



# Health & Safety Policy

No: GFMC/PD/02

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This document replaces the Health & Safety Policy dated May 2023, updates have been made to Paragraphs 7, 28 & 36.

## **GARSTANG FREE METHODIST CHURCH**

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## **Introduction**

1. Garstang Free Methodist Church (GFMC) have a duty of care to ensure the health and safety (H&S) of those who use or visit the Church premises. As an employer of 5 or more people, including unpaid volunteers, GFMC is required by UK Law to meet the requirements of UK Health and Safety Law, in particular, GFMC is required to have a written health and safety policy, in accordance with Section 2(3) of the Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974. This document meets that requirement.

## **General Health & Safety Responsibilities**

2. The Trustees are primarily responsible, through the Pastoral Team (PT) and the Ministry Leadership Team (MLT), for:
  - the safety and care of people, buildings, grounds and the environment within the Church premises;
  - providing suitable and adequate supervision of vulnerable people and people under the age of 18, to ensure that health and safety standards are maintained;
  - setting a personal example on all health and safety matters.
3. Every adult person who enters the Church premises should be aware of:
  - their own safety;
  - the safety of those around them;
  - and take no action that puts themselves, surrounding people or the environment in an unsafe condition.
4. The Church Health & Safety (H&S) Officer is responsible for:
  - keeping up to date with relevant UK Health and Safety Law and Free Methodist H&S Guidance;
  - advising the Trustees & MLT on all health & safety matters;
  - monitoring health & safety standards and notifying the Trustees & MLT of any deficiencies;
  - ensuring records are kept of all safety related work, assessments, inspections and meetings.
5. The Church Health & Safety Committee is responsible for:
  - reviewing the health and safety system within the Church;
  - carrying out safety inspections, as and when required.

## **Safeguarding**

6. GFMC have a safeguarding policy for children, young people and adults with care or support needs. This important work is detailed in a separate policy document.

## **Accident Reporting and Investigation**

7. All accidents, no matter how minor they seem, within the Church premises will be entered into the appropriate Church accident books, which are located in the kitchen. There is one accident book for primary and pre-school children and one for adults and young people. This includes accidents to people visiting the Church or community groups using the Church premises.
8. Accidents of a serious nature will be reported to the Trustees, MLT and Church H&S Officer. The Church H&S Officer will report to the Regulatory Authorities, where required, and carry out an investigation making recommendations to the Trustees & MLT on any safety improvements.

## **Fire Safety**

9. GFMC will have an up to date Fire Risk Assessment, as it employs 5 or more people. They will also keep a record of the assessment, periodic reviews and changes to the assessment.
10. The Church building has an installed fire alarm system, with manual fire alarm call points. All fire exits, fire extinguishers and fire alarm points are clearly marked. Fire exits must not be blocked, particularly the one at the back of Church. All these items will be checked and maintained periodically by the Building Director and records kept. In addition, annual inspections and servicing will be carried out by a suitably qualified and experienced person and records kept.
11. The fire alarm will be sounded periodically before morning service to ensure the maximum number of people have heard it and know what action to take. The assembly point is the Church Car Park
12. All Church Stewards will be trained, by the Senior Steward or person(s) nominated by the Senior Steward, on the actions to take in the event of the fire alarm sounding during a Church service, which includes morning and evening services, weddings and funerals. All Ministry Leaders should ensure that people are reminded, at least once a year, how to evacuate the Church building in the event of the fire alarm sounding.

## **Safety Risk Assessments**

13. Risk Assessments will be drafted for Church ministries and activities, when they are required, including:
  - general use of the Church premises, covering Church Services, Life and House Groups, Pastoral Team work, kitchen and other work;
  - all activities involving children and young people, when parents and guardians are not present, and adults with care and support needs.
  - all off Church premises activities involving children and young people.

## People Safety

14. The ground floor comprising all the main meeting rooms of the Church premises are accessible by disabled people, there are 2 disabled toilets on the ground floor. During regular Church services, weddings, funerals and other significant one-off services Church Steward(s) are on hand to give extra help, where required. Ministry Leaders will ensure that any disabled person receives extra help, as and when required.
15. Suitable precautions will be taken to prevent slips, trips or falls, which will take into account any difficulty the frail, elderly or disabled may have in negotiating access. Periodic safety inspections will be carried out to ensure that floors, coverings, steps, pathways and seating remain in good condition, free from obstruction and that any precautions, including handrails or lighting remain adequate. Records will be kept of inspections and maintenance.
16. A list of trained First Aiders and their currency dates will be kept and maintained. A trained First Aider is required for all ministries involving children and young people, when their parents/guardians are not present. Trained First Aiders may also be required for ministries involving the elderly, vulnerable and adults with care and support needs. Each ministry should be assessed on its own requirements.
17. Manual Handling of heavy loads will be avoided as far as reasonably practicable. If this is not practicable the use of lifting equipment or team lifting should be considered. Any manual handling issues should be referred to the Church H&S Officer, who will carry out a risk assessment prior to the work.
18. Lone Working on the Church premises should be avoided, if practicable. However, if Lone Working on the premises cannot be avoided the following should be implemented:
  - carry a mobile phone at all times;
  - tell someone where you are, what you are doing and when you will be leaving the Church building.It is important when leaving the Church premises to inform the last person on the premises that they are Lone Working.
19. General housekeeping and tidiness of the Church premises is the responsibility of everyone. GFMC employ a Church Cleaner who will ensure that floors and toilets are clean and safe. The Building Director and Senior Steward will monitor all public areas routinely to ensure they are safe and take action to rectify any hazards or unsafe conditions.
20. The Trustees & MLT will assign an owner to all significant store rooms and cupboards, preferably one person. This person should ensure that the store room or cupboard is kept clean, tidy, safe for use and dispose of any items that are no longer required.

## Plant & Equipment Safety

21. The Church premises electrical supply and distribution system was installed and certified in accordance with the 18<sup>th</sup> Edition of the Electrical Regulations. The supply and distribution system will be inspected, maintained and recertified periodically, in accordance with the latest version of the edition of the Electrical Regulations by a suitably qualified and experienced person.

22. All portable electrical equipment used inside the Church will be PAT tested annually (Portable Appliance Testing) and tagged. This includes all equipment owned by the Church and any equipment bought into the Church by individuals for frequent use on the Church premises.
23. Any work equipment used on the Church premises will be fit for purpose, safe for use and maintained in a safe condition in accordance with the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER) 1998. Any queries should be referred to the Building Director and/or the Church Safety Officer.
24. All wall and ceiling mounted equipment will be inspected annually by a suitably qualified and experienced person. Records will be kept of inspections and maintenance. Periodically, an independent expert will be contracted to carry out the annual inspection.
25. The Church central heating system will be inspected and maintained periodically by a suitably qualified and experienced person. Records will be kept of inspections and maintenance.

## **Hazardous Substances**

26. Hazardous substances are required to keep the Church premises clean, tidy and safe. The substances used will only be purchased from supermarkets, DIY stores and other general public retail outlets.
27. Should any substance of a more specialist and/or hazardous nature be required, the Church H&S Officer should be consulted and special arrangements and precautions agreed.

## **Kitchen Hygiene and Food Safety**

28. Hygiene and food safety are important in any kitchen. The GFMC kitchen will be run in accordance with suitable national hygiene and food safety standards.
29. The maximum number of people allowed in the kitchen at one time is 8 (eight). Children under the age of 12 are not allowed in the kitchen. Young people between the ages of 12 and 16 should be supervised by an adult at all times.

## **Waste**

30. Waste will be minimised and recycled, where practicable, sorted and disposed of in Wyre BC waste bins. Larger quantities of waste will be taken to an appropriate local authority tip.

## **Use of or Working on the Church Premises by Non-GFMC People**

31. All non-GFMC people or organisations should be shown this Health and Safety Policy before use and agree in writing to implement it. Regular users of the Church premises should also generate and implement their own risk assessments.

32. Contractors who carry out work should be supervised at all times, where practicable, and work to method statements and risk assessments, agreed by the GFMC supervisor.

### **Health & Safety Committee**

33. The Church H&S Committee, as a minimum, consists of the Church H&S Officer, Building Director, Senior Steward and Person in Charge of the Kitchen. Other people will be asked to join the committee, as and when required. The Committee will meet at least twice a year, minutes will be taken and sent to the Pastoral Team, Elders, Trustees and MLT members.
34. The H&S Committee will carry out regular safety inspections of the Church premises. Records will be kept of inspections and maintenance.

### **Health & Safety Records**

35. All GFMC Health & Safety records, including minutes of the Health & Committee Meeting, will be kept in the GFMC Secure Cloud Facility, with a backup hard copy in the Church Office.

### **Monitoring and Reviewing the Policy**

36. The H&S Advisor will formally review and reissue this policy every 5 years or when there are any significant changes. This policy also will be periodically reviewed by the H&S Advisor and the H&S Committee to ensure that it is being implemented in all areas of GFMC. Church members are welcome to comment on this policy and suggest ways in which it might be improved by contacting H&S Advisor.

### **Approval**

37. The Health & Safety Policy was approved by the Trustees at their March 2025 meeting.

### Definitions and Abbreviations

- **Garstang Free Methodist Church (GFMC)** is the body of Christian people that worship at Garstang Free Methodist Church, Windsor Road, Garstang. PR3 1ED. The Church is led and directed by the Pastoral Team, Trustees, Elders and Ministry Leaders.
- The **Church Premises** are the building on Windsor Road, the car park to the West, including the brick wall, the tarmac area to the North and the passage to the South, but not the passage to the East.
- **Pastoral Team (PT), Trustees, Elders & Ministry Leadership Team (MLT)** definitions and responsibilities are contained in a separate document.