

**GODALMING UNITED CHURCH**

**SAFEGUARDING**

**POLICY**

**AND**

**PROCEDURES**

Revised

April

'10

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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 are:

- ❖ 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

### **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.

### 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.

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.

#### **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 Criminal Records Bureau via the Churches Agency for Safeguarding.

From November 2010, new workers working with children/vulnerable adults will need to be registered with the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) if they are involved in 'regulated activity'. (See definition below). Existing workers will enter the ISA registration scheme on a rolling basis as their existing CRB checks are renewed. This process will be completed by 2014.

##### Definition of a regulated activity:

Activity of a specified nature that involves contact with children or vulnerable adults frequently, intensively and /or overnight. Such activities include teaching, training, care, supervision, advice, treatment and transportation.

##### Definition of frequency: once a week or more.

##### Definition of intensive: 4 or more days in a 30 day period, or overnight.

The Safeguarding Officers have the responsibility to ensure that

- a) CRB disclosures/ISA registrations are obtained as required
- b) The Church Secretary has the responsibility to ensure that CRB/ISA registration forms have been completed correctly and the documentary evidence verified
- c) The Church Secretary has the responsibility to notify church council if the CRB/ISA registration indicates that a person is deemed unsuitable for the post for which they have applied.

Anyone whose name is on ISA 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. The Church Secretary will be responsible for checking the ISA status of the new worker on the ISA's Barred List and Registration List website when it is operational.

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.

Any one hiring the premises for an activity involving children or vulnerable adults will be provided with a copy of this document. 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 Abuse**

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

### **II. Sexual Abuse**

Direct or indirect involvement in sexual activity without consent.

### **III. Neglect**

Ignoring or withholding physical or medical care needs

### **IV. Psychological Abuse**

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

### **V. Financial Abuse**

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

### **VI. Abuse of individual rights**

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

### **VII. Professional Abuse**

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/suspicions 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 in April of each year.
- 5) To refer to the Independent Safeguarding Authority 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 which 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 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 can not 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
- 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 text books 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, police and ISA 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.
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.