

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 the 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 protecting 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 Disclosures 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 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.

We will seek to offer pastoral care and support, including supervision and referral to the proper authorities, to any member of our church community known to have offended against a child, young person or vulnerable adult

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 Roundhay Methodist Church

This policy was agreed at a Church Council held 11th March 2025

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 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.

Roundhay St John agreed at their PCC meeting on 3rd March 2015 that they agree to follow the Roundhay Methodist Church safeguarding policy.

Roundhay Methodist Church and Roundhay St John Church are in a covenant partnership and their church life is entirely united under the name of Oakwood Church. This policy is held legally by the trustees of Roundhay Methodist Church, but will operate for the congregation and church known as 'Oakwood Church'. This name will be used in the statements below.

Oakwood Church is committed to the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and vulnerable adults and affirms that the needs of children, or of people when they are vulnerable and at risk are paramount.

Oakwood Church recognizes that it has a particular care for all who are vulnerable whether as a result of disabilities or by reduction in capacities or by their situation. It is recognized 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.

Oakwood Church recognizes the serious issue of the abuse of children and vulnerable adults and recognizes that this may take the form of physical, emotional, sexual, financial, spiritual, discriminatory, bullying, 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.

Oakwood 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.

Oakwood Church commits itself to ensuring the implementation of the Methodist Church Safeguarding Policy; government legislation and guidance and safe practice in the circuit and in the churches.

Oakwood Church commits itself to 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.

Oakwood Church affirms and gives 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. Appoint a Church Safeguarding Officer and there should be no gaps in this crucial provision. 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

Oakwood Church appoints Anne Kirkland as Church Safeguarding officer (Adults) and as Church Safeguarding officer (Children) and supports her in that role which is to:

- provide support and advice to the Minister and the 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 names of current safeguarding officers, 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 reporting of concerns and provide a point of reference to advise on safeguarding issues.
- identify and inform those who are required to attend safeguarding training and maintain records of attendance. Work with the circuit safeguarding officer and DSO to arrange training.
- attend training and meetings relating to the role
- 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.
- 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 District Safeguarding Officer 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.
- Ensure that the church has a safeguarding notice board with a copy of the current, signed safeguarding policy, contact numbers for local and national helplines and other suitable information.
- Liaise with Circuit and District Safeguarding Officers.
- Ensure the church completes a risk assessment on each area of activity in the church and this is stored and reviewed at least annually and that it is readily available on request.
- Ensure that the church has a safeguarding notice board with a copy of the current, signed safeguarding policy, contact numbers for local and national helplines and other suitable information.

a) Good Practice

We believe good practice means that:

- 1 All people are treated with respect and dignity.
- 2 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 of this will be made and kept noting date, time and place of visit.
- 3 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 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.

- 4 Those who work with children, young people or vulnerable adults or who are in a position of trust or office holders, will attend a refresher training every 4 years
- 5 Any church-organized 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 should be kept in the church file for each driver/car
- 6 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
- 7 Promotion of safeguarding is recognized 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.
- 8 Following safer recruitment, every worker, volunteer or paid, will have a line manager, a person to whom we are responsible in the role held.

These things are to safeguard those working with children, young people and those adults who may be vulnerable.

b) Appointment and training of workers in the Church

Workers will be appointed after a satisfactory DBS disclosure 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. A record of these meetings will be agreed and signed and the record kept. Each worker will be expected to undergo safeguarding training, within the first six months of appointment. The other training needs of each worker will be considered (e.g. food hygiene, first aid, lifting and handling, etc.)

c) Pastoral visitors

In terms of safeguarding, the visiting team will be supported in their role with the provision of safeguarding training upon appointment and renewal every 4 years. If they are undertaking tasks for which a DBS would be required, this will be undertaken prior to appointment.

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

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

e) Ecumenical events

Where ecumenical events happen on church premises, safeguarding is the responsibility of this Church Council. All united church events in partnership with Church of England Parish of Roundhay St John's, under the name, Oakwood Church, are referred to in this clause.

f) 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 Anne Kirkland who will also inform the church council secretary.

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

g) 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 the Circuit Safeguarding Officer.

h) Complaints procedure

There is a formal complaints procedure within the Methodist Church, which allows concerns 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. Tanya Short, 52 Nursery Lane, LS17 7HW. tanya.short65@gmail.com 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 the District Chair, the Revd. Kerry Tankard, 38 Longlands, Idle, Bradford, BD10 9UG.

chair@ywmethodist.org.uk

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.

i) Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Church Council. The date of the next review is March 2026.

j) Definition of Key Terms

- 1) A child is anyone who has not yet reached their eighteenth birthday.
- 2) Vulnerable Adults: any person 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, young people 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, young people and/or 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 and in an institution. It may be perpetrated by a person or persons known to the child, young person 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.
- 6) Worker: anyone working with children or vulnerable adults in the name of Oakwood Church, whether in a paid or voluntary capacity

Signed. Chair of Church Council

Rev'd Dr George Bailey

Date – 11th March 2025

Date of Review March 2026