



Our Church is committed to **POSITIVE WORKING TOGETHER**

What is Positive Working Together?

Positive Working Together was adopted by Methodist Conference 2015 and establishes a 'code of conduct' or 'Shared Commitment' to how we behave together, as Methodists, in the lives of our churches. The intention is not to stifle discussion or disagreements (which approached creatively lead to new ideas) but to make it clear that as people in the Methodist Church, we can agree or disagree and be kind, respectful, thoughtful, and gentle in the process. Positive Working Together covers face-to-face behaviours and also our behaviour online and on the phone.

What does this mean in practice?

Its adoption in 2015 means that Positive Working Together outlines the expectation for how people should behave around one another in Methodist churches around the country. It explains how we need to consider how we communicate and how we treat one another. Each person is equally important to God and must be treated with respect. The Methodist Church is an inclusive church that seeks to work collaboratively and recognises the challenges that difference can bring. The Shared Commitment explains in full the detail of this policy, however, in summary:

OUR COMMITMENT is to:

- *listen carefully to each other;*
- *speak & act respectfully at all times;*
- *be courteous in all communication;*
- *encourage openness & confidence in our relationships;*
- *never use verbal or physical intimidation in our relationships;*
- *deal positively with one another even when we disagree*

Want to know more?

Ask a member of our church about it today or read more at the web address below.

SHARED COMMITMENT

Promoting positive working relationships

Starting from a distinctively Christian standpoint creates an opportunity for individuals associated with the Church to behave in a manner which models the very highest standards of human interaction and relationships. On an everyday basis, high standards of behaviour require attention to how individuals communicate with each other, how people are treated, how information is managed and shared and how difference is understood and embraced. A fuller list is available here www.methodist.org.uk/pwt (page 11, section 6).

In practical terms this means:

Communication

- Paying attention to how we greet and address each other on an everyday basis, ensuring that we are at all times courteous, respectful and appropriate, regardless of the medium
- Being mindful of the impact our communication has on others and making efforts to understand our communication from the perspective of how it is received by others
- Being aware of how our power over others is communicated and taking measures to ensure that such power is not misused or abused
- Only communicating about other people what we would be prepared to communicate to them face-to-face unless there are overriding and justifiable reasons not to do so
- Making an effort to check with others whenever we fear we may have upset or offended them in order to promote confidence and clarity in our relationships with others
- Making time to genuinely listen to what others communicate to us, particularly when the situation is sensitive or personally challenging to us.

A list of examples of negative behaviour is here www.methodist.org.uk/pwt (page 34, appendix 3).

How we treat each other

- Treating every person fairly, equally and with dignity and respect
- Behaving at all times with integrity, honesty and openness
- Adjusting our behaviour, including language, if we understand it to be causing offence
- Bringing unfair treatment to the attention of others so as to avoid it being repeated
- Challenging inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour we have witnessed and doing this in a constructive, sensitive and proportionate way
- Responding to criticism of our own behaviour by genuinely listening to what is being said, remaining calm and reflecting honestly on its potential validity before responding
- Being aware that at times we may lack self-awareness and that this may impact negatively on our behaviour.

Inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour often arises from a context where conflict is not dealt with well. We recognise that conflict is an inevitable part of life. However, when it is handled badly it often leads to poor behaviour. Although informal approaches to dealing with conflict are offered here, in some situations, due to the gravity of what is alleged to have occurred, it may be necessary to move quickly to formal processes to ensure that individuals are properly held to account.

From "Positive Working Together – A Short Guide" Pp4-5, Our Shared Commitment. Published by and adopted as policy by The Methodist Church in June 2015