

St James' Methodist / United Reformed Church, Woolton

Health and Safety Policy June 2024

This document includes

A. A general statement with essential contacts details which will be placed on Notice Boards in the Church and Hall

B. The Policy on :

Section 1 Accident and Incident Reporting

Section 2 Fire / Emergency Safety

Section 3 Safeguarding

Section 4 Building & Property: Risk Assessment

Maintenance and Repairs

Responsibility to Contractors

Section 5 Personal H&S Matters: Lone working and personal security

Cash Handling

Manual Handling

Slips and Trips

Working at heights

Equipment

Hazardous Substances

Restricted Areas

H&S Training

C. Appendices (*Ancillary documents are not shown on the website with the exception of item 2 which is posted separately*)

1. Emergency Evacuation Policy

2. Safeguarding Policy

3. Lettings Agreement

4. Disaster Recovery Statement

5. H&S Information Leaflet

This document was approved by the Property and Finance Committee on:

June 13th 2024

(Mrs Pam Bellis, P&F Committee Chair)

It will be reviewed annually at the nearest comparable meeting date (or earlier if appropriate).

General Statement

St James' is committed to the Health and Safety (H&S) of everyone using the Church, Church Hall and outside areas associated with the premises.

We aim to provide a safe environment for work, worship and leisure activities, by managing foreseeable hazards posed by property, equipment, circumstances and individual behaviours.

To minimise the risk of injury/damage to people and property, St James' will:

- endeavour to meet all its legal and reasonable social responsibilities in relation to the premises, facilities and equipment;
- provide appropriate training for church staff and volunteers;
- make information and advice available to other users of the buildings,

Annual risk assessments in relation to Fire and H&S issues will be carried out in the Autumn quarter of each year by the Property and Finance Committee, and a report - with recommendations / action plans / amendments to this policy - will be made to the Church Council in November. Interim issues arising from accidents, incidents and other information received, will be dealt with appropriately and included in the annual report.

This policy will be reviewed annually, and revised as necessary.

Responsibilities

Overall responsibility for H&S lies with the Minister but, for practical purposes, specific aspects of that responsibility will be delegated as described in the policy.

Key Contacts:

Property and Lettings Manager:	Mrs Wendy Doig 07867 795179
Chair of Property & Finance Committee	Mrs Pam Bellis 07811406016
Church Appointed First Aider(s):	Miss Margaret Dee, 07761 129935 Mrs Jayne McLaren (paediatric) 07859 062692

Church Appointed Fire Officer(s) are:

- At times of public worship: Vestry (Lead), & all official and acting Steward Elders
- At other times: named people, appointed with their agreement by the event organiser.

Church Appointed Safeguarding Officers:	Mrs Pam Alexander (Children) 07702 876678 Miss Margaret Dee (Adults) 07761 129935
---	--

Church Appointed Complaints Officer:	Mrs Jayne McLaren 07859 062692
--------------------------------------	--------------------------------

Everyone using the premises has a responsibility for their own safety and the safety of other users, and is expected to help the Church maintain a safe environment by

- ensuring the premises, facilities and equipment are only used for the purposes for which they were provided,
- following safety instructions and signs, and
- reporting accidents and incidents.

Groups hiring the premises are advised of their responsibilities for all aspects of H&S within the letting agreement.

Please do not hesitate to contact appropriate Officers as named above if you have a query or concern about H&S matters at St James' Church.

NEAREST MEDICAL SERVICES:

Hospital /Adult A&E:	Liverpool Royal, Prescot Street L7 8XP 0151 706 2000
Children's A&E:	Alder Hey Hospital L12 2AP Tel 0151 225 4811 or Smithdown Road Walk-in Centre, L15 2LQ 0151 285 4820 (8am-8pm)
Adult Walk-in Centre:	Church Road, Garston, L19 2LW Tel: 0151 295 9010 (9am-9 pm weekdays / 9am-5pm Weekends)
GP Surgery:	Woolton House Medical Centre (opposite The Elephant) L25 5J 0151 295 8686 (8am-8pm)

Section 1: Accident and Incident Reporting

- (a) All accidents on church premises must be reported to a responsible person at the time they occur, e.g. the person leading the activity taking place - who will make a record in the Accident /Incident Book(s).¹
- (b) All incidents (i.e. unusual or unexpected events of any kind) must be similarly reported and recorded.

The Property Manager should also be notified of accidents and incidents, especially any which may have an immediate effect on others using the premises, so that prompt remedial action can be taken where necessary. All such events will be brought to the attention of the next meeting of the most appropriate church committee(s) for information and a review of current arrangements to take place.

- (c) In the event of an accident or incident resulting in injury, medical action appropriate to the circumstance must be initiated by the Group Leader or, wherever possible in the case of children or vulnerable adults, by a parent or carer.
- (d) First Aid boxes can be found in: the Church Kitchen and the Church Hall Kitchen
The contents will be checked regularly by the named Lead 1st Aider to ensure that the items are adequate and in date.

Groups using either the church or hall under a letting agreement will be asked to report/record accidents and incidents as part of their terms and conditions. They will be made aware of the first aid boxes but will be expected to make their own appropriate first aid and fire safety arrangements.²

SECTION 2 – Fire / Emergency Safety

Steward Elders' duties were adapted in September 2020 to accommodate increased safety requirements relating to Covid-19 and reduced numbers attending church. These are under regular review and the policy updated as appropriate.

At all times, St James' recognises the need for

- clearly defined and practiced safety procedures for use in an emergency, and
- the inherent difficulties applying such procedures when large numbers of unnamed individuals are on the premises and keeping accurate registers is problematic.

Church Nominated Fire Officers are identified in the 'Responsibilities' section above, and their specific roles in an emergency are described in the agreed Emergency Evacuation Procedure, a copy of which appears as Appendix 1 to this document

All Staff, Church Officers, Church Group Leaders and regular Volunteers will be made aware of this procedure through Church Council and/or their regular group meetings. Group Leaders are responsible for cascading this information to their groups with particular reference to the sound of the alarm, and exit and assembly points.

Emergency information notices are posted in both buildings and everyone over the age of 16 using the premises is required to observe the instructions.

¹ These books are kept in the church kitchen and the hall kitchen close to the first aid boxes.

² See relevant paragraph in each agreement

Both the church and hall are equipped with fire extinguishers which are serviced regularly in accordance with statutory requirements and appropriate training in the use of these will be provided.

- Fire alarms, extinguishers and emergency lighting systems (where they are in place) will be tested, checked and maintained annually in accordance with legal requirements and current schedules. (See Section 4b, below).
- Fire alarm will be checked weekly and the details recorded in the Fire Log.
- Fire drill evacuation procedures for both buildings will be completed periodically and recorded in the Fire Log.

Groups hiring the premises are advised of their responsibilities for Fire/Emergency Safety within the letting agreement.²

SECTION 3 - Safeguarding

A copy of the Safeguarding Policy appears as Appendix 2 to this document and is posted separately on the website.

SECTION 4 – Building & Property

This section addresses H&S issues for which the Church is directly responsible as Trustees of the premises, professional landlords and hosts for church-led functions. It also seeks to reflect the duty of care owed to whoever is using the buildings by agreement, and to the wider community, whether or not anyone is on the premises.

a. Risk assessments

Members of The Finance and Property Committee will undertake regular risk assessments of the Church Premises under all the headings contained in this policy, *complying with advice and guidance issued by the Methodist Church through their Property Services update* and in conjunction with the completion of the annual Methodist Connexional Property Report. A statement of the findings will be forwarded to the November meeting of the Church Council, together with the Property Report, and any proposed amendments to this policy for discussion and endorsement.

The Property and Finance Committee will annually verify the absence (or presence) of asbestos based material on the premises *by the maintenance of an Asbestos Report and Register* and in a statement to the Church Council contained within the Connexional Property Report.

Where a previously unforeseen risk has been identified between the annual assessments, say via the Accident and Incident reporting system, immediate steps will be taken by the Property and Finance Committee to assess and mitigate potential future danger from the same or similar source. Any action taken as a result will be included in the annual report to the Church Council, and reflected the policy as appropriate.

St James' recognises its responsibility towards the church family at special events organised by the church either on or off the premises. Each event will be individually assessed for risk by the organisers in accordance with their standard procedures.

b. Maintenance and Repair

- i. St James' accepts responsibility for the prompt and efficient maintenance and repair of the premises, facilities and equipment provided, to maximise the safety of everyone using them. The Property Manager will regularly 'walk round' the buildings, and:

- note any work needing to be put in hand,
- seek estimates for repairs and maintenance, or ask other appropriate people to do so,
- authorise and arrange repairs and maintenance in consultation with the Property and Finance Committee.

The Property Manager will also ensure that fire safety, gas and electrical systems and equipment, both fixed and portable, are serviced in accordance with legal requirements and current schedules.

- ii. Everyone using the building has a responsibility to help the Church maintain a safe environment by
- ensuring the premises, facilities and equipment are only used for the purposes for which they were provided,
 - following safety instructions and signs, and
 - reporting accidents and incidents promptly to their group leader and/or the Property Manager.

c. Responsibility to contractors working on the premises

Any contractors working on the premises will be informed³ that they must comply with the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and that their employees, sub-contractors, trainees or volunteers must be made aware of their own duties and liabilities under the act. Information about known hazards on the premises and the emergency procedures will be made available to contractors at the same time.

SECTION 5 - Personal Health & Safety Matters

This section addresses risks which have been identified by St James' Church and for which a proportion of corporate responsibility is acknowledged. However, in the following paragraphs the degree of risk is significantly increased through the way people interact with the buildings, facilities and equipment, so the church seeks to raise awareness of individuals' responsibility and the co-operation of everyone using the church's buildings. A summary of the information in the following paragraphs is made widely available in leaflet form. (See Appendix 5)

Areas of church premises which may require increased levels of awareness with regard to the personal health and safety of staff, church officers, volunteers, users and members of the public include:

- Kitchens
- Cellars
- The church loft and the storage space above the stage.
- Gardens & other areas of the grounds
- Steps into church
- Road crossing between the church and hall etc

The policies and procedures to cover potential risks in these areas are as follows.

a. Lone working and personal security

Keyholders are the most vulnerable when preparing for, or clearing up after, group sessions, but the ratio of leaders/children in Junior Church can also present a potential risk.

³ By the person requisitioning /supervising the work

Wherever possible, no-one should be alone on church premises without permission or the knowledge of another church person.

If this is unavoidable, St James' has clearly defined procedures to maximise the personal security of anyone who is alone

- i. in church - these procedures are contained in printed and laminated notices on the rear door and lift door, and in the job descriptions for Steward Elders;
- ii. in the church hall - which has double-locking access for added security. NB: special care must be taken that children should NEVER be taken into the church hall with only one adult present, even if the adult is a parent of one or more of the children. This presents a Safeguarding Risk and may also increase the potential for harm to the children and/or adult in the event of an accident.

All keyholders and users of the church and church hall are expected to be aware of the procedures in place and observe them at all times.

No-one should be afraid/reluctant to ask for help or for someone else to be present.

Lone workers in the church or hall must have a fully charged mobile phone with them at all times and are required on arrival to text their Group Leader or the Property Manager advising where they will be and for approximately how long, They should send a further text when leaving the building.

This information is distributed to all new keyholders, volunteers and groups using the premises, in the H&S leaflet.

b. Handling Cash

e.g. Sunday Collections, mid-week events etc

In principle,

- cash belonging to the church should always be the shared responsibility of at least 2 people from different households.
- Recognising the timing of church events and the increasingly restricted access to banking facilities, cash up to the value of £4,000 may be held overnight at home but must be banked as soon as possible after that.

Whenever the general principles cannot be observed for any reason

- all the required records must be made and signed *stating the name of the person who is taking the cash to be banked*;
- extreme care should be taken when transporting cash off church premises;
- in the case of an attack, personal safety takes precedence.

If there are any personal concerns, anyone handling or transporting cash on behalf of the church is encouraged to ask for the help and support of a church officer.

c. Manual handling

This might involve moving chairs, tables, the stage-platform extension panels, the communion rail, containers of hot or cold liquids, loaded trays, garden supplies, storage boxes into and out of confined or overhead spaces, etc.

St James' firmly discourages *anyone* from handling/lifting/moving or attempting to handle/lift/move these or similar items without the assistance of others and appropriate training/advice and equipment (e.g. trolleys provided for the purpose).

At the same time, St James' warmly embraces its duty of care to those working on the premises, renting them, or carrying out volunteer tasks. Therefore:

- Appropriate training will be given to those with overall responsibility for H&S, and others as identified.
- Information, raising awareness of the risks and best practice to minimise them, will be made available to all staff, church officers, volunteers, and users / others via posters on notice boards in both buildings.
- A note raising awareness of potential manual handling risks appears in the H&S information leaflet.

The Property and Finance Committee will regularly review the procedure for moving heavy or awkward items from one building to the other, to make it as safe as possible.

d. Slips and Trips

These might be caused by wet floors due to unmarked leaks and spills, obstructions in door- and passage-ways, loose trailing cables & wires, uneven paving stones, any external floor surface (steps, ramps paving etc.) covered with wet leaves or ice, etc. The risk of accidents is considerably greater in these areas and conditions if people are also carrying awkward or heavy objects which might obstruct their vision or balance.

St James' warmly embraces its duty of care to keep all internal and external floors and walkways safe. This includes

- regular and frequent clearing and cleaning
- appropriate lighting
- obstructions or trip/slip hazards clearly marked until they are resolved/removed.

The Property Manager and Duty Steward/Elders will carry out regular checks, especially before either building is opened for public use by the church, and will respond promptly to any concerns raised through the accident and incident reporting process.

Staff, Church Officers, Volunteers and Users are expected to act responsibly in relation to the introduction and identification of potential slip/trip hazards and always to replace all church equipment in the room/position in which they found it on arrival. Nothing should be brought onto the premises and left there, without first notifying, and obtaining the express permission of, the Property Manager.

e. Working at Heights (i.e. other than when standing on the floor.)

For Staff, Church Officers, and Volunteers, occasions to work at heights may occur when accessing the church loft and over-stage spaces, accessing items from high shelves and overhead cupboards [e.g. in the kitchens and vestry], putting up Christmas decorations, locking/unlocking the front doors of church, erecting dismantling items in the gardens, e.g. the outside Christmas tree / prayer ribbon cross, etc. Activities requiring working at heights should have very limited application to anyone renting the church buildings.

Any essential activity requiring the use of a step-ladder must not be undertaken by anyone:

- Below the age of 18, and
- without previous training / experience, and
- working alone.

Activity relating to building/property maintenance requiring the use of stepladders must not be undertaken without prior notice to, and permission from, the Property Manager.

All such equipment will be inspected regularly and maintained and stored safely.

St James' undertakes to make step-stools available in both buildings for appropriate lower-level use.

No-one renting the buildings, or present as a member of the public, may use anything other than one of the step-stools provided for tackling a task above ground level.

Standing on a chair or table to complete a task that would otherwise be out of reach is not permitted under any circumstances.

Specific agreements about working at heights will be reached with external contractors working on the premises.

f. Equipment:

This includes the use of church-provided electrical items, sound systems, gardening, kitchen, and cleaning items, and those in the office and photocopying rooms, and any items brought onto the premises by church groups or hirers etc.

St James' undertakes to

- maintain all equipment permanently on the premises to a high standard, including annual checks by qualified electricians and other professionals as appropriate,
- provide all necessary training in the use of equipment to appropriate users,
- provide safe, accessible storage for equipment.

Staff, Church Officers, Volunteers and others using the building must:

- report items of equipment found to be faulty, via the Incident Reporting Procedure (see Section 1c above), and/or to the Property Manager, and, if portable, remove the item from use **or** attach a sign stating "faulty must not be used"
- switch off all equipment when not in use, and when leaving the building at the end of a session unless a specific notice indicates otherwise,
- replace equipment as and where it was found at the start of the session,
- ensure that portable items of electrical equipment brought onto the premises are available for PAT testing annually on request.
- observe standards of hygiene/safety in kitchen and toilet areas (especially when in charge of a group),
- dispose of all waste safely in the appropriate bins.

Staff, Church Officers, Volunteers and others using the building must NOT:

- attempt to repair any faulty equipment unless qualified to do so
- leave any items of equipment on the premises or in non-designated storage areas without the permission of the Property Manager.

g. Hazardous substances:

The most likely location for these, in generally accessible areas of the church premises is in the kitchens and sluice room (e.g. cleaning materials), and church garden storage area (e.g. gardening and de-icing products). Other, less publicly accessible locations include the office & photocopying room (e.g. glue, ink) and in the cellars (e.g. paint or decorating materials). However, it is recognised that church groups and other users of the buildings who have their own designated storage areas might bring other toxic or flammable substances onto the premises, e.g. paint, glue, aerosol cans etc.

St James' undertakes to act responsibly in relation to the storage and use of any necessary chemicals and substances, by:

- maintaining a COSHH register for relevant items
- keeping items for immediate use in closed cupboards or on higher shelves, and restricting access to these areas for young people and unauthorised members of the public,
- storing bulk purchases safely out of the public view, and in closed/locked cupboards,
- carrying out regular checks of any part of the buildings not frequently used to prevent the build-up of unauthorised, out-of-date, unnecessary or forgotten items, and disposing of any such items appropriately, and
- disposing of any unwanted chemicals or other substances in a safe and legal way.

The primary responsibility for all such issues lies with the Property Manager, but Staff, Church Officers, and Volunteers must act responsibly, be alert and responsive to inherent dangers, and raise any concerns promptly.

Users will be informed of church policy in relation to these matters, and asked to confirm the presence and storage conditions of any chemicals/ dangerous substances in their own designated storage areas. The church reserves the right to insist on the removal of such items if the safety of the storage arrangements is in any doubt.

h. Restricted areas

Some parts of the church premises are designated as areas where people should not be at all, or as accessible only to authorised people, or at specific times e.g. all storage areas, kitchens, the church balcony, the back of church, side passage behind the lift gate etc.

St James' undertakes to indicate clearly any areas of restricted access by appropriate notices, to ensure that the premises are as safe as possible.

Staff, Church Officers, Volunteers and others using the buildings are required to take note of the information provided and respect the restrictions. Previous practice, custom and usage are not viable reasons for currently ignoring any restrictions that are indicated.

Anyone authorised to be in restricted areas should acknowledge the rationale behind the restrictions, proceed with caution while there, and leave those areas as quickly and safely as possible.

i. Health and Safety Training

Specific training issues have been identified throughout the individual paragraphs in the policy, e.g. manual handling, food safety/hygiene, use of fire extinguishers, emergency evacuation procedures (including use of the evacuation chair), keyholder responsibilities, safeguarding, carrying out risk assessments etc.

Formal training in the procedures mentioned will be offered to all new Staff, Church Officers, Church Group Leaders, regular Volunteers and others as appropriate, to ensure that everyone is aware of key health and safety issues, and is equipped to keep themselves, the premises / facilities / equipment, and other users as safe as possible.

Additional training will be offered to meet the requirements of individual situations, and a H&S information leaflet is available to anyone at all times to endorse the church's overall Health and Safety messages.

A register of H&S training will be kept by the Property Manager.

Section 6 Appendices

For more information about these ancillary documents. please apply via the contact form on the church website.