



# The City of Edinburgh Methodist Church

<http://edinburghmethodist.com/>

## Our commitment

- We believe that The City of Edinburgh Methodist Church should be a caring, safe and welcoming place for all people.
- We will work together to try to ensure that children, and others who may be vulnerable, are not put at risk of harm.
- We will protect anyone whom we believe could be at risk from abuse/harm and will work with relevant agencies to do this.
- Towards this we are committed to pursuing best practice.

## **The City of Edinburgh Methodist Church Safeguarding Policy** (Please note that whenever "children" are mentioned it also includes young people and vulnerable adults.)

### **1. Introduction**

This document sets out the steps we will take to try to ensure that children are kept safe from abuse. In general, the steps apply to children who are under the age of 18 years. However, in some circumstances we will act to protect a person who is 18 or over, where we believe that s/he is in need of protection.

Where we consider that a child could be at risk from abuse (i.e. we have a concern) we will always be guided by the principle – that the needs of the child are the paramount concern.

### **2. Those who have responsibility for safeguarding children**

#### *a) The Ministers in pastoral charge and the Church Council*

Ultimate responsibility for making sure that we adhere to all relevant Methodist Church safeguarding policy rests with the Ministers in pastoral charge and the Church Council.

#### *b) Local Church Safeguarding Officer*

Our Local Church Safeguarding Officer [**insert name**], co-ordinates and implements our safeguarding policy on behalf of the Minister and the Church Council.

#### *c) Those who work with children*

People in the church who work with children work to a Code of Good Practice (Appendix 1 - a copy of which is available from our Local Church Safeguarding Officer). Where they believe that a child could be at risk of abuse, they are expected to report their concerns to our Local Church Safeguarding Officer.

#### *d) The wider church community*

We believe that all our members (even those who do not work directly with children or hold an office in the church) have a responsibility to work together to build a safe and caring church community.

### **3. What we mean by ‘safeguarding’ and ‘abuse’**

The Methodist Church believes that safeguarding is about preventing the abuse of children. It does this by taking:

- all reasonable steps to ensure that risks of harm to children and other vulnerable persons are minimised; and
- appropriate actions to address concerns about the welfare of a child or other vulnerable person, working to agreed policies and procedures<sup>1</sup>.

The HMSO – National Commission of Inquiry into the prevention of Child Abuse (1996) gives the following definition of abuse:

“Child abuse consists of anything which individuals, institutions, or processes do or fail to do which directly or indirectly harms children or damages their prospects of safe and healthy development into adulthood.”

### **4. Types of abuse**

Appendix 2 summarises the different types of abuse and some possible signs and indicators which may suggest that a child could be at risk from abuse.

#### **NOTE**

**It is never the responsibility of any member of this church community to determine the nature or extent of abuse being experienced by a child. The responsibility for determining this always rests with Social Work services who work in partnership with other agencies such as the Police.**

### **5. What we mean by a concern**

The Scottish Government defines a ‘concern’ as a suspicion or belief that a child or young person may be in need of help or protection<sup>2</sup>. Given that we must never attempt to undertake an investigation into any child protection concern we will rarely know for certain if a child has experienced abuse.

### **6. How concerns may come to light in our church community**

We may become concerned that a child could be at risk from abuse because (for example):

- we observe something about the child (for example bruising that is on a part of the body where bruises should not occur or worrying aspects of behaviour);
- information shared with us by a child suggests that s/he could be at risk of abuse by an adult;
- a parent/carer tells a member of our church community that they are finding it hard to care for their child/children;
- an allegation is made about someone in our church placing a child at risk of harm;
- an adult tells a member of our church community that they were abused as a child (‘historical abuse’).

<sup>1</sup> This definition of ‘safeguarding’ is adapted from *Safeguarding Children in Education* (Department for Education and Skills, 2004).

<sup>2</sup> Refer to *Protecting Children and Young People: Framework for Standards* (Scottish Executive, 2004)

## **7. What we will do if a child adult discloses abuse by someone**

- Allow the child to speak without interruption, accept what is said, but DO NOT investigate.
- Alleviate feelings of guilt and isolation, while passing no judgement.
- Advise that you will try to offer support, but that you MUST pass the information on.
- The group leader is to report immediately to the Minister or Safeguarding Officers.
- Write down notes, dates, times, facts, observations, verbatim speech, if possible, as soon as is reasonably practicable after the incident/disclosure has occurred.
- Check with the appropriate person within 24 hours to ensure action is taken.

## **8. What we will do if we have a concern that a child is at risk from abuse**

We will:

- treat all concerns seriously and refer them – we will never dismiss a concern that a child could be at risk from abuse;
- follow the Scotland District's guidelines on how to manage an allegation made by a child;
- refer concerns to relevant people within our church – this means the Local Church Safeguarding Officer, the Minister in pastoral charge and the Connexional Safeguarding Advisor, or the Circuit Superintendent when the Minister is implicated;
- when necessary refer concerns to relevant people outwith the church – in the first instance this means Social Work services;
- make sure that all those who are the subject of a concern, and relevant members of the church community, are appropriately supported in a way that will not compromise the wider child protection process;
- an incident report form is required to be completed; this is available on the Methodist Church website:  
**<http://edinburghmethodist.com/safeguarding/incident-form>**
- written record of the concern and, where required, share this record with appropriate external agencies, for example Social Work, (see below for more information). An incident

## **9. Contacting the child protection agencies**

When a child protection concern arises we will usually speak to the Social Work area which covers the area where the child/young person (who is the subject of the concern) resides.

**The Emergency Social Work Number is 0800 731 6969, and the following link will take you to the appropriate web page:**

**[http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/internet/Social\\_care/Carers\\_Introduction\\_to\\_services/CEC\\_emergency\\_social\\_services](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/internet/Social_care/Carers_Introduction_to_services/CEC_emergency_social_services)**

Social Work services are responsible for processing all child protection concerns. Sometimes a referral to Social Work from an organisation such as a church will not be taken any further whilst at other times a referral could lead to a full child protection investigation which may involve the Police. The management of child protection concerns by Social Work requires considerable skills and knowledge. This church seeks to ensure that it will not take any action which will compromise the work of external child protection professionals.

## **10. Liaising with parents/carers**

Before speaking to a child's parents/carers the Minister will usually ask Social Work if it is appropriate for the church to discuss the concern(s) with them.

We know that this is a very sensitive issue but our practice in this aspect of child protection is informed by Scotland's national child protection guidance.

Approved Forms:

- Anyone wishing to work with children will be required to complete a Churches Agency for Safeguarding application and necessary checks will be made.
- All new workers (paid and volunteer) will require to provide 2 referees. This should not be the Minister.
- Volunteers will serve a probationary period (normally 6 months).
- Church Council will have the final responsibility for the appointment of workers.
- Renewal of disclosure will take place every 5 years for approval to continue.

Transport and out-of-church activities:

- Where children have to be transported by car/minibus, as far, as is possible there should be more than one passenger in the vehicle.
- The last/only child should be placed in the back seat. In an emergency every effort will be made to get parental consent before transporting.
- All youth trips will require parental consent. Parental consent forms will be issued to all organisations and stated guidelines will be adhered to.
- Arrangements for such trips must be submitted and approved by a Safeguarding Officer.
- Emergency procedure folders will be distributed for all overnight trips.
- Parental consent will be sought at the start of each session for ad hoc outings.
- It is possible that youth/junior church members may appear in photograph or other media that will be used for publicity purposes (church magazine, newsletter, local newspaper, church website, etc.).
- Care must be taken to ensure parental permission has been obtained before using these in whatever form. This will be done in the annual consent form.

### **A code of good practice for adults working with young people.**

#### YOU MUST:

- Treat everyone with respect and be inclusive
- Provide an example you wish others to follow
- Plan activities which involve more than one person being present, or at least which are within sight or hearing of others
- Respect a young person's right to personal privacy
- Have separate sleeping accommodation for leaders and children
- Provide access for children to talk to others about concerns they may have
- Avoid physical horseplay such as wrestling or tickling, etc.
- If physical restraint is required it should involve the absolute minimum force necessary and is only permissible when you are certain that a child is in imminent risk of endangering themselves, yourself, others, or property. Where possible summon another adult to witness the situation and give you support. Any incident should be recorded.
- Be aware in a "toilet situation" of who else is in the toilet, especially in the case of a vulnerable adult, who could be at risk from the accusations of inappropriate behaviour
- Remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well-intentioned
- Recognise that special caution is required even in sensitive moments of counselling, such as when dealing with bullying, bereavement or abuse.

#### YOU MUST NOT!!

- Permit abusive youth peer activities(e.g. initiation ceremonies, ridicule, bullying)
- Play physical contact games with children
- Have any inappropriate physical or verbal contact with others
- Jump to conclusions about others without checking facts
- Allow yourself to be drawn into inappropriate attention seeking behaviour such as tantrums or crushes
- Exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues
- Show favouritism to any individual
- Make suggestive remarks or gestures
- Rely on your good name to protect you
- Believe 'it could never happen to me'.

**THE CITY OF EDINBURGH METHODIST CHURCH**

**Additional Information for Safeguarding Policy**

(Adapted from the Edinburgh and Lothian's Inter-agency Child Protection Policy)

**CATEGORIES & DEFINITIONS OF CHILD ABUSE**

**Definitions**

1. A 'child' is any person under the age of 18; 'children' are to be construed accordingly. Particular care shall be afforded to a child under the age of 16.
2. A 'vulnerable adult' is a person aged 18 or over whose ability to protect him- or herself from neglect, abuse, or violence, is significantly impaired on account of disability, illness, or otherwise.

**Application**

This policy shall apply to all who come into direct contact with children and vulnerable adults, whether as part of their work or through volunteering activities.

**ABUSE**

Five categories are used to classify abuse.

**1. PHYSICAL ABUSE**

This occurs when children are physically hurt by someone else either deliberately or where the injury is preventable.

It includes hitting, smacking with force, shaking, burning, biting, giving a child poisonous substances or drugs or attempted drowning or smothering.

**Parental Chastisement**

Parents can chastise their children as long as they use reasonable force. They cannot hit a child on the head, use an implement or shake a child.

**Fabricated or Induced Illness Syndrome.**

This form of physical abuse is where an adult induces or feigns the symptoms of an illness in a child that results in unnecessary medical intervention.

## **2. SEXUAL ABUSE**

This occurs when an adult or older young person uses a child in a way which gives that person sexual gratification and meets the person's own sexual needs. The majority of sexual abuse takes place with people known to the child and it is important to remember this with the current focus on sex offenders in the community.

It includes sexual intercourse, sodomy, fondling, rape and incest. It also includes showing children pornographic material or taking sexually explicit pictures of children. Using images of children to create pornographic material on the Internet is a new phenomenon.

Sexual abuse also can take place when one child/ young person abuses another to gain sexual gratification or to meet their sexual needs. In these circumstances it is important to consider each of the children being in need of protection,

### **New Technology**

The rise in use of the internet and other technologies has increased the availability of pornography. It can also make children using this technology for social networking (including chat rooms) more vulnerable to abuse.

## **3. EMOTIONAL ABUSE**

This occurs when a child is persistently exposed to a lack of love and affection. It also occurs when a child is continually criticised whatever she/he tries to do or achieve. A child may also be subjected to threats or ridicule leading to the child being withdrawn and feeling unable to take part in activities.

Hearing or seeing the abuse of another person, including domestic abuse, can also be a form of emotional abuse.

Serious bullying may also be a form of emotional abuse

## **4. PHYSICAL NEGLECT/ EMOTIONAL NEGLECT**

This occurs where adults fail to meet the basic needs of a child for food, shelter and clothing. It can include children who are consistently left without adult supervision. A child may be emotionally neglected by an adult refusing to give the child affection and attention. Failure to ensure adequate supervision, including the use inappropriate caregivers, is also a form of neglect.

The difference between neglect and a very low standard of care is not always easy to identify. Where a parent is attempting to provide a satisfactory level of care but is not achieving it either because of their poverty or lack of parenting skills, then efforts would be made first of all to try to provide the parent with extra support. If, however, the child's development and care remain seriously deficient then other measures may be needed to protect the child.

Neglect may occur during pregnancy as the result of maternal substance abuse.

## **5. FAILURE TO THRIVE**

This is where a child fails significantly to reach normal developmental or growth milestones in height, weight etc with no genetic or medical reason for this lack of growth or development. It requires medical input to identify this kind of abuse.

### **THE FOLLOWING CAN APPLY TO ALL CATEGORIES OF ABUSE**

#### **CHILDREN LIVING IN FAMILIES WITH PROBLEM SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

*Substance use in itself may not have a negative impact on a parent's capacity. ...It is when substance use adversely affects life-style, social behaviour and capacity to discharge their parental responsibilities that it becomes a matter for concern because it adversely affects the quality of care that their child receives and poses a risk to health and development*

'Protecting Children Living in Families with Problem Substance Abuse Guidelines for Agencies in Edinburgh and The Lothian's

### **SIGNS OF ABUSE**

**Some signs which may indicate that a child is being abused**

#### **PHYSICAL ABUSE Improbable excuses for injuries (from child or parent/carer)**

- Unexplained injuries or burn
- Bite marks
- Untreated injuries
- Excessive physical punishment

**But need to consider other possible reasons for injury ...**

- Genuine accidental injuries
- Skin disorder
- Blood disorder
- Arms and legs covered in hot weather
- Frightened round parent/carer
- Aggression
- Crying or putting up a fight when it's time to go home
- Brittle bones
- Mongolian Blue Spot

#### **PHYSICAL NEGLECT**

- Constant hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Constant tiredness
- Poor state of clothing
- Unexplained absences—frequent lateness
- Untreated medical problems
- Low self esteem/Poor peer relationships
- Stealing / taking food etc from others

**But need to consider other possible reasons...**

- Parental poverty
- Parental illness
- Poor housing

**EMOTIONAL ABUSE**

- Low self esteem
- Indiscriminate affection
- Clinginess
- Sudden speech disorder
- Significant decline in concentration
- Neurotic behaviour—rocking, head-banging
- Becoming 'parental' towards other children
- Delayed physical or emotional development
- Continuing to have regular temper tantrums
- Compulsive stealing
- Extreme passivity/aggression

**But need to consider other possible reasons...**

- Parental separation
- Serious illness of someone in the family
- Death of a significant adult or child in the family/ community

**SEXUAL ABUSE**

**Some changes in behaviour.**

- Lack of trust in adults
- Fear of a particular individual.
- Withdrawal
- Sleep disturbances.
- Reluctance or refusal to take part in physical activity or to change clothes for games.
- Low self-esteem
- Display of sexual knowledge or curiosity beyond child's years.
- Unusual interest in other people's genitals
- Fear of bathrooms or closed doors
- Sexual drawings
- Problems with peer relationships
- Over sexualised behaviours.
- Stealing
- Compulsive masturbation

**Some physical/ medical signs**

- Sleeplessness, nightmares, fear of the dark
- Bruises, scratch marks, bites.  
Eating disorder
- Difficulty in walking or sitting
- Pain, itching bleeding or bruising round genital area
- Soiling or wetting in previously continent children

**But need to consider other possible reasons...**

- Other, non-abusive events e.g. birth of sibling
- Urinary tract infection
- Consensual sex in older teenagers

**INTERACTION WITH CHILDREN**

Establishments should provide an environment in which there are caring and safe relationships between adults and children .

**Diversity**

Children and young people have a wide variety of needs and characteristics that may require special consideration.

These include age, race, ethnicity, religion, culture, sexual orientation, ability and social difference. It is vitally important that the diverse needs of children and young people are explicitly considered when making decisions regarding their care and protection.

Where disability or sexual orientation is a factor or for children from black and minority ethnic groups, there can be additional vulnerability that requires particular considerations. It is crucial that such considerations are made and recorded.

All communication with children and/or families must be appropriate to their level of understanding.

March 2010



**THE CITY OF  
EDINBURGH  
METHODIST**

**Individual Visit Permission Slip**

Part 'A' (To be completed by Leader)

**Church Group: Breakout**

**Leader in Charge:**

Part 'B' (To be completed by the parent/carer)

**Full Name of Child: .....**

**Date of Birth: .....**

**Details of any conditions requiring treatment, including medication, or any disability which may affect this child's participation in this activity.**

.....  
.....

**Medication which may be required during the activity:**

.....

Part 'C'

**Venue for Activity: Lyceum Theatre**

**Date and Time of Activity: Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2009**

**Purpose of Activity: Theatre Trip**

Permission

**I do/do not give my permission for my child to attend the above named activity.**

**Signed:** .....Parent/Carer

**Print Name:** .....

**Emergency Contact Number:** .....

**Alternative Contact Number:** .....

**Date:** .....

**Leader :**.....( **Leader in Charge or Group Leader**)

**Print Name:**.....

**Date:** .....

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**Contact Details for Leader in Charge of Trip:**



The City of Edinburgh Methodist Church

Annual Permission Slip

Part 'A' (To be completed by Leader)

Church Group: **Breakout**

Leader in Charge: **Vickie Davitt**

Part 'B' (To be completed by the parent/carer)

Full Name of Child: .....

Date of Birth: .....

Details of any conditions requiring treatment, including medication, or any disability which may affect this child's participation in this activity.

.....  
.....  
.....

Medication which may be required during the activity:

.....

Part 'C'

Venue for Activity: The **City of Edinburgh Methodist Church**

Date and Time of Activity: **Sunday 11.15 – 12:15 approximately.**

Purpose of Activity: **Christian education**

Permission

I do/do not give my permission for my child to attend the above named activity.

Signed: .....Parent/Carer

Print Name: .....

Contact Telephone Number: .....

Emergency Contact Number: .....

Date: .....

Leader :.....( Leader in Charge or Group Leader)

Print Name:.....

Date: .....

This form will allow the children to leave the Church premises and participate in supervised activities on an 'ad hoc' basis.

For example – parachute games in the Square gardens.

The children will be supervised at all times.



**THE CITY OF  
EDINBURGH  
METHODIST  
CHURCH**

**Media Permission Slip**

Part 'A' (To be completed by Leader)

Church Group: **Breakout**

Superintendent: **Vickie Davitt**

Part 'B' (To be completed by the parent/carer)

Full Name of Child: .....Date of Birth:

Full Name of Child: ..... Date of Birth:

Full Name of Child: ..... Date of Birth:

Permission

I do/do not give my permission for my children to appear in photographs or other media used by the church.

Signed: .....(Parent/Carer)

Print Name: .....

Date: .....

Leader :.....(Leader in Charge or Group Leader)

Print Name:.....

Date: .....

By signing this form you are giving permission for photographs to be taken during activities planned for the 2009/2010 session, both in the regular weekly session and other extra activities, for example, the summer outing.

It is possible that children may appear in photographs or other media that will be used for publicity purposes (Church magazine, newsletter, local newspaper, church website etc.) Care will be taken to ensure that addresses of individuals are not given.