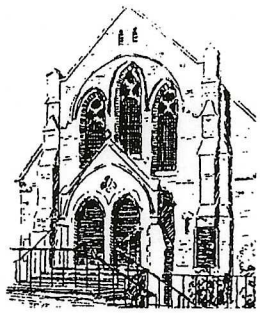
The Methodist Church - Winchester, Eastleigh & Romsey Circuit

ROMSEY METHODIST CHURCH



Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy for Romsey 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
- 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 through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

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.

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 the risk assessment of those who present a Safeguarding risk within a church environment. We will ensure that appropriate pastoral care is offered and measures 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.

This policy was agreed at a Church Council Meeting held on **27th March 2025.**

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 as a safe space for all its users.

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.

Romsey 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.

Romsey Methodist Church recognises that it has a particular care for all who are vulnerable whether by 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.

Romsey 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 issues of promotion of welfare so that each of us can reach our full potential in God's grace.

Romsey 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, 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.
- **IMPLEMENT** the Methodist Church Safeguarding Policy Procedures and Guidance; government legislation and guidance and safe practice in the circuit and in the churches.

- **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.
- **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.

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. 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.

Romsey Methodist Church appoints **Marilyn Pack** as Church Safeguarding Officer (Adults) and Church Safeguarding Officer (Children) and supports them in their role, which is to:

- provide support and advice to the Minister and the Church Stewards in fulfilling their roles with regard to Safeguarding;
- ensure that a suitable, signed Church Safeguarding Policy is displayed at all times in the church on a Safeguarding noticeboard, along with the names of current Safeguarding Officers, details of national helplines and other suitable information. This must be renewed annually;
- record all Safeguarding issues that are reported to the Church Safeguarding Officer according to Methodist safeguarding policy;
- promote appropriate routes for the reporting of concerns;
- identify and inform those who are required to attend Safeguarding training and maintain records of attendance. Work with the Circuit Safeguarding Officer and District Safeguarding Officer to arrange training;
- attend training and meetings relating to the role;
- work in partnership with others, including Church Stewards and user groups to promote good Safeguarding practice on church premises. This may 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;
- check that Safeguarding is included as an agenda item at all Church Council meetings and report to the Church Council annually;
- inform all those with responsibility for recruitment, whether paid or voluntary, of their obligation to follow safer recruitment procedures;
- advise the Circuit Safeguarding Officer and/or the District Safeguarding Officer of any issues with compliance with Safeguarding training, policy or safer recruitment requirements and respond promptly to any request from them regarding the audit of Safeguarding activities.

A Good practice

We believe that good practice means:

- All people are treated with respect and dignity.
- 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.
- The church premises will be assessed by the Church Safeguarding Officer with the Property Steward and/or their representatives at least annually for safety for children and vulnerable adults and a written risk assessment report will be given annually 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.
- 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 (where required) are appropriate. A record is to be kept in the church file for each driver/car.
- 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/minister. A written record of the assessment will be retained securely.
- 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 DBS disclosure and following the safer recruitment procedures of the Methodist Church. Informal supervision is currently provided by Mrs Meghan Elkin (Funday Sunday), Mrs Ann Cousins & Mrs Meghan Elkin (COGs), Mrs Maggie Blair (Story Tots), Mrs Elizabeth Robertson (Tiddlywinks), Mrs Vickie Barker (Tune Tots) and Mr Jason Elkin (Who Let the Dads Out). These arrangements will be reviewed annually. Each worker will be expected to undergo Safeguarding training within 6 months of appointment or as soon as possible thereafter. The other training needs of each worker will be considered (eg food hygiene, first aid, lifting and handling).

D Pastoral Visitors

Pastoral Visitors will be supported in their role with the provision of Foundation Module (2020 Edition) 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

Everyone who works with children, young people and vulnerable adults will be given a copy of the Methodist Church's *Quick Reference Guide* and the *Code of Safer Working Practice* so that they are aware of good practice and systems.

F Ecumenical Events

Where ecumenical events happen on 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. If the activity is considered 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 Church Safeguarding Officer should be informed. The Church Safeguarding Officer will keep the records and take advice as appropriate from both the District Safeguarding Officer and Circuit Safeguarding Officer.

I 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 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 Peter Rayson.** 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 Rachel Bending chair@sdmc.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 Positive Working Together

Romsey Methodist Church seeks to promote positive working together to create a church community where all can be safe, treated with respect, love and dignity and where no individual or group seeks to be dominant. We affirm that all who serve the Church, whether as ministers, lay employees, or Church members should be free to do so creatively and without being bullied or harassed. All have a right of access to a process through which such inappropriate behaviour can be addressed.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Church Council. Next review date **March 2026**.

K 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 their status or entitlements to services or protection.

2 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.

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 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.

5 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.

Date 27th March 2025

Signed ..... Chair of Church Council