

# **Beeston Methodist Church**

## **Guidelines on safeguarding the welfare of children and Young People**

*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 of children, young people and vulnerable adults.*

### **Guidelines for those who work with children and young people.**

Children and young people should always be treated with respect. Those under the age of 16 are defined as a child and those between the age of 16 and 18 are defined as a young person. Workers with children and young people must have completed the "Creating Safer Space" training and the appropriate forms as designated by the Beeston Methodist Church Safeguarding Officer.

Although the number of people who actively seek to harm children is small, churches can reduce the opportunities for abuse in various ways:

- 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. This may mean groups working within the same room or working in an adjoining room with the door left open. If an adult is likely to be alone with a child or young person they must have a current DBS check.
- Ensure that all workers with children and young people do not arrange to 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 preferably one male and one female. These adults should not be related to or in a relationship with each other. This is particularly important when it is the only activity taking place on church premises. Correct adult:Child ratios must be maintained at all times (0-2yrs 1:3, 2-3yrs 1:4, 4-8yrs 1:6, 9-12yrs 1:8, 13-18yrs 1:10).
- Where lone working is unavoidable and has been agreed by the safeguarding officer, ensure that the lone worker indicates their movements, particularly if leaving the normal premises. This information should include details about the group or individual, place being visited and expected timetable.
- Think about the use of premises, for example, do not expect children or young people to have to walk along a dark path in order to enter the premises.
- Where children or 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 with an unknown group unless someone is within calling distance.
- Ensure any actions cannot be misinterpreted by someone else. Do not put anyone, including yourself, in a vulnerable or compromising situation. Always challenge unacceptable behaviour.
- When photographing children and young people you must first obtain the permission of the child or young person and their parent or guardian. Permission must be obtained for the use of the photograph in publications such as newsletters or on websites or social media. For more information refer to guidelines on photography.

- When using email, it is good practice to email to a group of children or young people including their parents and local safeguarding rep using the blind (BCC) option. When using text messaging, it is good practice to text to a group of children or young people including their parents and local safeguarding rep in the group. For more information refer to guidelines on email and text messaging.
- Workers should not be friends of children or young people on social media. Any groups on social media should be by invitation and include the parents or guardians of the children and young people and the local safeguarding rep. For more information refer to guidelines on Internet and social Media.
- Assess the risks based on the knowledge of the children and young people involved and take into account the following factors;
  - 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 the workers
- Activities that take place away from the normal premises should be risk assessed. Risk assessments should be discussed with the local safeguarding rep.
- Other examples of safer practice would include;
  - Allowing others to see into the room (keep doors open, leave curtains open, glass panel in doors)
  - Inviting parents or church members on a rota to 'sit in' on the activity, make the drinks or staff the snack bar
  - Barring access to unwanted visitors
  - Having other appropriate groups meeting on the premises at the same time
  - Encouraging parents to deliver and collect their children

## **What to do if...**

### **You have concerns about possible abuse, including allegations:**

1. In an emergency, respond immediately. Consult BMC safeguarding officer and decide together whether to seek advice or to make a referral.
2. Keep a record of what happened, your concerns and your actions.

### **A child or young person wishes to disclose that they have been abused:**

1. Keep listening. Do not question or investigate.
2. Do not promise confidentiality; tell them we need to share this.
3. Assure them they are not to blame.
4. Tell them what you are going to do and that they will be told what happens.
5. Make careful notes of what is said, record dates, times, events and when you are told.
6. Report to BMC Safeguarding officer email [safeguarding@beestonmethodist.church](mailto:safeguarding@beestonmethodist.church)
7. Only tell those who need to know.