiring agreement

10. Those working with children or vulnerable adults will be encouraged and trained to adopt good safeguarding practices and lessen the risk of them being suspected or accused of abuse.

APPENDIX 1

SAFE FROM HARM: HOME OFFICE GUIDANCE FOR ALL VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

These recommendations form the basis of the procedures and recommendations for good practice. The following is a summary.

- Adopt a policy statement on safeguarding the welfare of children.
- Plan the work of the organisation so as to minimise situations where the abuse of children may occur.
- Introduce a system whereby children may talk with an independent person.
- Apply agreed procedures for protecting children to all paid staff and volunteers.
- Give all paid staff and volunteers clear roles.
- Use staff supervision and support as a means of protecting children.
- Treat all would-be paid staff and volunteers as job applicants for any position involving contact with children.
- Gain at least one reference from a person who has experience of the applicant's paid work or volunteering with children.
- Explore all applicants' experience of working or contact with children in an interview before appointment.
- Find out whether an applicant has any conviction for criminal offences against children.
- Make paid and voluntary appointments conditional on the successful completion of a probationary period.

- Issue guidelines on how to deal with disclosure or discovery of abuse.
- Train paid staff and volunteers, their line managers or supervisors, and policy makers in the prevention of child abuse.

APPENDIX 2

Photographs and Images of Children – A guide to the risks and how to minimise them

Who this guidance is for

This guidance is designed for officers of the church or other individuals using images of children and young people in the name of the church, including photographic images in magazines, promotional literature and internet websites.

Background

The church recognises the opportunities that technology such as photography and the internet can bring: these include the ability to celebrate the achievements of children and young people as well as being a useful tool in promoting activities. As well as the advantages, this technology brings certain risks, which should be considered.

The Risks

There are concerns about the risks posed directly and indirectly to children and young people through the use of photographs on websites and in other publications:

1. Photographs can be used as a means of identifying children when they are accompanied with personal information e.g. this is X who lives at Y, is a member of Z church and who sings in a certain music group. This information can make a child vulnerable to an individual who may wish to start to 'groom' that child for abuse - online (e.g. through websites or social networking) or through direct contact in the off-line, 'real' world. Information placed on the internet has also been used by estranged parents (e.g. in adoption or domestic violence circumstances) to identify, trace and cause significant difficulties for children.
2. The content of photographs can itself be inappropriate, or used or adapted for inappropriate use. There is evidence of this inappropriate or adapted material finding its way onto sites showing child abuse images, and of inappropriate images being shared within groups of offenders.

Ways to minimise the risks:

- If the child is named in an article, avoid using their photograph.
- Avoid using the first name and surname of individuals in a photograph. This reduces the risk of inappropriate, unsolicited attention.
- Ask for parental permission to use an image of a young person. This ensures that parents are aware of the way the image of their child is representing the church. The Parental Permission Form should be clear about how and for how long images and associated consents and information will be securely stored and used e.g. newspaper, magazine, promotional materials or internet/website.
- Only use images of children in suitable dress to reduce the risk of inappropriate use.

- When choosing images of children to include in a newsletter or magazine, care should be taken that the images are appropriate. Apply an increased level of consideration to the images of children and young people used on a website.

APPENDIX 3

Consent Form For Recording and Using Images of Children – GODALMING UNITED CHURCH

Dear Parent or Guardian,

During your child’s time with us we may wish to record still images/film images and audio of activities that involve your child. The images may be used for displays, publications and on a web-site by us. Images may also be used for inclusion in local newspapers.

We will take every reasonable care that images are not misused:

- Full names of children will not be included in any accompanying notes.
- No home addresses will be included in any accompanying notes.
- Images that might cause embarrassment or distress will not be used.
- Images and consent forms will be kept securely and reviewed annually.
- Images will be kept only as long as needed and deleted when no longer required.

Please complete the details below if you agree to us using images of your child.

NAME(S) OF CHILD/CHILDREN:

.....

ADDRESS:

.....

NAME OF PARENT/GUARDIAN:

.....

ADDRESS IF DIFFERENT FROM ABOVE:

.....

.....

I give permission for photographs/video or audio clips of my child/children to be taken for use in displays, publications or the church website.

DATE:

Please return the form to.....



Appendix 4 WiFi Acceptable Use Policy

WiFi is provided by Godalming United Church (which described as "we" or "us" below).

By using this WiFi, you agree to be bound by this policy. If you do not agree, please do not use the WiFi.

In using the WiFi, you agree to:

- Act lawfully – do not act in any way that could be unlawful or encourage others to act unlawfully. In particular, do not infringe intellectual property rights, do not reveal confidential or sensitive information and do not engage in any criminal offence or encourage others to do so. Music, video, pictures, text and other content on the internet are copyright works and you should not download, alter, e-mail or otherwise use such content unless you are certain that the owner of such works has authorised its use by you.
- Act responsibly – you must not undertake actions that are harassing, defamatory, threatening, obscene, abusive, racist, sexist, offensive or otherwise objectionable or inappropriate. Do not pretend to be anyone other than yourself. Do not collect email addresses or other personal details or use the WiFi to send bulk email messages ('spam').
- Act reasonably – do not use WiFi access in any way that may affect the running of the WiFi or network or other technology connected to it (for example, other WiFi users' devices). In particular, do not upload or download very large files and make sure your device is protected by up-to-date anti-virus software.
- Act carefully – we recommend that you do not use the service to transmit or receive any confidential information or data. If you choose to do so, you accept that you do so at your own risk. We are not responsible to you for any damages, losses, costs or expenses you suffer because of activities you conduct using the WiFi, or because the WiFi is unavailable, does not operate as expected or causes loss or damage to any data.

We don't charge you for using the WiFi. We do not guarantee the availability of the Service; the speed at which information may be transmitted or received via the Service; or that the Service will be compatible with your equipment or any software which you use. We are not able to provide technical support for use of the WiFi.

We cannot completely control the types of material that can be received (or sent) over the WiFi. As with any internet access, you may encounter material that you find offensive, objectionable or inappropriate – Godalming United Church cannot be held responsible if this happens. Web filtering software is available commercially if you want to reduce the likelihood of viewing offensive content, but is not provided by Godalming United Church.

You are responsible to us for all damage, losses, costs or expenses suffered by Godalming United Church arising out of any breach by you of this policy (for example, if you use the WiFi for copyright infringement or to commit a criminal offence).

If we believe that your actions are in breach of this policy, we can suspend your access at any time in our sole discretion without responsibility to you.

Please also be aware of the Godalming United Church Safeguarding Policy and Procedures which can be found in the 'About Us' section of the church website: www.guc.org.uk

I confirm that I accept these terms and conditions as the basis of my use of the WiFi service provided.

Signed: Email:
Name: Dated: