

October 2008

## **Cantley Methodist Church Safeguarding Policy**

**As the people of Cantley Methodist Church we seek to serve God's purpose and ensure no harm comes to any of his people. We want to safeguard all members of the church community, of all ages. It is the responsibility of each one of us to prevent the physical, sexual or emotional abuse, financial or spiritual abuse, or abuse by neglect of children, young people and vulnerable adults.**

The Safeguarding policy of Cantley Methodist Church will be reviewed annually by the Church Council.

## **Purposes**

The purposes of Cantley Methodist Church's Safeguarding policy are to ensure procedures are in place and people are clear about their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding and to promote the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults both in our care and using our premises. This policy is to be read in conjunction with the circuit and district's safeguarding policies and '**Safeguarding-a policy for good practice in the care of children and young people, 2003**'.

## **Part 1 Children and Young People**

### **1. Connexional Statement**

As the people of the Methodist Church we are concerned with the wholeness of each individual within God's purpose for everyone. We seek to safeguard all members of the church community, of all ages. It is the responsibility of each one of us to prevent the physical, sexual or emotional abuse and neglect of children and young people.

### **2. What is Abuse and Neglect?**

'Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.' **Working Together to Safeguard Children, HM Government, 2006.**

There are four categories of abuse: physical, emotional, sexual and neglect. Any child or young person under the age of eighteen can suffer abuse.

### **3. Clarification of terms**

Within this safeguarding policy all those termed 'workers' includes paid and voluntary positions, a 'child' is anyone who has not yet reached their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

### **4. Good practice guidelines:**

#### **a) For good practice in our Church we should ensure that:**

- all children and young people are treated with respect and dignity
- as far as possible, children's and youth workers or anyone else are not alone with a child where their activity cannot be seen; on church premises this may mean leaving doors open, or two groups working in the same room
- in a pastoral situation with a child, where privacy and confidentiality are important, another adult knows the interview is taking place, and with whom it is taking place

- the church premises, and access to and from them, are safe and well lit.

**All of us are responsible for observing the guidelines set out above. The following guidelines are designed for those appointing children's and youth workers, and for children's and youth workers.**

#### **b) Appointing children's and youth workers**

##### **Appointing**

The appointment of all workers is the overall responsibility of the Church Council. All workers with children and young people must be able to provide a satisfactory disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau. The Church Council is responsible for determining the level of disclosure, based on guidance provided in *Safeguarding*, 2003, p. 15. The Church Council will ensure all sections on Form A parts 1 & 2 (Appendix) are completed and the Minister/Safeguarding Coordinator will retain copies in a secure place.

##### **Re-applying for disclosures**

It is the Safeguarding Coordinator/Minister's role to ask workers to re-apply for a disclosure every five years or upon change of location, whichever is shorter.

##### **S.O. 010**

It is the Minister's responsibility to make sure all office holders or those carrying a duty or responsibility cannot do so if they have been cautioned or convicted for sexual offences against children. This includes people who have lone access to the church. When a person is appointed to an office or becomes a key holder the Minister will check the person has signed either Form C or Form D (Appendix).

At Cantley Methodist Church the Minister works through the Safeguarding Coordinator.

#### **c) Good practice guidelines for working with children and young people for workers:**

- at least two adults will lead any children's and young people's activities
- as far as possible, a worker will not be alone with a child or young person and never on a regular basis
- if a worker does find themselves on their own with children, eg. illness of another worker they must contact the Minister or person to whom they are

responsible to inform them and together make a risk assessment on what action to take, again this must not happen on a regular basis

- if privacy or confidentiality is required, another worker should be told, and doors left open
- all children should be treated with respect and without discrimination
- avoid games whose rules do not prevent the possibility of physical aggression, or inappropriate touching
- refrain from any sexually suggestive comments, ridiculing, or rejection of a child
- avoid inappropriate touching of any form; exercise caution if comforting an injured or distressed child
- manage children's behaviour without physical contact, or aggressive or intimidating behaviour
- avoid, where possible, giving lifts to individual children; if this is unavoidable, ask them to sit in the rear of the car
- follow Methodist Church guidance on camping and residential trips, residential settings and youth meetings at home (Appendix)

**amongst children's and youth workers:**

- workers should support one another in ensuring these guidelines are followed
- if a worker has a concern about the behaviour or suitability of a colleague, they must speak to the person to whom they are responsible or the Minister
- workers must be given a regular opportunity to meet and review the work they have done and to plan future work
- leaders should discuss with workers their role and any concerns they have about their work with children; this is supervision.

If there is an allegation that a person who works with children has behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child or has possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or behaved towards a child in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children the minister must report it to the local authority Designated Officer via the Local Safeguarding Children's Board.

## **5. What to do if you are concerned about a child**

A worker or member of the church community may be concerned about a child for a number of reasons:

- a child has made an allegation about abuse or neglect
- information has been received from a third party
- observation, for example, of changed behaviour or unexplained injury.

a) If a child makes an allegation about abuse or neglect:

- ✓ listen, try not to question and never push for information
- ✓ accept what is being said calmly

- ✓ reassure the child they were right to tell you
- ✓ let them know you will need to pass the information on, don't promise confidentiality, and let them know what you are going to do next
- ✓ record concerns as soon as possible, including names of child, gender, age, date of birth, names of parents/carers (Incident Report Form in Appendix)
- ✓ discuss your concerns with the person to whom you are responsible or the Minister
- ✓ make a decision together about what will happen next, record this
- ✓ keep a copy of the Incident Report form in a secure place and send a copy to the District Office, marked 'Safeguarding Referral'

b) There are visual, verbal and behavioural signs and indicators which could alert you to a child who may be being abused. These include:

- unexplained or untreated injuries or bruising
- sexually explicit language or actions
- a child describing an abusive act to you
- unexplained changes in behaviour
- a change observed over a long period of time
- a distrust of adults.

This list is not exclusive and the presence of one or more indicators is not necessarily proof that abuse is actually taking place. If you are concerned about a child:

- ✓ record concerns as soon as possible, including names of child, gender, age, date of birth, names of parents/carers (Incident Report Form in Appendix)
- ✓ discuss your concerns with the person to whom you are responsible or the Minister
- ✓ make a decision together about what will happen next, record this
- ✓ keep a copy of the Incident Report form in a secure place and send a copy to the District Office, marked 'Safeguarding Referral'.

**The safety of the child is paramount, sending the form should not delay any action.**

**If a child alleges sexual abuse or you believe s/he is at risk of significant harm you must make a referral to social services.**

To make a referral to social services, call this phone number **01302 737777**. It may also be the case that you need advice about what to do next in a situation; it is possible to phone social services for advice and consultation, the number for that is **01302 737777** and the out of hours number is **01302 737777**.

## **6. Training**

Safeguarding training is available through the District Safeguarding Group. From September 2008 'Creating Safer Space', the Connexional Training Framework for Safeguarding will be implemented in a three year programme during which all presbyters/deacons, lay employees, children's and youth workers and office holders will be required to undertake training.

## **7. Other groups and activities on church premises**

Groups hiring the church where children are present should be asked to sign Form E (Appendix). This is the responsibility of Cantley Methodist Church Council, through the agency of the Booking Secretary.

(Scouts and Guides will obtain disclosures through their own organisations.)

When any ecumenical (or other partnerships, agencies, colleges, mission events) activities take place on the church premises it is the Church Council's responsibility to ensure that workers have satisfactory CRB disclosures and all personnel see and understand the procedures in this policy.

## **Part 2 Vulnerable Adults**

### **Definitions**

The ecumenical group 'Churches' Forum for Safeguarding' defines a vulnerable person as one who may be at risk and in need as a result of:

- . Sensory or physical disability or impairment
- . A learning disability
- . A physical illness
- . A mental illness, chronic or otherwise including dementia or an addiction to alcohol or drugs
- . A reduction in physical, mental or emotional capacity or, who has for any reason become unable to protect him/herself from significant harm or exploitation.

An adult is a person who is aged 18 or over.

Many among our church community would be included in at least one of these categories, and we are all likely to be vulnerable ourselves at some stage in our lives.

## **Policy statement**

We, the people of Cantley Methodist Church commit ourselves to the safeguarding of vulnerable adults and ensuring their well-being in the life of this church.

We must be alert to the needs and interests of vulnerable adults in our contact with them not only on our church premises, but also in the wider community and in their own homes.

It is the responsibility of each one of us to prevent the physical, emotional, sexual, financial or spiritual abuse of vulnerable adults. The needs and wishes of the person who has possibly been abused must always be considered, but abuse must not be kept secret. When an incident of serious harm or a situation of serious ongoing risk is observed, suspected or reported, we should always talk with Social Services (01302 737777) and the Police as well as informing the person to whom we are responsible and the Minister.

We all, but particularly those with posts of responsibility and those who have regular face-to-face contact with vulnerable adults, need to be aware of the potential for misuse and abuse of power.

The Good Practice Guidelines for working with children and young people in Part 1 of this document, sections 4a and 4c (pages 2,3 and 4) are also relevant when considering the needs of vulnerable adults.

We undertake to exercise proper care in the appointment and selection of those who will work with vulnerable adults. Training and support for pastoral visitors (shepherds) are provided by the minister and the Pastoral Committee.

Office holders, those with responsibilities within the church and keyholders will be required to sign a declaration that they will adhere to the guidance contained in this policy statement (in addition to completing the relevant forms referred to in Part 1 of this document).

## **Definitions of Abuse**

Physical abuse - includes hitting, slapping, pushing, and forcing, inappropriate restraint, withholding or misuse of medication, squeezing, biting, kicking, suffocating, drowning or killing.

Emotional abuse - use of threats or fear to negate the person's wishes, including lack of privacy, denial of dignity, deprivation of social contact, or creating deliberate isolation, withholding of love or affection, threatening, humiliating, blaming, controlling, pressurising, coercion, deliberately ignoring.

Financial or legal abuse - wilful extortion or manipulation of a person's legal or civil rights, including misappropriation of monies or goods, abuse of influence to make gifts or change their will.

Neglect - a pattern of behaviour which seriously impairs another, including failure to intervene where there is risk of danger.

Sexual abuse - contact or non-contact behaviour that is abusive, including remarks, gestures, exposing to indecent material, indecent exposure, teasing, indecent assault, sexual intercourse, being forced to touch someone in a sexual manner.

Spiritual abuse - forcing people to accept religious ideas or values including the misuse of authority or leadership, leading to discipline, oppressive teaching, obtrusive healing, or deliverance ministries and extreme pastoral interference in personal matters which may reduce individual choice and responsibility. Vulnerable Adults may be more susceptible to suggestion. We need to take care when interpreting their wishes on spiritual matters.