

Trinity (Methodist/United Reformed) Church Sutton

Safeguarding children and adults at risk: principles, policy and procedures 2023

Safeguarding principles

1. Trinity Church aims to value every human being as part of God's creation and the whole people of God. At the heart of its 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 community is called to be a place where the transformational love of God is embodied and life in all its fullness is a gift, which is offered to all people.
2. Trinity Church aims to ensure that protecting people from abuse, harm or neglect is central to our culture. It provides procedures for promoting safeguarding, preventing abuse and protecting children, adults at risk and staff. This includes clear procedures for taking appropriate action when safeguarding concerns are raised involving children and adults within our Church, or those who attend our activities and events.
3. Safeguarding is about the action the Church takes to promote a safer culture. This means that we will:
 - promote the welfare of children and adults at risk;
 - work to prevent abuse, harm, neglect and violence;
 - protect and respond well to those that have been subjected to abuse, harm, neglect and violence.
4. We are committed to:
 - the care and nurture of, and respectful pastoral ministry with, all children and adults;
 - safeguarding and protecting all children and adults when they are at risk;
 - establishing a safe, caring community, which provides a loving environment where there is informed vigilance about the dangers of abuse, harm, neglect and violence.
5. 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 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).
6. 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 care services in any investigation.
7. We will work with anyone who has suffered abuse, harm, neglect or violence, developing with them an appropriate ministry of informed pastoral care.
8. We will work to challenge any abuse of power, especially by anyone in a position of trust.
9. Working with Church, Circuit and District Safeguarding Coordinators(s), we will support risk assessment of people who present a safeguarding risk within our church environment. We will ensure appropriate pastoral care is offered and measures are taken to address identified risks including referral to statutory agencies, suspension or other management of access to church activities, including the use of safeguarding contracts.
10. In implementing all these principles, we will follow legislation, official guidance and recognised good practice, paying attention also to guidance issued by the Methodist and United Reformed Churches.

Definitions

11. The term 'children' refers to people under the age of 18 years.
12. The term 'adult at risk' refers to anyone aged 18 or over who, because of mental or other disability, age, illness or other situation, are permanently, or for time being, unable to take care of themselves, or to protect themselves against significant harm, abuse or exploitation.

Policies

13. Trinity Methodist/United Reformed Church is committed to the safeguarding and protection of children and adults at risk and affirms that their needs are paramount in making decisions and taking action to implement its safeguarding responsibilities.
14. The Church will work to be a safe, supportive and caring community for children, adults at risk, survivors of abuse, people affected by abuse, for staff and volunteers and for communities challenged by safeguarding issues.
15. The Church acknowledges the effects that abuse, harm, neglect and violence may have on people and their lifelong development, including their 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 promotion of welfare so that each of us can reach our full potential in God's grace.
16. Trinity Methodist/United Reformed Church commits itself to:
 - *respond* without delay to any allegation or cause for concern that a child or adult at risk 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 and United Reformed Churches' safeguarding principles, policies and procedures, following legislation and official guidance and best practice.
 - *provide* support, advice and training for lay and ordained people to ensure that they are clear about and confident in carrying out their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults at risk.
 - *affirm and give thanks* for those who work with children and adults at risk.
 - *accept the shared responsibility of all of us* for safeguarding children and adults at risk who participate in activities organised by the Church or that take place on our premises.
 - *treat all people* with respect and dignity when dealing with safeguarding concerns.
 - *consider regularly* the extent to which the safeguarding requirement to enable all God's people to reach their full potential is met by the Church's work.

Responsibility

17. Legal responsibility for safeguarding rests with the Deacons/Trustees. The safeguarding coordinators(s) shall have the right, on request, to attend the meetings of the Deacons/Trustees and at least annually to report on implementation of the safeguarding responsibilities
18. The Deacons/Trustees shall appoint safeguarding coordinators, whose names and contact

details shall be made available on notices posted in the Church buildings and on its website, and will support them in their roles, set out in job descriptions, which shall be reviewed periodically and at least whenever a coordinator is appointed.

19. The Deacons/Trustees shall ensure, working with the Minister, the Methodist Circuit and the safeguarding coordinators, that:
 - 19.1. the safeguarding principles, policy and procedures are published on its website and a suitable summary posted both in the Church buildings and on its website;
 - 19.2. appropriate records of safeguarding issues that are reported to the Minister, to Church safeguarding coordinators and to other employees or volunteers are confidentially and securely retained in the Church;
 - 19.3. routes are established and maintained for safeguarding concerns to be appropriately recognised, responded to, recorded and reported;
 - 19.4. foundation and advanced training are arranged, and that records of people who are required to attend safeguarding training and records of attendance are securely and confidentially maintained;
 - 19.5. appropriate advice, guidance and information is available to the Church, its Minister and members to enable them to fulfil their shared responsibility for safeguarding;
 - 19.6. regular consideration of and reflection about safeguarding issues takes place during Worship and at the Church Meeting.

Procedures

20. The Minister will maintain an appropriate system for confidential, secure recording of concerns about safeguarding issues, for responses to them and for reporting or referral of concerns to the relevant authorities.
21. The safeguarding coordinators(s) will:
 - 21.1. process initial and renewal DBS checks
 - 21.2. maintain records of people required to attend safeguarding training, and notify them accordingly;
 - 21.3. attend meetings and training relevant to their role;
 - 21.4. work in partnership with others with responsibilities for aspects of the work of the Church, including Deacons/Trustees and user groups, to promote good safeguarding practice and awareness of Church or other relevant safeguarding policies and procedures;
 - 21.5. advise the Minister, Deacons/Trustees, the Church Meeting and others with responsibilities for aspects of the work of the Church about compliance with safeguarding training, principles, policy, responsibilities and 'Safer Recruitment' policies;
 - 21.6. respond to needs or requests for advice, information or action on safeguarding matters.
22. People who act or work on behalf of the Church should not meet or work alone with a child or adult at risk where the activity cannot be seen by others, unless this is necessary for pastoral reasons, in which case a written record will be made and kept noting date, time, place and appropriate details of the action.
23. Working with the Property Committee, the safeguarding coordinators shall assess the Church buildings annually and provide a written report of any safeguarding concerns that arise annually to the Church Meetings.
24. Organisers of Church-organised transport of children or adults at risk will ensure that the vehicle is suitable and appropriately insured and that the driver and escort, where

required, are appropriate to meet potential safeguarding concerns and a record kept in the Church file for each vehicle and driver/escort.

25. Workers and volunteers will be appointed using 'Safer Recruitment' procedures, after a satisfactory DBS check and consideration of their appropriateness for the safeguarding responsibilities inherent in the roles they are to undertake.
26. Guidelines will be issued or published on the Church website to inform people working on Church activities with children and adults at risk, and hirers of Church rooms, of their safeguarding responsibilities, including the need to ensure that adequate staffing and appropriate risk assessments are carried out.
27. Procedures will be issued to define safeguarding responsibilities when events involve participation of members from other Churches.
28. The procedure in the event of a concern being raised about abuse, harm, neglect or violence is as follows:
 - 28.1. If there is an immediate threat of harm, the Police should be contacted without delay.
 - 28.2. Where it is judged that there is no immediate threat of harm, the concern should be discussed with the Minister, or a relevant Church safeguarding coordinator, within 24 hours, to decide whether the concern should be reported to the authorities.
 - 28.3. A confidential record will be made of the conversation and the circumstances surrounding it, and a copy passed to the authorities if a report is made.
 - 28.4. The person about whom the allegation is made must not be informed by anyone in the Church if it is judged that to do so could place a child or adult at further risk. If the statutory authorities are involved, they should be consulted before any information is given to a potential perpetrator.
 - 28.5. The London District Safeguarding Officer should be kept informed of any serious concerns and reports to police and statutory authorities.
 - 28.6. Prior to any report to children's social care services, the child's wishes, feelings and rights should be considered when determining what action to take. There should also be a verbal consultation with local authority to ensure that making a report is an appropriate action. The parent/carer will normally be contacted to obtain their consent before a report is made. However, if the concern involves, for example alleged or suspected child sexual abuse, domestic abuse, Honour-based violence, fabricated or induced illness, or the District Safeguarding Officer has reason to believe that informing the parent at this stage might compromise the safety of the child or a staff member, nothing should be said to the parent/carer ahead of the report, but a rationale for the decision to progress without consent should be provided with the report.
 - 28.7. In the case of reports to adult social care or other services for adults at risk, information should be shared with consent if the adult has capacity within the meaning of the Mental Capacity Act and if this does not place the person making the report, them or others at an increased risk. A person's right to confidentiality is not absolute and may be overridden where there is evidence that sharing information is necessary to support an investigation or where there is a risk to others.
 - 28.8. If someone in the church is alleged or known to harm/have harmed children or adults, it is essential to inform the District Safeguarding Officer so that they can offer advice and support.
 - 28.9. For any concerns relating to children, the Designated Officer (DO - previously known as the Local Authority Designated Officer - LADO) will be contacted. The timing and method of any action to be taken will be discussed and agreed with the DO. This will cover communication with the worker, suspension, investigation and

possible strategy meetings. A decision will be taken by the DO about when to inform the worker and the Church will follow this advice.

- 28.10. Where the concern is considered a 'serious incident', the Deacons/Trustees Meeting should consider whether a report should be made to the Charity Commission.
29. Where a person wishes to raise a formal complaint about the actions or behaviour of a member or officer of the Church, they should raise them through the formal complaints procedures of the Methodist Church, or of the United Reformed Church where the complaint is about a Minister of that Church. A complaint should normally be addressed to the Superintendent Minister or equivalent in the United Reformed Church. If it is concerning the Superintendent Minister, it should be addressed to the District Chair or equivalent in the United Reformed Church. Information about the complaints procedure and contact information for the Superintendent Minister and District Chair will be posted with the Safeguarding Policy summary in the Church buildings and on its website.

These principles, policy and procedures were approved by the Deacons/Trustees of Trinity Methodist/United Reformed Church, Sutton on:

5 July 2023

Signed: Robert Stewart
(Secretary)

and considered and affirmed by the Church Meeting on:

15 October 2023

Signed: David Jones
(Secretary)