



Well Street United Church

Child Protection Policy

'Safeguarding Children and Young People'



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What are we saying?

1.0 Child Protection Statement

'Safeguarding Children and Young People'

- 1.1 As one of its major activities Well Street United Church seeks to serve the needs of children and young people, promoting holistic development.**
 - 1.1.1 In doing so, Well Street United Church takes seriously the welfare of all children and young people who come onto its premises or who are involved in its activities.**
 - 1.1.2 Well Street United Church aims to ensure that they are welcomed into a safe, caring, Christian environment with a happy and friendly atmosphere**
 - 1.1.3 Well Street United Church recognises that it is the responsibility of each one of its staff, paid and unpaid, to prevent (however this may arise) the neglect, physical, sexual or emotional abuse of children and young people and to report any abuse discovered or suspected**
 - 1.1.4 Well Street United Church recognises its responsibility to implement, maintain and regularly review procedures, which are designed to prevent and to be alert to such abuse.**
 - 1.1.5 Well Street United Church is committed to support, provide for resource and train those who work with children and young people and to ensure appropriate supervision.**
 - 1.1.6 Well Street United Church is committed to maintaining good links with the statutory child care authorities.**



Where has this come from?

2.0. Background

2.1 It is important that you know that Well Street United Church (WSUC) is committed to a Child Protection Policy which safeguards not only the children and young people, but those who work within these areas for the church, whether they are paid or voluntary. This policy is a living generic document that has been developed specifically for WSUC. It must be practical enough for people to feel that it really means something, and realistic so that we can supervise and ensure its implementation within the context of all the activities through the church. Every one of us working with children and young people must be prepared to read it, understand it and put it into practice. If we don't, we fail, and it could have serious consequences.

2.1.1. Each of the three denominations that WSUC is affiliated with (Methodist, Baptist and United Reform Church) provides good guidance on the subject of child protection. All of them encourage and expect a church to develop their own policy. They also go to great lengths to explain the Disclosure process, and to give advice on who should be subject to it.

2.1.2. In 1989 the Home Office issued the guidelines '*safe from harm*', stemming from the principles of the Children Act 1989. The guidelines were written to ensure good practice in work with children and young people and were particularly aimed at those working in voluntary organisations.

2.1.3. In 1997 the Police Act recommended the setting up of a new system of checks to help employers and voluntary organisations make safer decisions when recruiting workers. To facilitate this, the Criminal Records Bureau was set up in 2002.

2.1.4. Under this system the checks on workers are described as Disclosures. These have to be obtained from the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) through the auspices of a registered or umbrella body. For the benefit of a number of denominational churches the Churches Agency for Safeguarding has been set up as the umbrella body to deal with the Disclosures required for church workers with children and young people and some other categories of workers. This Disclosure process is described in greater detail on *page eight* of this document.

2.1.5. All of our denominations have done a great deal of work to implement a process for good practice, Disclosure and process for appeals, with the relevant pastoral support. WSUC has chosen to amalgamate various aspects of the policy and good practice offered by each of our denominations in formulating our own policy. However, for the purposes of dealing with Disclosure, or an allegation of abuse, we follow the procedures provided for within the Methodist church. We acknowledge much of the good work done by each of our denominations. Should you wish to, excellent in depth guidance and explanation can be found on the following websites:

www.methodist.org.uk

www.baptist.org.uk

www.urc.org.uk



What does this mean?

3.0. Well Street United Church Safeguarding policy

3.1. Every worker voluntary or paid as outlined in this policy will apply for CRB Enhanced Disclosure.

3.1.1. Disclosure certificates will be administered by the Well Street United Church (WSUC) office and administration. All Disclosure details will be dealt with in accordance with the policy and guidelines as determined by the Methodist Council. All matters will be dealt with in the strictest confidence.

3.1.2. Disclosure certificates will be current for a maximum of five years, after which the worker will be required to re-apply. WSUC will be responsible for ensuring the administration of this.

3.1.3. All administration costs associated with the Disclosure will be met by WSUC.

3.1.4. Any appeal against a Disclosure which indicates that a worker is 'unsuitable' for work in their office/appointment shall be dealt with in accordance with the procedures determined by the Methodist Council.

3.1.5. A worker that already has a Disclosure that has been approved by WSUC within the period of twelve months prior to taking up office/appointment shall be considered to be current. In this case, the period of five years shall be taken as from the Disclosure's first date of certification. If the Disclosure is from another organisation the worker will have to reapply for a WSUC Disclosure.

3.1.6. A worker will be required to read and acknowledge the Safeguarding Policy prior to taking up office/appointment.

3.1.7. A worker will be required to sign a declaration that they do not have any previous conviction or caution in relation to sexual offences against children, and that they consider themselves suitable to work with children or young people. Details will be held by WSUC office.

3.1.8. A worker will normally be able to work within an office/appointment during application, prior to the Disclosure being confirmed and once they have signed the declaration. They should not however, be left on their own unsupervised during this time.

3.1.9. Prior to taking up office/appointment the worker may be required to provide references and be interviewed regarding suitability.

3.2. Where an allegation of 'unsuitable behaviour' or abuse (physical, sexual, emotional, neglect) comes to the attention of a worker, they shall report it. The report should be made to one of the following:

- The Minister
- The Youth Minister



- A member of the Child Protection Group,
- A member of the Leadership Team.

They have a duty to take appropriate action and report to and take advice from other agencies (e.g Social Services, Police, Methodist District Council or the Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service - CCPAS).

3.2.1. Where a child or young person makes a disclosure to a worker, they have a duty to report it as above.

3.2.2. Any allegations of abuse or disclosures by a child or young person will be dealt with sensitively and where possible in restricted but not utmost confidence (see notes below).

3.2.3. WSUC will additionally appoint two suitable 'Link Persons' who have knowledge of and access to outside agencies. These people are available to give advice and to liaise with the agencies on matters arising. (Details in Appendix 'A')

3.2.4. WSUC will maintain a Child Protection Group who, supported by the Leadership Team is responsible for overseeing matters relating to WSUC' Safeguarding Policy.

3.2.5. WSUC will review the policy annually.

3.2.6. WSUC will make the policy available to the church, and place it in the public domain

Notes:

- Disclosure is only a part of considering whether a person is suitable for an office/appointment to work with children or young persons. It is actually only good for the specific criteria and at the time requested. WSUC has enhanced our policy to reflect this and to put into place real safeguards for our children, young people and the workers of the church.
- Workers should be fully informed as to the WSUC Safeguarding Policy and guidelines prior to working with young people. There is some discretion with those working on an ad hoc basis. However, WSUC undertakes to ensure that its workers are well informed on all aspects, and that the applications are implemented and maintained.
- Any person who is uncertain as to whether they are suitable to work with children or young people, or as to which of the sexual offences apply to the policy, can make enquiries through the Child Protection Group, Minister, Youth Minister or Leadership Team. Further details are available through the websites whose details are on page 4 of this document. Enquiries will be treated in the strictest confidence.
- Allegations of abuse or sexual assault are difficult to deal with. The first responsibility for any worker is to report it, and then maintain confidentiality.



- Do not investigate the allegation yourself, or confront the accused person.
- Where a disclosure is made by a young person to any worker, you are not able to promise them that you will maintain confidentiality and not tell anyone. It is vital that they are given a lot of support from someone that they can really trust. There are many occasions when abuse occurs and the person carrying out the abuse has been or become close to them.
- Early 'first report' disclosures are very important. You should make some notes of what has been said to you, where and when at the earliest opportunity and then report it. **Do not delay.** Do not question them to obtain detail. Sign your notes. Try to ensure that another adult is nearby for your benefit.
- It is important that some action is taken. You should have confidence that those that you report it to will take action. If in doubt, you are able to approach other agencies yourself (i.e. Social Services, police).
- This policy and its guidelines will be available to members of WSUC and public through the Church Office, website and displayed in the church.

There are further practical guidelines available in section 6

Who does this apply to?

4.0. Offices, Duties and Responsibilities

4.1. Following Methodist Conference policy, Well Street United Church states:

'no person who has been convicted of or has received a formal caution from the police concerning sexual offences against children shall be appointed to any office, post or responsibility or engaged under any contract for the following categories-'

1. Any **duty or responsibility** exercised on behalf of the church which involves:
 - a. Lone access to church premises
 - b. Face to face contact with children and young people without the presence of another adult
 - c. Carrying out duties off church premises in circumstances in which the person concerned may be seen as a representative of the Church
2. Any office within the following categories:

4.1.2 Representational (membership of the):

Leadership Team Circuit Meeting Methodist & URC District
Synod

Methodist Council Methodist Conference

4.1.3 Liturgical or pastoral



Well Street United Church, Buckingham

Ministers
Team/Elders

Local Preachers

Leadership

Worship Leaders

Pastoral Co-ordinators, links and action groups

Housegroup Leaders

Communion Stewards

Alpha group leaders

Workers with children and young people
ministry

People involved in prayer

Notes:

- A full list of the offences covered within this exclusion can be found on the Methodist Church website at www.methodist.org.uk
- Any person subject to the above will be unable to take on the duty or responsibility specified. Sensitive, pastoral support will be given to help the person to discover in what other ways they may be able to share in the life of the church. However, such a person may pose a continuing risk to children.
- Any appeal against the policy in the above area shall be brought to the notice of the Leadership Team. Generally where authorisation for a role/responsibility falls within the above criteria, and a person has the conviction or caution outlined, there will be minimal scope for appointment.

What is Disclosure?

5.0. Disclosure

5.1. All persons working with infants, children or young people on a regular basis will be required to undergo police checks for suitability. This is known as a CRB Disclosure. There are two levels of Disclosure, Enhanced and Standard. The Disclosure procedure is handled through an ecumenical body (representing a number of denominations), the Churches Agency for Safeguarding.

5.1.1. Enhanced Disclosures

Well Street United Church requires disclosure of all those who have regular contact with infants, children and young people and whose work in the church might involve '*regularly caring for, training, supervising or being in sole charge*'. This includes:

- ✚ Children's and youth workers
- ✚ Junior Church workers and Sunday School teachers
- ✚ Leaders of weekday groups
- ✚ Leaders of holiday clubs and residential weekends
- ✚ Workers with under 5's
- ✚ Ministers and Elders/Leadership Team
- ✚ Lay workers
- ✚ Key holders



Notes:

- Occasional helpers, who must **never** be left in charge or alone with a child, one-off helpers and visitors must be informed of WSUC' Safeguarding policy and may be asked to sign a form or letter saying they are aware of it. They will not be required to apply for Disclosure.
- Disclosure will normally last for five years.
- Any person wishing to work with young people or children must hold a Disclosure from WSUC. Disclosures from other organisations will not be accepted.
- Details of appeal against Disclosure may be found at www.methodist.org.uk

How does it all work?

6.0. Practical Guidelines

6.1. These guidelines are meant to support you and inform you of best practice to ensure that the 'Safeguarding Children and Young People' is implemented in a manner that restricts opportunity for misunderstanding. Actual instances of abuse may be very small. However, we should all recognize the importance of getting this right. These guidelines are not legally binding, and in some circumstances may be impractical. It is sensible to bear in mind that we ought to be aware of them and implement them wherever possible. It is not about paying lip service to them, or allowing ourselves to be unaware of them.

Plan the work of the organisation so as to minimize situations where the abuse (or allegations) may occur. For instance:

- Arrange that as far as possible, an adult is not left alone with a child or young person where there is little or no likelihood of the activity being observed by others. Work groups in the same large room, or an adjoining one with the door open.
- Ensure that all workers with children and young people, pastoral visitors and others do not meet a child or young person off church premises without a parent or other adult being present.
- Always have at least two adults present with a group, particularly when it's the only activity taking place on the church premises. Every adult engaged in an activity must be aware that they have a responsibility to each other in supporting them regarding the implementation of this policy.
- Think about the use of premises, for example, do not expect children or young people to have to walk along a dark unsupervised path in order to enter your activity or for a meeting place.
- Where children and young people have to be transported by car or minibus arrange, as far as possible, to have more than one passenger in the vehicle. Where this is not possible, the remaining passenger should sit in a rear seat.
- Avoid working alone with an unknown group or individual unless someone is within calling distance.



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- Where lone working is unavoidable and is agreed by the Leadership Team or other responsible supervising person, ensure that the lone worker indicates his/her movements, particularly if leaving the normal premises. This information would include details about the individual, place being visited and expected timetable.
- It is good practice to keep a record of activities and which children or young people attended.
- Ensure that children leaving premises do so only in the presence of adults known to have permission to do so. If you are unsure – check!
- Assess the risks based on
 - venue and environment
 - time of day or night
 - type of work/activity being undertaken
 - how well the children and young people are known (new or established group, unpredictable behaviour)
 - gender of children and young people and of the worker
- Other examples include:
 - allowing others to see into the room (keep doors and/or curtains open)
 - linking clear supervision and support to the worker
 - using parents/church members on a rota to 'sit in' on the activity
 - having activities take place on the ground floor where possible
 - barring access to unwanted visitors
 - having other groups meeting on the premise at the same time
 - encouraging parents to deliver or collect their children
 - challenging inappropriate behaviour among children or young people
- Encourage children and young people that there are independent people that they can talk with. Have those details available.
- Liaise regularly with your supervisor or link Leadership Team/Elder member.
- Attend training when it is offered.
- Be clear about the role that you are called to work within. If in doubt – **ask**.
- Spend some time looking at the websites of each of the denominations. They contain some excellent guidance on how to recognize signs of abuse, and how to be a 'caring church'.
- Above all, **take your responsibility to prevent abuse seriously**.

Appropriate adult/child/young person ratios:

The ratios given below are a minimum and may need to be increased for groups with special needs. Sometimes an extra pair of willing hands is invaluable!

Indoor activities.



The ratios **required** under the Children's Act are:

0 to 2 years	1 member of staff to three children
2 to 3 years	1 member of staff to four children
3 to 7 years	1 member of staff to eight children

8 years and over:

The Children's Act **specifies** the ratio for the under eight's. The **recommended** ratios for children over eight and young people are:

Up to twenty children/young people, two adults (preferably one of each gender)

One additional adult for every one to ten extra children/young people

e.g.	20 children = 1 male and 1 female adult (at least)
	21 children = 1 male and 1 female plus one extra adult
	30 children = 1 male and 1 female plus one extra adult
	31 children = 1 male and 1 female plus two extra adults

Outdoor activities.

0 to 2 years	1 member of staff to three children
2 to 3 years	1 member of staff to four children
3 to 7 years	1 member of staff to six children
8 to 13 years	2 member of staff up to fifteen young people (preferably one each gender)
13 and over	2 adults up to twenty young people (preferably one of each gender)

AND

One additional adult for every 1 to ten extra young people

7.0. Confidentiality

7.1. WSUC recognises that the area of child abuse is one in which it is inevitable that the normal rules applying to confidentiality should be waived in the best interests of an abused child or young person. However, a balance must be obtained between those who have a need to know the facts of a situation as they are perceived and those who wish to know to satisfy their curiosity. It is vital to maintain an environment of trust and respect, avoiding a situation of half-truths and rumour.

7.1.1. If a person begins to indicate that they have been abused, are perpetrating abuse, or are aware of abuse taking place it must be explained immediately that absolute confidentiality cannot be maintained, and that there are some secrets that must be shared.

Do not attempt to deal with it alone.



Well Street United Church, Buckingham

[Registration form for voluntary workers with children or young people](#)

Full name:
(Include former name if applicable)

Current Address:

Postcode

Telephone details:
Day
Evening

How long have you lived at the above address?
If less than twelve months please give the following information:

Previous address:

How long there?

Church attended

Name of Minister

Please give details of previous experience in dealing with children or young people:

[Registration form for voluntary workers with children or young people \(Contd.\)](#)



Please give details of any relevant qualification or appropriate training:

Are you prepared to undertake training offered by WSUC? Yes/No
(If you decline to undertake training WSUC will be entitled to withdraw your
authority to work with children or young people).

Reference:

Please give the name address, telephone number and position or relationship
of someone who knows you well.

(Following up a reference will be at the discretion of WSUC).



Declaration.

Name:

Office, duty or responsibility

Your name has been put forward for the position stated above. Having regard to the Safeguarding Policy of Well Street United and its implementation, you are asked to sign the declaration below.

I am aware of the Well Street United Church policy to safeguard the welfare of children and young people. I have read the policy and its guidelines and agree to implement them. I know of no reason why I cannot fulfil the office, duty or responsibility named above.

I have not been convicted of or received a formal caution from the police concerning sexual offences against children.

Signed:

Date:

Signed:

Date:

WSUC (print name)



Well Street United Church, Buckingham

'Appendix 'A'

Useful contact details:

Minister Steve Fisher 01280-817560/813862(home)

Youth Pastor Nick Francis 01280-817560
Mob: 07735 427811

Link People Margaret Gateley

Child Protection Group Nick Francis/Margaret Gateley/Caroline George & Margaret Roderick

Leadership/Eldership Team Steve Fisher/Nick Francis/Pete Downing
Erik Undritz/Ian Thornton/Keith Holmes
Margaret Gateley/Sylvia Dellenty/Jane

Butcher

Childline: 0800-1111
(Free phone especially for children)
Freepost 1111
London N1 0BR

Childs Legal Centre 01206-873820
(Useful advice for anyone enquiring about law and policy)

Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service 01322 667207
Independent Christian charity providing professional advice, support, training and resources in all areas of safeguarding children and for those affected by abuse.

EPOCH - End Physical Punishment of Children 020 7700-0627
(Offers advice and information)

Kidscape 020 7730- 3300
152 Buckingham Palace Road
London
SW1 9TR

NSPCC 0800-800500
(Child protection helpline)
42 Curtain Road
London
EC2A 3NH

PAIN – Parents Against Injustice 01279-656564

(A group of parents who feel they have suffered unjustly from allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse)