St James Methodist/United Reformed Church

Statement of Safeguarding Principles 2025-26

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** 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
- safeguarding and protecting all children, young people and adults when they are vulnerable
- establishing 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 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

We will respond without delay to every safeguarding concern made 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.

Working with the District and Church Safeguarding Officers, 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.

CONTACTS

*Minister	Revd Peter Hughes	0151 364 0134
*Church Safeguarding Officer (Children)	Mrs Pam Alexander	07702 876678
*Church Safeguarding Officer (Vulnerable Adults)	Miss Margaret Dee	0151 428 3356
*Property and Lettings Manager	Mrs Wendy Doig	07867 795179
*Church Complaints Officer	Mrs Jayne McLaren	0785 906 2692

Only contact ONE of the above-named Church Officers

Circuit Safeguarding Officer (Children) ..	Mrs Lee Phillips	0151 345 4324
Circuit Safeguarding Officer (Vulnerable Adults)	Mrs Carole Trubshaw	07961653357
NWED/ Liverpool Regional Officer for Safeguarding ……	Ms Linda Locke lockel@methodistchurch.org.uk	07341 773728

LIVERPOOL CITY COUNCIL – LOCAL AUTHORITY DESIGNATED OFFICERS
To report a child at risk call **Children's Advice & Support Service** (CASS) on **0151 459 2606**
To report **an adult at risk** call **Adult Access** on **0151 459 2606**
In an emergency for children or vulnerable adults contact the police - dial 999
A full copy of St James' Safeguarding Policy can be obtained from any of the above* or the church website www.stjameswoolton.org

ST JAMES' CHURCH POLICY

Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy for St James' Methodist/United Reformed Church 2025-26

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 its users.
This policy was agreed at a Church Council held on February 17th 2026
The Methodist and United Reformed Churches, along with the whole Christian community, believe 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.

St James' Church is committed to the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and vulnerable adults and affirms that the needs of vulnerable individuals at risk are paramount.

St James' Church recognises that it has a particular care for all who are vulnerable whether as a result of disabilities or reduction in capacities or by their situation. It is recognised that this increased vulnerability may be temporary or permanent and may be visible or invisible, but that it does not diminish our humanity and seeks 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 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.

St James' Church recognises the serious issue of the abuse of children, young people and vulnerable adults and recognises that this may take the form of physical, emotional, sexual, financial, spiritual, discriminatory, 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.

St James' Church commits itself to:

1. **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.

2. **IMPLEMENT** the Methodist Church Safeguarding Policy~~;~~ government legislation and guidance and safe practice in the circuit and in the churches.

3. **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, young people and adults who may be vulnerable.

4. **AFFIRM** and gives thanks for those who work with children, young people and vulnerable adults and also acknowledge the shared responsibility of all of us for safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults who are on our premises.

Church Council
Legal responsibility for safeguarding rests with the members of the Church Council. The safeguarding officers should be members of the Church Council. 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.

St James' Church appoints
Miss Margaret Dee as Church Safeguarding Officer (Adults)
and
Mrs Pam Alexander as Church Safeguarding Officer (Children and Young People)
and supports them in their 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 along with the 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(s)
- promote appropriate routes for reporting of concerns
- identify and inform those who are required to attend safeguarding training and maintain records of attendance. Work with the Circuit Safeguarding Officer and District Safeguarding Officer 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.

a) Good Practice

We believe good practice means that:

i) All people are treated with respect and dignity.
ii) 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 will be made and kept noting date, time and place of visit.
iii) 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, young people and vulnerable adults and a written risk assessment report will be given annually to the Church Council. 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.
iv) Any church-organised transport of children, young people or vulnerable adults will be checked to ensure the vehicle is suitable and insured and that the driver and escort (where required) are appropriate.[1] A record to be kept in the church file for each driver/car.
v) 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.

[1] Appropriate: a clean driving licence and fully comprehensive business insurance as they are driving people on behalf of the Church, safely recruited and have a Methodist DBS.

vi) Promotion of safeguarding is recognised 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.

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[2]

Workers will be appointed after a satisfactory criminal records check and following the safer recruitment procedures of the Methodist Church, as appropriate.

- Each *voluntary* worker will be mentored by and accountable to the Group or Committee which manages their area of activity e.g. Steward Elders, Pastoral Team, Finance and Property Committee etc and is required to meet with their Group regularly.
- Each *paid* worker will have an identified supervisor who will meet with them at regular intervals. A record of these meetings will be agreed and signed and the record kept.
- *All* workers will be expected to undergo safeguarding training appropriate to their role within the first 6 months of appointment. Other relevant training needs (e.g. food hygiene, first aid, lifting and handling, etc) will be agreed and undertaken as necessary.

c) Pastoral visitors

Pastoral Visitors will be supported in their role with the provision of safeguarding training upon appointment. If they are undertaking tasks for which a criminal records check would be required, this will be undertaken prior to appointment.

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

A leaflet[3] outlining good practice and systems should be given to everyone who works with children, young people and vulnerable adults. The leaflet should be reviewed annually.

e) Ecumenical events

Where ecumenical events happen on St James church premises, safeguarding is the responsibility of the Church Council. Safeguarding risk assessments will be prepared in advance and distributed to all participants / denominations involved, so that requirements and accountability are clearly understood[4].

f) Events with church groups off the premises

Adequate staffing, a risk assessment and notification of the event will 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 the church council secretary Mrs Dorothy Peers.

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 other queries raised.

g) Other groups on church premises

Where the building is hired for outside use, the Property Manager should be informed. The Property Manager 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 the 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 David Goodwin. 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

[2] The wording of this section, originally taken from the Connexional and Circuit template policies, was amended by SSG in January 2025 to accurately reflect local best practice.

[3] What Everyone Needs to Know about Safeguarding at St James' Church, Woolton Updated Jan 2025.

[4] Amended for clarity as per note 2 above.

complaint has been made, in an attempt to resolve it. If the complaint is against the superintendent, it should be sent to the North West England Methodist District Chair, The Revd Dr James Tebbutt at tebbuttj.chair@nwedmethodists.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.

j) **Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Church Council. Next review date: February 2026

k) **Definition of key terms**

i) A child or young person is anyone who has not yet reached their eighteenth birthday.

ii) Vulnerable Adults: Any adult 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.

iii) Safeguarding: protecting children, young people or vulnerable adults from maltreatment; preventing impairment of their health and ensuring safe and effective care.

iv) 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 /specific adults who are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm, including neglect.

v) Abuse and neglect may occur in a family, a community or 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.

vi) Worker: anyone working with children, young people or vulnerable adults in the name of St James Church, whether in a paid or voluntary capacity.

Signed …… Chair of Church Council Dated: 17/2/2026

Rev Peter Hughes

Attached as an Appendix to the filed copy of this policy:
Connexional Update on Requests for Character References *(via Methodist Conference 2023)*

For full details see:
https://media.methodist.org.uk/media/documents/appendix-5b_responding_to-character_reference_requests_july_2023