

# SAFEGUARDING AND SUSPENSIONS



The Secretary of the Conference has the authority, on a recommendation of the Safeguarding Committee, to instruct any minister, local preacher or member to step down from their roles and responsibilities of their office in the Church. This instruction must be given in writing and should be accompanied by a copy of the recommendation made by the Safeguarding Committee. These directions are subject to review and appeal. This process is laid out in Standing Order (SO) 013C.

## **Suspension**

If there are reasonable grounds to believe a safeguarding issue has arisen with a deacon, presbyter or probationer, they should be suspended, and if they do not resign, they can be suspended from their role in the Church, or from any particular functions, powers or responsibilities of their role. This is laid out in SO 013C.

The suspension can be subject to variation or extension if circumstances change and the suspending officer (the District Chair or the Circuit Superintendent) should refer the matter to the Director of Safeguarding, who may offer advice or refer the matter to the Safeguarding Committee for its advice, direction or recommendations (SO 232(2)).

Office-holder includes presbyters, deacons and probationers; local preachers; any other lay officer in the Church; and the managing trustees of any model trust property. A lay officer is an officer of the Church who is not a deacon, presbyter, probationer or Local Preacher; and managing trustees are the identified charity trustees of the church.

The District Chair is the officer with authority to suspend presbyters, deacons, probationers or supernumeraries, and the Circuit Superintendent has the authority to suspend lay employees and volunteers.

For further information, see SO 013C and SO 232(1A).

For up-to-date safeguarding information, see: **[methodist.org.uk/safeguarding](https://methodist.org.uk/safeguarding)**

This is part of a series of leaflets summarising the safeguarding provisions in Methodist Church Standing Orders and *The Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church*. They are not intended to replace the Standing Orders referenced. If you are unclear about their interpretation, please seek advice from the Connexional Safeguarding Team or the Conference Officer for Legal and Constitutional Practice.

The other leaflets in the Safeguarding Standing Orders series are:

- A Simplified Guide
- The Safeguarding Committee
- Duty to Obtain Disclosures
- The Church and Public Protection
- Safeguarding and the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act



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