



The Methodist Church

Serving locally, connecting the county

Safeguarding in Lincolnshire District

September 1st 2021

Visiting or working with other organisations – guidance on ensuring individuals are aware of roles and responsibilities.

Introduction

In the life of any church and as part of its mission and ministry, many people become involved in contact and activity with other organisations in a number of ways, such as:

- Being a part of a group involved with a specific activity e.g. Open the Book;
- Visiting care homes, hospitals, other settings for pastoral support to individuals;
- Being a Governor of a school;

Context

This guidance applies only to those having contact with other groups, organisations or settings when it ***is on behalf of the Methodist church or parts of its outreach***. It is especially relevant if someone believes they are there, not in their own right, but as part of the context of the Methodist church in any way.

It will always be important in these situations to ask about and understand, if not already clear, the expectations of all.

The Covid Pandemic.

Much of what is contained within this guidance is severely affected by the restrictions and limitations that the Covid Pandemic has brought and may continue to bring.

It may not be possible to implement all or part given this but the guidance remains in place and should be used when and as appropriate.

Working with other organisations as Mission and Ministry

It is always important to remember that work with others or visiting others in any context is a positive contribution in the church's mission and ministry.

Case Examples *church may not have any children within its congregation and activities, but anyone involved in, for example, with Open the Book is undertaking mission and ministry to children in schools as part of its outreach;*

Being a governor in a local school as a Minister or Office holder means the church is having a key role in the shaping of safe cultures and environments for our children to grow and flourish.

Good practice guidelines – visiting other settings, working in groups etc.

Clarity about role – for some settings, this is straightforward given the nature of what is being done e.g. Governor of a school. However, it will be essential to ensure that you feel you have enough information about expectations if assisting in a particular area of work or activity.

Accountability – it is always necessary to understand who an individual is accountable to whilst:

- On another organisations premises;
- Involved in work in a group in a setting e.g. Open the Book;
- A part of a specific activity e.g. singing in a care home at Christmas

When in a setting, those to whom one who be accountable might change due to shift patterns etc., it will be important to clarify each time to be sure.

Boundaries – it is not always clear once in a setting or within an activity, what the boundaries are:

Examples:

- When visiting a care home, where do I see someone being visited and where in the home can there I go?;
- In a group activity with children, is touch allowed with the children and/or spontaneous discussion to help engagement etc.?
- In professional settings, knowing any “rules” that apply, if any.

Case Examples

Open the book session in a local school. Child attending had problems with shoe. Volunteer reached down to help the child put in on properly. Volunteer told not to do that – teacher’s responsibility.

Pastoral visit to a care home. Visitor signed in and then entered the lounge area to look for the resident. Member of staff stated that this was not appropriate without going to office to check where resident was etc.

Identification – In most situations, this will be provided. When it is not because of the context, ID should be worn or carried and telephone numbers of others to prove such identification available if needed.

Safeguarding responsibilities.

As part of ensuring clarity about accountability arrangements, it will important to be clear to whom safeguarding concerns are reported, if appropriate. This may be implicit in the structure of a group or organisation involved i.e. the leader of an activity or the manager of a ward or care home.

It is essential to remember everyone has a **public protection responsibility**. This requires us to look beyond an individual or general activity if there are concerns about:

- General care of people, children and/or adults, not just an individual;
- Activities' which seem unsafe;
- Pastoral concerns about someone in a volunteer group or member of staff in a setting.

It is important to recognise reporting procedures for anything that causes concern either through the internal procedures within the activity, organisation or group or via discussions with the District Safeguarding Officer (DSO). (**07758 239286**).

Pastoral visit to a member of the church in a health setting. Concern about the personal presentation of not only the person visited but also some others in that setting. Pastoral visitor felt concerned that the setting may be understaffed and spoke to the person in charge who was grateful for the information – this led to a developing relationship with the setting and mutual help when needed.

Building relationships.

There are positive examples of when connections with other organisations and group have led to personal relationships and engagement which have been mutual beneficial and have helped the ability to reach others in creative and targeted ways.

Case Examples

Pastoral ministry to individuals in a care home led to a relationship where the Care Home brought residents to services at church and some activities.

Work with groups and agencies have led to being able to invite people into church to speak about how we can work together more closely and understand roles and responsibilities.

Developing specific contacts in organisations.

Partnerships in mission and ministry.