

THE METHODIST CHURCH IN ZIMBABWE



DRAFT

SAFEGUARDING POLICY (FEBRUARY 2021)

FOREWORD

The Methodist Church in Zimbabwe as one of the biggest traditional denominations has a moral and spiritual mandate to protect, promote and safeguard the wellbeing of the most vulnerable of society. This policy seeks to make the church a safe place conducive for love, discipline, growth, peace and transformation. The church exists to foster integrity, accountability and transparency to its members. In view of the above, it is envisaged that this policy will go a long way in enforcing the core values of the Methodist church and augmenting the instruments that regulate any interaction with children and vulnerable adults in the ministry of the church.

The Methodist Church in Zimbabwe's Safeguarding Policy strives to complement already existing international, regional and national instruments which are designed to promote, protect and promote and safeguard the rights of all people, including children and vulnerable adults, not only in the church but in society. These include but are not limited to:

- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- The African Charter on the rights and welfare of Children (ACRWC)
- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women,
- The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.
- The Constitution of Zimbabwe (2013)

The church is cognizant of the vulnerability of children, the youths and some adults, and recognise that all people deserve to be safeguarded from any form of harm or abuse. In this regard, the church is committing herself to protect the most vulnerable of society to achieve their goals through creating an environment that reduces the risk of abuse in all its forms.

Due to the nature of the membership of the church, which is voluntary, chances of abuses are real and hence a regulatory framework will go a long way in

providing guidelines for identifying and reporting any form of abuse within the flock. This includes the screening of all potential employees and volunteers during the recruitment process, a step which help reduce the risk of harm, especially to those most vulnerable.

The Church as a caring organization supports all efforts that are aimed at protecting and promoting the wellbeing of all people, including children and vulnerable adults, in places of worship, fellowship and any other form of human development. The Methodist church in Zimbabwe run institutions such as schools, centres, children’s homes and all workstations will from now make use of the framework that help them to create and maintain a safe space

It is intended that these written guidelines shall be distributed to all Methodist Church in Zimbabwe Representatives. This includes all persons in leadership positions and all personnel of the church, whether appointed or volunteer staff members. There shall be appropriate in-service programs to educate MCZ Representatives in the recognition of signs of abuse/misconduct, including against children, youth, or the disabled, and to inform them of the procedures to be followed should a suspected or actual incident of misconduct occur or be brought to their attention.

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Presiding Bishop

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1.0 BACKGROUND

The Government of Zimbabwe in 2015 appealed to all churches and organizations which deal with children and youths to formulate policies to protect children from abuse. The Methodist Church in Zimbabwe recognises that it is not only children and youths who can be subjected to harm and abuse. Many adults too, especially those more vulnerable such as women and those with disabilities, can also be subjected to abuse.

The baseline survey conducted by the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe in October 2020 revealed the level of exposure of children, youth and vulnerable adults to various forms of abuses. Abuse can occur in all settings, including within churches.

The Methodist Church in Zimbabwe and her partners felt compelled to demonstrate their commitment to safeguard the physical, spiritual and emotional safety of all people, including children and vulnerable adults, who interact with the church at different levels. This policy document seeks to provide a comprehensive guideline on how the church, her members, church employees (both clergy and laity), her agencies and partners safely interact and work with people, including children, youth and vulnerable adults, in all spheres of the church life. This includes worship, training, educational institutions, social responsibility, relief and development activities and including but not limited to activities being carried out in facilities under the auspices of the Methodist Church or her agencies.

The Methodist Church in Zimbabwe's commitments to safeguarding all people who interact with the church are in light of the selected few biblical references that encourages us to stand on the gap of the weak and the vulnerable.

- **Psalm 82 v 4:** *"Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked."*
- **Proverbs 24 v 11:** *"Rescue those who are being taken away to death; hold back those who are stumbling to the slaughter."*
- **Mark 10 v 42:** *"But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea." (NKJV).*
- **Matthew 26 v 52-54:** *Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?"*

- **Philippians 2 v 4** *“Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.*
- **1 Peter 4 v 8:** *Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.*
- **1 Timothy 5 v 8:** *“But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever”.*
- **Corinthians 13 v 1-13:** *If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing. Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; ...*

It is intended that these written guidelines shall be distributed to all Methodist Church in Zimbabwe Representatives. This includes all persons in leadership positions and all personnel of the church, whether appointed or volunteer staff members. There shall be appropriate in-service programs to educate MCZ Representatives in the recognition of signs of abuse/misconduct, including against children, youth, or the disabled, and to inform them of the procedures to be followed should a suspected or actual incident of misconduct occur or be brought to their attention.

1.1 **OUR PLEDGE**

As the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe connexion, we pledge to conduct our worship and all other activities in ways that protect and safeguard the wellbeing of all people, including children and vulnerable adults, in and outside the church. We endeavour to transform the church into a safe space for all and promote the rights of all people, including children and the underprivileged.

We promise to follow reasonable safety measures in the selection and recruitment of employees and provide them with a copy of the Children and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy that provides clear guidelines for reporting any suspected or actual abuse and conforms to the requirements of State Laws – the Constitution of Zimbabwe amendment (No.20) ACT 2013, Part 3, article 81, Sub-section 1.

1.2 OUR IDENTITY

We are the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe, a Connected Oasis of Life, Peace, Justice and Hope.

The Methodist Church in Zimbabwe is a global church with diverse cultures. The Zimbabwe Connexion is divided into 8 districts and has both regional and international fellowships in Africa, America, Europe and Australia. The church has a number of institutions, primary and secondary schools, clinics, Children's homes, businesses, service arms, circuits, societies, class meetings and organizations. Within all these tires and institutions, the probability of some forms of abuse is high hence the move to develop a Children and Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding policy.

1.3 OUR SHARED VISION

An Empowered and connected Christian community impacting society.

We are mindful of the need to empower our employees and members and the need to develop strong partnerships with like-minded individuals and organizations with the view to transform society.

1.4. OUR MISSION

To Transform lives through a Holistic Approach Grounded in Scriptural Principles

Using the Bible as our manual, we endeavour to provide sustainable solutions to all aspects of human life, including promoting, protecting and safeguarding the rights of all.

1.5 OUR CORE VALUES

- 1.3.1 Integrity** - We value consistency in our teaching, preaching and practice.
- 1.3.2 Transparency and Accountability**- We place all things on the table and take responsibility of the outcomes.
- 1.3.3 Commitment and Professionalism** - We always strive to do the best, give the best and act in the best interest of all.
- 1.3.4 Compassion** – The love of Christ drives our mission.
- 1.3.5 Inclusivity**- Our approach is not discriminatory, the young, the old and those living with disabilities are involved in their own way.
- 1.3.6 Stewardship** – We are driven by the spirit of custodianship of all under our care.

1.6. SCOPE OF THE POLICY

This Policy applies to all representatives of the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe. Representatives include all workers and officers appointed (both laity and clergy) or volunteers, youth workers, chaplains, board members, official visitors and contractors undertaking work on behalf of the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe. The Policy is an instrument that is to be used as a point of reference in decision making. All Methodist Church in Zimbabwe visitors and employees (both laity and clergy) attending the Church sponsored activities shall be bound to this policy.

This policy shall give operational guidelines and a code of conduct for all representatives of the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe. The policy shall be in force in all societies, districts, regional and international fellowships, institutions and organizations, service agencies and all other places where the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe activities are taking place.

2.0. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

- **Bullying:** Bullying is the inappropriate use of power by an individual or group, with intent to injure. It is usually deliberate and repetitive. Bullying may be physical or psychological (verbal and non-verbal).
 - ✓ Physical bullying includes pushing, hitting, punching, kicking or any other causing hurt or injury. –
 - ✓ Verbal bullying includes insults, taunts (mocking), threats and ridicules.
 - ✓ Psychological bullying includes physical intimidation and ostracism (keeping out).
- **Child labour:** This is any work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that harmful to physical and mental development. It refers to work that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children. These include but not limited to employing a child as a domestic helper, slavery, child trafficking, debt bondage and sexual exploitation
- **Child Abuse:** Is an act, or failure to act, on the part of a parent or caretaker that results in the death, serious physical or emotional harm, Sexual Abuse, or exploitation of a child, or which places the child in an imminent risk of serious harm
- **Child or young person:** A child or young person is regarded to be any person under the age of 18 years.
- **Child-Safe Environment:** A child-safe environment is one free from real and perceived harm.
- **Child-Sex Tourism:** Tourism Act 14:20 defines child-sex tourism as “the commercial sexual exploitation of children by men or women who travel from one place to another, usually from a richer country to one that is less developed, and there engage in sexual acts with children, defined as anyone aged under 18years.”
- **Consultants:** Those engaged on short term contracts such as but not limited to researchers, suppliers, photographers etc. working in Zimbabwe or abroad.
- **Discrimination:** Discrimination includes the exclusion of, mistreatment of, or action against an individual based on social status, race, ethnicity, colour, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, national origin, political affiliation or disability
- **Duty of Care:** Duty of Care is a common law concept that refers to the responsibility of the organisation, church and individual to provide children

with an adequate level of protection against harm. It is the duty of the organisation, church and its individuals to protect children from all reasonably foreseeable risk of or real injury.

- **Emotional abuse:** The failure to provide a developmentally appropriate and supportive environment to enable children to realize their full potential in the context of the society in which the child lives. This can be restriction of a child to movement, degrading, humiliating, scapegoat, and threatening, scaring, discriminating, ridiculing or other non-physical forms of hostile or rejecting treatment (WHO 1999)
- **Employees:** These are workers, both clergy and laity employed by the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe on long- and short-term contracts.
- **Exposure to Domestic Violence:** Domestic violence occurs when children and young people witness or experience the chronic domination, coercion, intimidation and victimization of one person by another by physical, sexual or emotional means within intimate relationships.
- **Head of Office-** refers to any officer occupying the office of minister at society, Circuit Superintendent, School Principal, District Bishop and General Secretary at respective tiers of the church
- **Human Trafficking:** Involves the use of force, fraud or coercion to obtain some type of labour or commercial sex act.
- **Neglect/ negligence:** Is the inattention or omission on the part of the caregiver to provide for the development of the child in health, education, shelter etc. in the context of resources reasonably available to the family or caretakers and causes, or has a high probability of causing harm to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. (WHO, 1999)
- **Others:** Within reference to this policy, other includes staff family members, visitors, volunteers, board members, committee members, trustees, staff in partnership agencies, suppliers, contractors and any other individuals or groups that have contact with The Methodist Church in Zimbabwe
- **Partners:** For the purposes of this policy, partner refers to any organisation or person that The Methodist Church in Zimbabwe deliver programme services with. These include individuals or organization that supports financial specific projects or programmes.
- **Physical abuse:** Physical abuse occurs when a person purposefully injures or threatens to injure a child or young person. This may take any form of physical treatment including but not limited to slapping, punching,

shaking, kicking, burning, shoving or grabbing. The injury may take any form including but not limited to bruises, cuts, burns or fractures.

- **Protection:** Protection includes ensuring that individual basic human rights, welfare and physical security are recognized, safeguarded and protected in accordance with, church, biblical and international standards.
- **Sexual abuse:** Is the involvement of a child in sexual activity that he/she does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent to, or for which the child is not developmentally prepared and cannot give consent, or that violates the laws or social taboos of society (WHO 1999).
- **Contact acts:** Fondling, penetrative sex, oral sex and sodomizing
- **Non -contact acts:** These are acts without contacting.
- **Voyeurism** – peeping through the window and whistling at girls and women dressing or bathing in the river and exposure of private parts by perpetrator or the child is forced to expose.
- **Pornography** - refers to representations designed to arouse and give sexual pleasure to those who read, see, hear, or handle them
- **Sexual exploitation:** Sexual Exploitation is any abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes; this includes profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.
- Sexual exploitation includes using one's position of authority, influence or control to pressure, force or manipulate someone to do something against their will knowingly or unknowingly, by threatening them with negative repercussions such as withholding project assistance, not approving an employee's work support requests, threatening to make false claims about an employee in public etc.
- **Sexual harassment:** Sexual harassment includes any unwelcome sexual advance, comment, expressed or implied sexual demand, touch, joke, gesture, or any other communication or conduct of a sexual nature, whether verbal, written or visual, by any person to another individual within the scope of work. Sexual harassment may be directed at members of the same or opposite sex and includes harassment based on sexual orientation. Sexual harassment can occur between any one or more individuals
- **Spiritual abuse:** Spiritual abuse occurs when a spiritual leader or someone in a position of spiritual power or authority (whether organisation, institution, church or family) misuses their power or authority, and the trust placed in them, with the intention of controlling, coercing, manipulating or

dominating another individual (e.g. Prophetic messages, deliverance, exorcism and forcing someone to fast, etc.)

- **Vulnerable Adult:** any person 18 years of age or older with diagnosed diminished physical, mental, or emotional capacities. This policy extends that definition to include all adults with diminished physical, mental, or emotional capacities, whether diagnosed or not. A specific example would be a disaster victim whom church people respond to help.
- **Vulnerable adult abuse:** includes physical abuse, neglect, financial abuse, abandonment, isolation, abduction or other treatment with resulting physical harm or pain or mental suffering – regardless of whether those specific results actually were intended.
- **Child protection risk management:** The Methodist Church in Zimbabwe recognizes that there are a number of potential risks to children in our work, particularly in those programmes where staff, suppliers, contractors or others come into contact with children. In recognizing these risks, staff and others will pro-actively assess and manage risks to children to reduce the risk of harm. All staff members and partners will conduct assessments of child protection needs and implement relevant child protection strategies. Programmes that involve direct work with children are considered a higher risk, and therefore require more stringent child safeguarding procedures.
- **Youth Advisor:** any appointed elder who is elected by the youths and approved by the leaders meeting to provide spiritual and societal advice to children and youths.
- **Youth worker:** shall refer to and also mean any appointed youth advisor include full time youth workers employed by the church.

3.0. OBJECTIVES OF THE SAFEGUARDING POLICY

3.1 To advocate for the total protection, support, unite and empower all people in the community, and provide a safe environment that is conducive to growth and development in all human dimensions for all people, especially children and vulnerable adults so that they can safely participate in all programmes and activities of the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe.

- 3.2.** To reduce the danger of all forms of abuse and exploitation by influential perpetrators, including economic, physical, emotional child labour, human trafficking sexual exploitation / harassment and all other forms of abuses in the church ..
- 3.3** To protect all Methodist Church in Zimbabwe employees and representatives against false and malicious allegations of inappropriate behaviour or abuse occurring within their involvement in the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe.
- 3.4.** To provide comprehensive guidelines in the recruitment, selection, induction and expected behaviours of Methodist Church in Zimbabwe representatives, many of whom work with children and vulnerable adults.
- 3.5** To outline procedures for reporting suspected and actual abuse of children and adults within the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe systems.
- 3.6** To conform to the international, regional and national minimum standards for safeguarding the rights of all people, including children and vulnerable adults.

4.0 RECRUITMENT & TRAINING IN THE METHODIST CHURCH IN ZIMBABWE

- 4.1** All job adverts carry statement about the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe's commitment to safeguarding and to employing people who do not pose a risk of harm to others
- 4.2** Questions included in all interviews for possible new candidates to determine attitudes, perceptions, behaviours of the candidate relating to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults (should be general but also specific to the position).
- 4.3** At least two reference checks will be obtained, ideally verbally, from previous employers or professional contacts. Checks will include questions about candidate's previous professional or personal conduct around children and vulnerable adults (and any concerns).
- 4.4** Successful candidates will receive the Safeguarding Policy and be required to sign the Code of Conduct

- 4.5** All prospective representatives (including employees, youth workers, chaplains, suppliers, contractors, visitors, volunteers and board members) will be informed of The Methodist Church in Zimbabwe's Safeguarding Policy. All applicants will be subject to police clearance. If police clearance cannot be obtained for a valid reason, applicants will be required to complete a declaration disclosing any criminal convictions, countersigned by a witness who has known them for at least 5 years.
- 4.6** Each Department, unit or institution shall conduct an induction for all new representatives (including employees, youth workers, chaplains, volunteers, board members, visitors or contractors) where safeguarding shall be a key subject of the induction process. Each new representative shall receive a copy of the Safeguarding Policy and sign the Code of Conduct, representing their commitment to uphold the expected behaviours and protect and safeguard the welfare of all people, including children and vulnerable adults.
- 4.7** Existing representatives are encouraged to participate in at least one safeguarding refresher training session annually, and at minimum they must attend refresher training every three years. This training should explain the expected behaviours outlined in this policy and the Code of Conduct, the requirement to report any safeguarding concerns and how to report concerns according to this policy. The Methodist Church in Zimbabwe will keep a record of which representatives have attended training and when.
- 4.8** All representatives will be required to re-sign the Code of Conduct annually. The Methodist Church in Zimbabwe will keep a record of which representatives have signed the Code of Conduct and when.
- 4.9** Any representatives visiting communities, including employees of partner organizations or agencies and students will be given a briefing by the Head of Department or Unit on the incidence and indicators of child abuse.
- 4.10** Volunteers and suppliers with the MCZ will be monitored by the relevant church structures under whose jurisdiction they fall. These will ensure that confidential information concerning safeguarding is not misused.

5.0. BEHAVIOUR PROTOCOLS IN THE METHODIST CHURCH IN ZIMBABWE

- 5.1** Behaviour protocols are rules of appropriate and proper behaviour, which are designed to protect all people involved in the life of the church. This includes protecting both children and adults from experiencing abuse, and also protecting representatives from false accusations of inappropriate behaviour or abuse. These protocols apply to all Methodist Church in Zimbabwe representatives (including employees/workers, youth workers, volunteers, board members/committee members, contractors/suppliers, partners and employees of any agency and official visitors to any MCZ projects or activities and any other Methodist business or institution).
- 5.2** Methodist Church in Zimbabwe representatives (including employee/workers, Youth workers, volunteers, board members/committee members, contractors/suppliers, visitors) must not stay alone overnight with one or more children or minors, whether in staff accommodation, project premises or elsewhere.
- 5.3** The Methodist Church in Zimbabwe representatives should not hire nor facilitate hiring of minors as “Domestic helpers” or provide temporal shelter for minors in their homes. A minor is defined as a child under the age of 18 years.
- 5.4** The Methodist Church in Zimbabwe representatives must not, in the course of carrying out their work, fondle, hold, kiss, hug or touch minors and anyone, whether same or opposite sex in an inappropriate or culturally insensitive way. To avoid misunderstanding, it is recommended that a child be asked for permission before holding hand even during prayer, exorcism or deliverance.
- 5.5** Where possible and practical two or more adults shall supervise all activities where minors or children are involved and are present at all times. If this is not possible, the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe representatives are encouraged to look for alternatives such as being accompanied by community members on visits to children.
- 5.6** Methodist Church in Zimbabwe representatives must avoid being placed in compromising or vulnerable positions by any minor or adult. There are circumstances where minors and adults can behave seductively. Methodist Church in Zimbabwe representatives are expected to be

people of high moral standard who can resist any temptation. In the event that a minister or counsellor requires a private space for confidentiality, the parties must keep the door and curtains open, just in case one party may need some intervention.

5.7 Inappropriate behaviour by Methodist Church in Zimbabwe representatives towards children or any adult is a ground for disciplinary action. Inappropriate behaviour by representatives includes:

- Engaging in bullying, emotional abuse, harassment, physical abuse, sexual abuse, sexual misconduct, sexual grooming or spiritual abuse of any person.
- Using a position of power to refuse to help, or to favour some people over others, in order to gain some personal benefit
- Using the power of a role to influence or force someone to do something for our personal gain or that will have a negative effect on their well-being or their community
- Using a position to exchange or gain money, work benefits, or sexual favours from members of the community being supported with church programs and activities or from other representatives. We must not demand or accept favours, bribes or other forms of personal enrichment. This is because such relationships can be based on inherently unequal power dynamics and undermine the credibility and integrity of church work.
- Making or sending offensive or sexual messages (by email, telephone or any other means) to or about anyone involved in church programs and activities or to another representative
- Making sexually suggestive comments or jokes, and acting in sexually suggestive ways, such as leering or staring, brushing up against someone, touching, fondling or hugging.

5.8 Methodist Church in Zimbabwe representatives must report any suspected or known breach of this Policy or the Code of Conduct. Failure to report any suspected or known concerns itself constitutes a breach and can lead to abuse being able to continue. The Methodist Church in Zimbabwe representatives must use appropriate language, avoiding derogatory and foul language in their interaction with children and vulnerable adults.

5.9 The Methodist Church in Zimbabwe representatives must use appropriate language, avoiding derogatory and foul language in their interaction with children and vulnerable adults.

5.10 To maintain safe boundaries in their work, Methodist Church in Zimbabwe representatives must:

- Disclose to the church if they are or have been investigated for any criminal offences or have any knowledge of serious criminal activity
- Inform the church if they engage in a romantic or sexual relationship with a member of the community being supported with church programs and activities and/or with another representative, in order to prevent the perception of a conflict of interest or fraternization

5.11 Methodist Church in Zimbabwe representatives responsible for planning and implementing MCZ programs and activities are required to undertake a risk assessment that considers possible safeguarding risks. Risk assessments must include an assessment of any risks of harm to children and adults involved in the programs or activities and identify ways to reduce these risks. Risk assessments should be reviewed and updated regularly, at least annually.

6.0 PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING SUSPECTED OR ACTUAL ABUSE OF CHILDREN OR ADULTS BY MCZ REPRESENTATIVES OR IN THE MCZ PLACES OF WORSHIP, INSTITUTIONS OR ANY OTHER PLACE ASSOCIATED WITH MCZ PROGRAMMES AND ACTIVITIES

The Methodist Church in Zimbabwe will treat seriously all concerns reported about suspected or actual abuse or other policy non-compliance.

The Methodist Church in Zimbabwe is committed to supporting victims/survivors and ensuring that abuse is not enabled to continue. As part of this commitment the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe will:

- Consult people involved in MCZ programs and activities, especially children and adults, to understand preferred ways of safely reporting any concerns
- Ensure people involved in MCZ programs and activities are regularly made aware of the expected conduct of MCZ representatives and how they can report any concerns or issues relating to their involvement with the

MCZ. For example, this could be done through verbal explanations, posters, leaflets, including child-friendly means.

- Develop linkages with local specialist organisations, such as medical, psychosocial, legal services and safe houses, to ensure victims/survivors can be quickly referred to support if needed.

6.1 Should Methodist Church in Zimbabwe representative receive any information about, or observe, actual or suspected abuse by a MCZ representative or at a MCZ site/ institution or circuit he or she must immediately inform the local church leadership or contact the General Secretary. Where appropriate the matter will be referred for further investigation. The Methodist Church in Zimbabwe will ensure those who report concerns do not face consequences in their role within the church as a result of reporting, as long as concerns reported are made in good faith with no malicious intention.

6.2 Any MCZ representative who has knowledge or suspicion that anyone, including children or vulnerable adults, is at risk of harm due to other MCZ representatives or as a result of their involvement in MCZ activities must report this to the head of office, who will determine what action to take within 24hours.

The General Secretary can be contacted by either:

Phone (call/text): 0242 250523 or

Email: gssec@connexional.co.zw or

Letter: Addressed to "Confidential – Head of Office", Wesley House, 17 Selous Avenue, P.O. Box CY 71, Causeway, Harare.

6.3 In the event that the head of office is the alleged or suspected perpetrator, Methodist Church in Zimbabwe representatives shall call the national call centre on a toll-free line and inform the attendant all the details of the incident including the people involved.

The toll-free phone number is:

7.0. PROCEDURES FOR MANAGING CONCERNS/COMPLAINTS RECEIVED

- 7.1.** When the church leadership receives a concern or complaint, they will store all details confidentially, locked securely in a hard copy cabinet or in a secure electronic folder. Information will only be shared with others on a need-to-know basis, only if absolutely required for the purposes of completing an investigation or making referrals to support services.
- 7.2.** Within 24 hours, the local church representative should report to the Connexional office and the issue to be handled through the GS's office together with members of the Safeguarding Committee or other panel of suitably skilled MCZ representatives who can be called on for these matters to assess the concern. The Safeguarding Committee/panel should be known in advance who they are to avoid delays.
- If the reported concern falls within the scope of the Safeguarding Policy. The concern falls within the Policy scope if it relates to MCZ representatives as suspected or alleged perpetrators, or if it relates to suspected or alleged incidents occurring within MCZ activities/sites/institutions/agencies.
 - If there is any immediate risk of harm (eg. to the alleged victim/survivor or to the complainant), and if so, the Safeguarding Committee should support access or provide referrals to local specialist agencies (such as medical, psychosocial or crisis accommodation).
 - If the concern reported involves possible criminal behaviour it should be managed as outlined in point 7.4. If the concern reported falls within the Policy scope but does not involve criminal behaviour it should be managed as outlined in point 7.5. If the concern reported falls outside of the Policy scope it should be managed as outlined in point 7.6.
- 7.3.** If the reported concern involves possible criminal behaviour the Safeguarding Committee should report it to the relevant departments of the Zimbabwe Republic Police, as long as this is in accordance with the wishes of an adult survivor/victim. All possible criminal behaviour involving children must be reported to the relevant authorities. For matters involving possible criminal behaviours, subsequent investigation will be completed by the Police and not by the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe Safeguarding Committee. The Police will also make referrals as needed to any other government department including the Social Welfare.

The Methodist Church in Zimbabwe Safeguarding Committee may still need to decide on internal steps required to reduce any risk of harm, including suspending alleged perpetrators from their MCZ duties whilst an investigation takes place, and then terminating from duties if an investigation confirms criminal behaviour has occurred.

7.4. If the concern falls within the Policy scope but does not involve possible criminal behaviour (ie it involves some other breach of the policy or Code of Conduct), the Safeguarding Committee should manage and investigate the concern internally within the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe, including:

- Assessing what information may be required to substantiate the concern reported
- Assessing the severity of the policy or Code of Conduct breach
- Assessing if the representative has breached this policy or Code of Conduct previously
- Applying warnings, punishments or remedies to ensure the representative does not breach the Policy or Code of Conduct again and reduces risk of harm to any children or adults. This will depend on the severity of the breach and whether the representative is deemed to pose a risk to children or adults.
- Applying learnings to strengthen MCZ systems, to reduce the risk of future Policy or Code of Conduct breaches

7.5 If any Methodist Church in Zimbabwe representative has knowledge or suspicion that a child or adult is at risk of harm outside of their involvement in the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe (ie outside of the Policy scope, being a protection concern, not safeguarding), they should follow the requirements for reporting stipulated under national laws. This may involve reporting to the relevant authorities or Government departments, including:

- Reporting to the Social Welfare department, who are the custodians and in charge of reintegration of children to their families. It also ensures guardianship of vulnerable children for their safety and psychosocial needs.

7.6. Reporting to the Zimbabwe Republic Police's Victim Friendly Unit, located at the nearest Police Station or any other organization which deals with the protection and safeguarding of children or adults. This should be done within 24 hours as anticipated by the law.

- Making a follow-up on the referral within 72 hours, by talking to the Social Welfare
- Officer, Police or organization that it has been reported to.

7.7. The Head of Office should keep a record of how all concerns reported are managed, including the steps taken, if referrals were made to authorities or specialist organisations, the outcome of any external/internal investigation and steps taken in response.

8.0 COMMUNICATIONS ABOUT CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS UNDER THE METHODIST CHURCH IN ZIMBABWE, INSTITUTIONS & PROGRAMMES

8.1. Communications about all people, especially children and vulnerable adults, should use pictures that are decent and respectful, not presenting them as victims. All people should be adequately clothed and avoid sexually suggestive poses. Language that implies a relationship of power should also be avoided. Where children and vulnerable adults are indeed victims, for example in times of famine, their dignity should be preserved while at the same time reality is presented.

8.2. When taking photos/videos of children or adults in relation to Methodist Church of Zimbabwe work, representatives must obtain informed consent from the individual themselves and also from their parent/guardian(s) if they are a child. Informed consent should include an explanation of how photos/videos will be used.

8.3. No individual or organization shall publish scanned images of vulnerable children or vulnerable adults on any Web site, or any other any other promotional materials without the written permission of the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe office responsible for the project and the written consent of the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the child.

8.4. Personal and physical information that could be used to identify the location of a child or adult within a country should not be shared electronically or used on the MCZ web sites or in any other form of communication.

8.5. Individuals or organisations requesting the use of the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe resources such as videos or photographs should be required to sign an agreement with The Methodist Church in Zimbabwe as to the proper use of such materials. The agreement will include a statement that any use of such materials for purposes other than what is agreed upon could subject the borrowing individual or organisation to legal action. Furthermore, failure to adhere to the agreed upon use of the material will result in the immediate termination of The Methodist Church in Zimbabwe's permission to use the subject materials and/or require immediate return of all materials provided by The Methodist Church in Zimbabwe as well as any copies of such materials.

8.6. Where there is an event outside the local society, circuit or district or institution, organizers of the event shall obtain prior permission from the relevant meeting and the head of office. On the day of travelling, the organizers shall compile and submit to the head of office a passenger manifest for each vehicle before departure. In the event that minors are part of the people travelling, the organizers shall obtain written consent in form of signed indemnity forms from all parents or guardians of those minors (see Annexure 7).

9.0. PARTNER ORGANISATIONS BY THE METHODIST CHURCH IN ZIMBABWE

Any agreement between The Methodist Church in Zimbabwe and partner organisations which provide services to children, youth or vulnerable adults will require assurance that sufficiently thorough Safeguarding Policies and procedures are in place, acknowledging that lack of such policies can put both the children and the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe at risk. If partner organisations cannot demonstrate that safeguarding policies and procedures are in place the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe will not engage in the partnership or otherwise ensure that MCZ policies and procedures will apply.

10.0. DATE OF REVIEW

This Policy will be reviewed every 3-5 years, to ensure it remains relevant and is updated to reflect learnings and best practice over time.

11.0. Policy Adoption

Adopted by the Conference of the MCZ as attested to by the following signatures:

Presiding Bishop _____

Rev George Mawire

Date:

General Secretary _____

Rev Dr (Name) Mujinga

Date:

Lay President _____

Mr (put first name) Hanyani

Date:

DRAFT