Health and Safety Policy

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Introduction

As a church we understand that we owe a duty of care to ensure the safety of those who visit or use our church, hall or grounds.

We also know that, where we are an employer or control premises in certain circumstances, we have to meet the requirements of health and safety law.

In particular, we know that if we are an employer having five or more employees, we are required to have a written health and safety policy. As such, we have drafted this policy to meet our duty under Section 2(3) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.

General Statement of Policy

It is the policy of Woodstock Methodist Church to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that its activities are carried out safely and do not pose a risk to the health of its employees, volunteers, church members, visitors and others who may use the church, grounds or any other building it is responsible for. This will be in accordance with good practice and any relevant statutory provisions where they apply.

The Church Council accepts its overall responsibility for this. It will ensure that adequate resources are made available to achieve this objective. Any decisions it makes will have due regard for it.

The Church Council will appoint a member of the Church Council to have specific responsibility for this policy and its implementation.

It will keep health and safety matters under review at appropriate intervals. It will monitor the effectiveness of the policy, amending it where it believes it is no longer valid.

It is the duty of each employee and volunteer to exercise personal responsibility for their own safety and that of others. This policy will be brought to their attention. The Church Council will try to ensure that everyone involved with the church plays their part in its implementation.

Further detail about the organisation and arrangements for managing health and safety is set out in this document. A copy of it will be kept on a notice board within the building, published on the church website and made available to others on request.

Signed: Declan Doran

On behalf of the Church Council

Date: 31st October 2025

Organisation and responsibilities

1. The member of the Church Council with overall responsibility for implementing our policy is: Declan Doran

   They will ensure that:
   - The standards set out in this policy are implemented and maintained
   - Any accidents are investigated, recorded and reported if necessary
   - Where necessary, specialist health and safety assistance is obtained
   - Relevant health and safety documents and records are retained
   - Any hazards reported to them are rectified immediately
   - They keep up to date on health and safety matters relevant to the church
   - Only competent persons carry out repairs, modifications, inspections and tests
   - Set a personal example on matters of health and safety

2. The Trustees have day-to-day responsibility for implementing the policy.

   They will ensure that:
   - All employees and volunteers are aware of their health and safety responsibilities
   - Adequate precautions are taken as set out in this policy and related risk assessments
   - Adequate information and training is provided for those that need it
   - Any hazards or complaints are investigated and dealt with as soon as possible
   - Where defects cannot be corrected immediately, interim steps are taken to prevent danger
   - All accidents are reported in-line with the requirements of this policy
   - Advice is sought where clarification is necessary on the implementation of this policy
   - Set a personal example on matters of health and safety

3. All employees and volunteers have a responsibility to cooperate in the implementation of this policy and to take reasonable care of themselves and others while on church business or premises.

   They will ensure that they:
   - Read this policy and understand what is required of them
   - Complete their work taking any necessary precautions to protect themselves and others
   - Comply with any safety rules, operating instructions and other working procedures
   - Report any hazard, defect or damage, so that this might be dealt with
   - Warn any new employees or volunteers of known hazards
   - Attend any training required to enable them to carry out their duties safely
   - Do not undertake any repair or modification unless they are competent to do so
   - Report any accident
   - Do not misuse anything provided in the interests of health and safety

Arrangements

This section sets out the general arrangements for managing health and safety and dealing with specific risks.

General Arrangements

1. **Competent Assistance**
   Where necessary, a competent person will be appointed to assist in meeting health and safety obligations.

   The person appointed to assist is: n/a at this time

2. **Risk Assessment**
   Risk assessments will be completed to identify what needs to be done to comply with health and safety law. Findings will be recorded and necessary precautions implemented. Any precautions that are deemed to be no longer valid will be reviewed and revised.

3. **Information and Training**
   Information and training for employees and volunteers will be provided in a timely manner. A record will be kept of what is provided. Relevant information will also be given to contractors and self-employed people who may need this to complete their work safely.

4. **First Aid**
   Adequate first aid facilities will be provided including – as a minimum – a suitably stocked first aid box and a person who will take charge of the first aid arrangements. Relevant information will also be provided for employees and volunteers.

   The first aid box is located in: Kitchen Cupboard

   Our person in charge of first aid arrangements is: Ruth Leach

5. **Accident Reporting**
   An accident book will be kept and details recorded therein. Reports will be made as required to the enforcing authority and records kept of certain accidents to employees, volunteers and members of the public in accordance with the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations.

   The accident book is kept in: Kitchen Cupboard

6. **Monitoring**
   Periodic checks will be made to ensure that precautions remain effective and adequate. Any lifting, work or electrical equipment and church utilities shall be inspected as necessary to ensure that they remain safe. Records will be kept of the checks that are made.

7. **Contractors**
   If contractors are employed, their own health and safety policy and Public and Employers Liability Insurance documents shall be reviewed.

8. **Record Keeping**
   Health and Safety Risk Assessments, records and other documents are kept in: a file in the Vestry

Special Arrangements

1. Asbestos
Necessary steps will be taken to identify the presence of asbestos in the buildings and, if so, assess any risk from it. A plan will be implemented to manage that risk. Relevant information will be provided to others who might need it (for example, building contractors). Records will be kept of the checks, assessments and plans that have been made.

2. Church Buildings
The fabric of the buildings shall be regularly inspected to make sure it is safe. Defects will be repaired as soon as is practicable. Where necessary, temporary measures will be taken to prevent danger until permanent repairs can be made. This will include glazing.

3. Grounds
Boundary walls and gates shall be kept in good repair. We will have trees inspected by a competent person and have any necessary work carried out to make them safe.

4. Construction Work
Where maintenance, refurbishment and restoration work is planned for the church, it will be identified what needs to be done to ensure the safety of all those concerned before work starts. It will also be determined if there are any responsibilities under the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations and if so, these will be complied with if necessary.

5. Display Screen Equipment
Where employees and volunteers regularly use computers daily, for continuous periods of an hour or more, workstations will be analysed to identify precautions, implementing these as necessary. Information, training, eye/eyesight tests (on request) and special spectacles if needed.

6. Electricity
Any electrical system, fixed machine and portable appliance shall be maintained so as to prevent danger. Any defective equipment will not be used until it is repaired or replaced. Records of the checks made shall be kept where appropriate.

7. Events
Where large or unusual concerts, services and fundraising events are to be held, any additional precautions that are necessary shall be identified and implemented.

8. Fire
A specific fire risk assessment will be completed to identify what steps are necessary to prevent, detect and take in the event of a fire. Findings shall be recorded and any necessary precautions implemented. Any precautions deemed no longer valid will be reviewed and revised accordingly.

9. Heating Systems
Any oil or gas heating system shall be suitably maintained and checked annually by a competent person. Any defects found will be corrected immediately and records kept of checks made.

10. Hazardous Substances
Only domestic cleaning or horticultural products and petrol shall be used. These shall be stored, used and disposed of in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions taking any necessary precautions that are specified.

11. Lifting Equipment
Any lifting equipment shall be properly maintained and thoroughly examined periodically by a competent person.

12. Manual Handling
The need for the manual lifting or carrying heavy objects shall as far as is possible be avoided. Where this is not practical, lifting aids (such as trolleys) or other precautions including team lifting shall be employed.

13. Preparation of Food
On those occasions when food is prepared on site, clean and disinfected work surface, utensils and equipment shall be used. Food shall be stored in such a way so as to avoid contamination, handwashing facilities shall be provided and suitable arrangements made for the disposal of waste.

14. Slips and Trips
Suitable precautions shall be implemented to prevent slips or trips, taking account of any difficulty the frail, elderly or disabled may have in negotiating access. Periodic checks shall be made to ensure that floors, coverings, steps and pathways remain in good condition, free from obstruction and that any precautions (such as handrails or lighting) remain adequate. Any defects will be identified and records kept. Arrangements shall be in place to manage pathways in winter weather.

15. Working at Height
Where possible, the need for work at height shall be avoided. Where this is not practicable, any work shall be properly planned to identify suitable precautions. These precautions shall be implemented, including the provision of any training and checks to ensure the safety of any equipment used.

16. Work Equipment
Any work equipment (including any hand tools) provided will be suitable, in good condition and properly maintained. Where necessary, some equipment (such as ladders) will be regularly checked to make sure they are safe. Records shall be kept of any checks made.

17. Working Alone
Circumstances where employees and volunteers work alone shall be identified, and suitable precautions implemented to ensure their safety.