

The Community for Spiritual Formation

Statement of safeguarding principles

Every person has a value and dignity which comes directly from the creation of humans in God's own image and likeness. Christians see this potential 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.

Principles

We are committed to:

- the care and nurture of all children, young people and adults
- safeguarding and protecting all children, young people and adults when they are vulnerable
- establishing a safe, caring and 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 Community.

We will respond without delay to every safeguarding concern which suggests that a child, young person or adult may have been harmed, working in partnership with the police and local authority 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.

We will support risk assessment of those who present a safeguarding risk within the Community 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.

Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy for the Community for Spiritual Formation

This policy was first agreed at a Board Meeting held on 10th March 2021.

The Community for Spiritual Formation, along with the whole Christian community, believes 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.

The Community for Spiritual Formation is committed to the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults and affirms that the needs of children or of people when they are vulnerable and at risk are paramount.

The Community for Spiritual Formation 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 our wish 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 be a dynamic policy. It is intended to support the Community in being a safe supportive and caring community for children, young people, vulnerable adults, for survivors of abuse, for those affected by abuse.

The Community for Spiritual Formation recognises the serious issue of the abuse of children 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, and those who care about them. It takes seriously the promotion of welfare so that each of us can reach our full potential in God's grace.

Spiritual Direction

The Community for Spiritual Formation offers those attending any Community retreat an experience of Spiritual Direction with an individual Spiritual Director.

The spiritual director will ensure that another team member is aware when and where a spiritual direction conversation is taking place without naming the individual concerned.

The spiritual director has significant potential power and responsibility that should be exercised with care to ensure the intention of the relationship is not undermined. Such care needs to be practiced in the use of language, in the expression of moral judgements and in the handling of decision-making so that the autonomy of the directee is not undermined.

The Community for Spiritual Formation recognises that, whilst the spiritual direction space is sacred and normally confidential, the protection of those who are most vulnerable is deeply rooted in the gospels. Where a disclosure is made that could cause a child or adult to be at risk of significant harm, the spiritual director will seek advice and guidance from the appropriate person and keep a written record of any action taken. It is not the role of the Spiritual Director to 'investigate' the matter, but the Team Leader will be informed, and any necessary referrals will be made. In an emergency, the matter will be reported to social services or the police.

Copies of the Community Safeguarding Policy will be included in the welcome packs to ensure all participants are aware of it. Should a disclosure be made during a spiritual direction session, a signed record will be kept stating that these matters and the proposed action to be taken have been explained and discussed with the directee.

The Community for Spiritual Formation 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 Community 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, Procedures and Guidance; government legislation and guidance and safe practice in the Community.
3. **PROVIDE** support, advice and training to ensure that people are clear and confident about their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults who may be vulnerable.
4. **AFFIRM** and give thanks for those who work with children and vulnerable adults and also acknowledge the shared responsibility of all of us for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees. Next review date: 10th March 2024

Key concepts and definitions

- i) A child is anyone who has not yet reached their eighteenth birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, a member of the armed forces, in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change their status or entitlements to services or protection.
- 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 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/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 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.

Signed Chair of Board

Dated