

Promoting Safer Working Practice

Safer working practice is critical to good safeguarding. Church officers will respect all children and young people and promote their well-being. The Church will create and maintain environments that:

- are safer for all
- promote well-being
- prevent abuse
- create nurturing, caring conditions within the Church.

The Church will challenge any abuse of power within church communities by ensuring church officers adhere to safe working practice.

Code of Safer Working Practices with Children and Young People

You should:

- be aware of and understand the local safeguarding policy
- treat all children and young people fairly and without prejudice, discrimination or favouritism
- respect differences in gender, sexual orientation, culture, race, ethnicity, disability and faith and challenge behaviour that demonstrates discrimination and/or prejudice
- ensure that your own language, tone of voice and body language is respectful
- always aim to work with or within sight and hearing of another adult
- ensure that another adult is informed if a child needs to be taken to the toilet (toilet breaks should be organised for young children)
- ensure that children and young people know who they can contact if they need to speak to someone about a personal concern. They should be made aware of organisations that can provide support.

- respond warmly to a child who needs comforting but this should not involve physical comfort e.g. cuddles.
- advise children, young people and their parent/carers/guardians in advance if any activity requires physical contact and provide an opportunity to opt out or agree alternative activities.
- administer any necessary first aid with others around
- obtain consent for any photographs/videos to be taken, shown or displayed via any medium. (This should be from the parent, carer or guardian and the young person if 12 years or over. Images should not be taken or stored on personal devices).
- record any incidents that concern you or make you feel uncomfortable and give the information to your group leader in the first instance. Although you must also contact the church, circuit or district safeguarding officer immediately if you believe you have acted in a way that others may have interpreted as inappropriate or if a child has acted inappropriately towards you. Records must be signed and dated.
- always share concerns about a child or the behaviour of another worker with your group leader and/or the safeguarding officer.

You should not:

- initiate physical contact and if this is initiated by the child, do not pull away abruptly but do so gently so physical contact is for the minimum amount of time
- invade a child's privacy whilst they are washing or using the toilet
- play rough physical or sexually provocative games use any form of physical punishment
- be sexually suggestive in the presence of or to a child, even as a joke
- touch a child inappropriately or forcefully
- scapegoat, ridicule, reject or ignore a child, group or adult

- allow abusive peer activities (e.g. initiation ceremonies, ridiculing or bullying)
- show favouritism to any one child or group
- allow a child or young person to involve you in excessive attention-seeking that is clearly physical or sexual in nature
- give lifts to children or young people on their own or on your own
- smoke any substance, vape or consume alcohol in the presence of children or when responsible for them
- provide personal contact details to a child or young person such as mobile number, email or social media contact
- share sleeping accommodation with children
- arrange social occasions (this includes online activity) with children or invite them to your home outside organised group occasions (other than with the consent of parent, carers or guardians and where at least one other adult is present)
- allow unknown adults access to children (visitors should always be accompanied by a known person) allow strangers and those who are not authorised to give children lifts.

Appropriate dress

You should dress appropriately when working with children and not wear anything revealing or that is not practical for carrying out the tasks as part of your role.

Receiving gifts

There may be occasions when children give you gifts. It is polite to accept a gift but your group leader should be informed. As a general rule, expensive gifts should not be accepted. For further guidance on procedures for safer working practices when managing activities for children, please refer to the main Safeguarding Policy and Procedures for The Methodist Church

Code of Safer Working Practices with Adults

You should:

- treat all adults with respect and dignity
- ensure that your own language, tone of voice, and body language are respectful
- record any incidents of concern and give the information to your group leader, sign and date the record
- share concerns about an adult or the behaviour of another worker with your group leader and/or safeguarding officer.

You should not:

- invade the privacy of an adult who is washing and toileting
- use any form of physical punishment or restraint (apart from car seat belts)
- be sexually suggestive about or to an adult, or scapegoat, ridicule or reject an adult or group
- permit abusive peer activities (e.g. initiation ceremonies, ridiculing or bullying)
- show favouritism to any one adult or group
- allow an adult to involve you in behaviour that is overtly physical or sexual
- allow unknown adults access to adults deemed at risk of harm (visitors should always be accompanied by a known person)
- allow strangers to give lifts to adults in your group.

Visiting adults at home

Most visits to adults in their own home will be straightforward as they will be well known to the church. However, when visiting someone new for the first time, visitors should let someone else know whom they are visiting (and when).

Here are some guidelines you may want to consider:

- Visiting in two ways may be advisable, especially if the adult lacks capacity. It is also advisable to take a mobile phone. Do not call unannounced. Call by appointment, telephoning the person just before visiting if appropriate. Be clear about what support can be offered to the adult if they ask for help with particular problems and refer back to the church if uncertain.
- Do not make referrals to any agency that could provide help without the adult's permission, and ideally encourage them to set up the contact.
- Never offer 'over the counter' remedies to people on visits or administer prescribed medicines, even if asked to do so.
- Do not accept any gifts from adults other than token items, to avoid misunderstandings or subsequent accusations from the person or their family. If someone wants to make a donation to the church, put it in an envelope, mark it on the outside as a donation and obtain a receipt from the treasurer.

Pastoral visitors should note the date when they visit people, report their visit to the pastoral secretary and say what is concerning or going well.

The pastoral secretary will report safeguarding concerns to the minister and safeguarding officer as appropriate and agree what action should take place and who should record the incident.



Code of Safer Working Practices with Children, Young People and Adults