

# Safeguarding Policy

**Church Name:** The Meeting Place Church, Beaminster  
**Policy Date:** 1<sup>st</sup> December, 2025  
**Review Date:** 1<sup>st</sup> December, 2026  
**Designated Safeguarding Officer:** John Ryde

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## 1. Policy Statement

We at the Meeting Place Church are committed to providing a safe and nurturing environment for everyone who attends our church, especially children, young people, and vulnerable adults. We believe that all people, regardless of age, gender, disability, racial or ethnic background, or sexual orientation, have the right to protection from harm.

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## 2. Purpose of this Policy

- To protect children and vulnerable adults who attend the Meeting Place Church
  - To provide those with responsibilities with clear guidance on safeguarding
  - To ensure a safe environment where abuse or harm is prevented, identified, and dealt with effectively
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## 3. Who This Policy Applies To

This policy applies to:

- All church leaders
  - Anyone with responsibilities including for hosting meetings
  - Anyone working on behalf of the church with children or vulnerable adults
  - All church participants should be aware of the policy and should report any concerns as indicated in step 6
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## 4. Safeguarding Officer

Our **Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)** is:

**Name:** John Ryde

**Phone:** 07980 861565

**Email:** maipenrydes@hotmail.com

The DSO is responsible for:

- Receiving and responding to safeguarding concerns
  - Liaising with authorities when needed
  - Ensuring all are aware of the safeguarding policy
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## 5. Definitions

- **Child:** Anyone under 18 years old.
  - **Vulnerable Adult:** A person aged 18 or over who is unable to protect themselves from abuse or exploitation such as factors due to age, illness, disability, intellectual capacity, neurodiversity or mental health. Any adult in challenging circumstances such as bereavement or illness may become vulnerable even if they are not normally vulnerable.
  - We should be aware that perceived power imbalance between leaders and church members may put members at risk, even if they do not fall into the traditionally vulnerable categories.
  - The 5 most commonly recognised areas of abuse are physical, sexual, psychological and emotional, neglect and financial.
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## 6. Code of Conduct for Church Participants

We recognise that we are a relationally based church, with many longstanding friendships that are often very close, and that this is a key part of our DNA. It is important that the value of these is not lost. However, the following principles should apply.

Anyone acting on behalf of the church should:

- Treat everyone with dignity and respect
- Never be alone in private with a child.
- In the case of vulnerable adults informed permission should be sought if we are seeing them alone
- Avoid physical contact that could be misunderstood
- Report any concerns or disclosures immediately to the DSO
- Never promise confidentiality if someone shares a safeguarding concern

## 7. Recruitment and Training

If applicable, we will:

- Safely recruit those who work with children or vulnerable adults
  - Conduct basic background checks (e.g., DBS in the UK) as required by law
  - Provide safeguarding training to church participants at least every 2–3 years or as needed
  - Ask those involved to watch a training video on the church website
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## 8. Responding to Concerns or Allegations

If someone discloses abuse or a concern:

1. Listen carefully. Don't interrupt or make promises.
  2. Reassure the person they did the right thing by speaking up.
  3. Record what was said using the person's own words.
  4. Report the concern to the DSO immediately.
  5. The DSO will determine next steps, including contacting authorities if required.
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## 9. Confidentiality and Record Keeping

All safeguarding concerns will be handled confidentially and information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis. Written records of concerns will be securely stored and kept in line with data protection laws.

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## 10. Review and Updates

This policy will be reviewed annually or after any serious incident, and updated as needed.

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**Signed:**

Pastor or Leader's Name:

Date:

Designated Safeguarding Officer:

Date: