

## **Guidelines for the Internet**

The following Guidelines have been prepared by the Methodists who have graciously allowed us to reproduce them here. We have not amended them in any way. However, you might like to note that the link at the end of the first section - to 'good safeguarding practice' refers to a Methodist publication. You will be aware that there is a similar Baptist publication *Safe to Grow*, available from publications@baptist.org.uk (£5.00 plus 20% post and packing).

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## **Methodist churches and organisations creating their own website are encouraged to observe safeguarding guidelines**

*Anyone designing a website for a Methodist church, circuit or district will want to ensure that it promotes opportunities for all ages – including children and young people - to get involved in the life of the church. While it is important to reflect the full mix of participation in church worship and other activities, care should be taken to ensure the safety of children and young people. Website builders are encouraged to follow these guidelines:*

- Children and young people under the age of 18 should not be identified by surname or other personal details. These details include e-mail or postal addresses, telephone or fax numbers.
  - When using photographs of children and young people, it is preferable to use group pictures. When a photograph of an individual child or young person is used, surnames or other personal details should not be used in any caption.
  - Permission to use information about or photographs of children and young people - where they are to be identified - should be obtained from their parents or carers.
  - Care must be taken when advertising special events for children and young people. It may be beneficial to encourage enquirers to obtain full details for an event by speaking to a responsible contact person, such as a youth worker or minister. (For example, a notice for a district event might give the type of event, the date, the age group, the town or circuit, but not the specific venue. A church holiday club for children might not give specific times, but might talk about 'two hours every morning'. In each case a telephone contact of an organiser/leader is included.)
  - When posting activity ideas for children's or youth groups, they should comply with good safeguarding practice.
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## **Those working with children and young people are encouraged to observe safeguarding guidelines when using the web**

*There may be occasions when church officers, youth or children's workers wish to demonstrate the internet to children or young people, or encourage them to access information online as part of an activity. When this happens, workers are encouraged to follow these guidelines:*

- Ensure that parents or carers are aware of what their children or young people are doing and have given their permission.
- When demonstrations are being given, plan beforehand to ensure that all websites visited have material that is appropriate for the age group taking part.

• Where children and young people are given access to undertake their own searches on the internet, the following search engines are recommended by the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE):

- [AOL Net Find Kids only](#)
- [KidsClick](#) web search for kids by librarians
- [PowerBug](#)
- [Superkid](#)
- [Webkeys Prowler](#) world's biggest search engine for kids
- [Yahooligans! Web guide for kids](#)

Your nearest Local Education Authority may also operate a local search engine facility appropriate for children and young people.

- Where children and young people are being encouraged to undertake subsequent searches on the internet back home, that they do so with the knowledge/supervision of their parent or carer.
- Warn children and young people about the dangers of giving out personal details on the net.
- Ensure children and young people obtain parental consent if they wish to develop internet friends into face-to-face friendships. Even then, they should always be accompanied on any first meeting.

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## Internet guidelines for children and young people

### Be Net Smart !

- Never tell anyone you meet on the Internet your home address, your telephone number or your school's name, unless your parent or carer specifically gives you permission.
- Never send anyone your picture, credit card or bank details, or anything else, without first checking with your parent or carer.
- Never give your password to anyone, even a best friend.
- Never arrange to meet anyone in person without first agreeing it with your parent or carer, and get them to come along to the first meeting, which should always be in a public place.
- Never hang around in a chat room or in a conference if someone says or writes something which makes you feel uncomfortable or worried, and always report it to your parent or carer.
- Never respond to nasty, suggestive or rude e-mails or postings in Usenet Groups.
- If you see something you don't like (eg bad language or distasteful pictures) then move on or click "back". If you are still concerned, talk to your parent or carer.
- Always remember if someone makes you an offer which seems too good to be true, it probably is.

***These latter guidelines for children and young people are adapted from the NCH Action for Children paper 'Children on the Net: Opportunities and Hazards' (1998).***