



**The Methodist Church
Gibraltar**



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CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

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INTRODUCTION

The Gibraltar Methodist Church, as the people of God, is concerned with the welfare and wholeness of every individual within its community. We seek to safeguard all members of the church community of all ages. We recognise that it is the responsibility of each one of us to prevent physical, sexual or emotional abuse, harm and neglect of children and young people. It is our policy to promote the safety, enjoyment and comfort of children and young people attending any activity in, or organised by, the Gibraltar Methodist Church.

In order to facilitate the above all adults need to be aware how they should behave around children. Our behaviour and our attitudes, while being part of our witness and care, also contribute to the way children feel about themselves, react to and relate to the world outside the church doors.

While it is important that everyone should seek to model themselves on the character of Jesus and reflect His love, goodness and care, it is particularly important that we do this in our contact with children and young people. Within this context, it is not the place of anyone to be authoritarian or domineering, but always to act in accordance with the gentleness and humility which should be a sign of our Christian walk.

The procedures outlined below are also designed to protect all those involved in the work with children and young people from any abuse or embarrassment which could damage their standing within the church community or hinder their usefulness to the Kingdom of God.

PROCEDURES

1. In accordance with current Methodist requirements, all volunteers for any work involving children or young people will be required to fill in the appropriate safeguarding forms in use at any given time. New volunteers will be required to provide references and enhanced disclosures as required by Methodist Church Safeguarding policy. Anyone applying for a role in work involving children or young people must have been in fellowship with the church for a period of not less than one calendar year.
2. Every local preacher or church officer must also comply with the requirements of the Methodist Church Safeguarding policy, and where necessary, fill in the appropriate forms and submit themselves to any vetting which may be required.

3. It is also important to ensure that anyone with lone access to the premises has been suitably vetted and considered reliable. To this end all key holders to the premises are required to fill in the appropriate safeguarding form, and if necessary submit themselves to any vetting procedure which might be required. All key holders must further agree not to lend or attempt to produce copies of any keys, anyone failing to comply with this requirement, will be considered unsuitable as a key holder and if necessary we will change locks and exclude them from further key distribution.
4. Any child aged 16 and under attending any activity in the church or organised by the church, without their parent or guardian, must be asked for written permission of a parent or guardian. Such permission must specify whether it is for one specific occasion or an open ended permission which can cover multiple occasions and activities. This permission must be signed on the appropriate form issued by each department leader and it shall be the responsibility of each leader to ensure the veracity of the forms and maintain their records in order.
5. All volunteers within each department are expected to adopt positive attitudes towards all who attend and not exercise any kind of favouritism. Anyone in contact with children or young people should at all times encourage and reassure those in their care. This is best achieved by recognising achievements, dispelling fears and respecting the opinions of all who attend. It is always good practice to listen attentively and where appropriate sensitively to any doubts and fears. Sarcasm, shouting, public criticism, bribery or instilling fear are not acceptable behaviour under any circumstances.
6. It shall be the responsibility of the Church Council to ensure that each and every worker with children and young people have clearly defined roles and responsibilities so as to minimise any confusion. Every one involved in working with children and young people will be given a brief description of their role, in writing, and will be made aware of the church's policy and any changes which may from time to time arise.
7. It is the responsibility of all, especially those involved with children and young people to ensure their own protection, as well as the protection of those under their care by adhering to the following simple guidelines:
 - a. Ensure they are never left alone with a child or young person where there is little or no opportunity of the activity being observed. This can often be achieved by working in groups within a large room or by leaving doors open. Where a child or young person may want to speak

in private to someone ensure that this takes place, out of sound but within sight of others.

- b. Do not meet a child or young person on or off the church premises without a parent or another adult being present.
 - c. Never take a group off the church premises without at least two adults.
 - d. Where children or young persons have to be transported by car arrange, as far as possible, to have more than one passenger in the vehicle.
8. It is the responsibility of everyone to be vigilant and watch out for any signs of abuse. This vigilance is not restricted to what happens on church premises but to anything which might be happening to a child or young person, at home, at school or elsewhere. Every one involved in working with children or young people should make themselves aware of the various recognisable signs of abuse.

Children and young people within the church should be informed of and encouraged to use the 'Childline' telephone help facility in cases where they feel they need an independent person to talk to. To this end the 'Childline' telephone number must always be prominently displayed on Church premises.

Where any volunteer suspects any kind of abuse this must be reported immediately to the department head, who will report it to the Minister. In the case of any suspicion, or accusation of abuse within the context of church life, and if this should involve the department head, it should be reported to the Minister. Never promise confidentiality to anyone reporting abuse. All incidents of abuse, or suspected abuse, must be reported to the child or young person's parent, except in the case where the parent is the presumed perpetrator. All incidents must also be reported to the social services and/or police in accordance with the current guidelines set by the Methodist Church.

9. Any group using Church premises, but not under the discipline of the Church, who have contact with children or young persons must agree to abide by this policy and to show that they have adequate indemnity insurance in place.

CONCLUSION

While every effort has been made to cover all eventualities in this policy it is nonetheless recognised that situations may arise that necessitate changes to same. It is the responsibility of all persons who are bound by this policy to keep themselves updated with developments as they arise.