

# Volunteer Boundary Checklist

(Methodist Safeguarding – Good Practice Tool)

This checklist helps volunteers reflect on safe, appropriate boundaries in their role. Boundaries protect **service users, volunteers, and the church**.

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## 1. Understanding My Role

- ✓ I understand **what my volunteer role is and is not**
- ✓ I know **who I am accountable to** for this role
- ✓ I understand when I should **pass concerns on**, rather than deal with them myself
- ✓ I only act **within my role description** and agreed responsibilities

 *Ask yourself:*

"Am I doing something because it's kind — or because I feel responsible in a way that goes beyond my role?"

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## 2. Relationships and Behaviour

- ✓ I treat everyone with **respect, dignity, and consistency**
- ✓ I avoid becoming someone's **only or main source of support**
- ✓ I do not promise **confidentiality I cannot keep**
- ✓ I maintain appropriate **emotional and personal boundaries**

 **Be alert if:**

- Someone asks for special treatment
  - A relationship begins to feel "exclusive"
  - You feel flattered, over relied upon, or uncomfortable
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## 3. Contact and Communication

- ✓ Contact with service users happens **through agreed channels**
- ✓ I avoid unnecessary **private or one-to-one contact**
- ✓ I follow agreed guidance on:

- Phone calls
- Messaging apps
- Social media

▶ **Not appropriate:**

- Secretive contact
  - Late-night messaging
  - Personal social media friendships linked to the role (unless agreed)
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## 4. Time, Availability, and Favour-Giving

- ✓ I volunteer **within agreed times and limits**
- ✓ I do not give money, gifts, or personal resources
- ✓ I do not take on tasks that belong to paid staff or professionals
- ✓ I step back when something feels **too much**

🔗 *Healthy boundary question:*

"Would I be comfortable explaining this action to a Safeguarding Officer?"

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## 5. Pastoral Care and Support

- ✓ I listen with care but do not act as a **counsellor or therapist**
- ✓ I know when to **signpost or refer on**
- ✓ I recognise when someone's needs go beyond my role

▶ **Always pass on concerns about:**

- Safety or wellbeing
  - Abuse or neglect
  - Emotional dependency
  - Risk to self or others
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## 6. Safeguarding and Reporting

- ✓ I know **who the Church Safeguarding Officer is**
- ✓ I know how to **raise a concern or seek advice**
- ✓ I understand that:

- Raising concerns is **responsible safeguarding**
- I am never expected to manage concerns alone

 *Early advice is encouraged — you do not need to be certain to ask.*

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## 7. Looking After Myself as a Volunteer

- ☒ I know it is okay to say “**I need support**” or “**I need to step back**”
- ☒ I understand that boundaries help prevent burnout
- ☒ I use supervision, check-ins, or conversations with leaders appropriately

 *Safeguarding includes caring for volunteers too.*

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## Final Reflection

Before continuing in my role, I ask myself:

- Am I working **within my role and boundaries**?
- Would my actions stand up to **safeguarding scrutiny**?
- Do I know **who to talk to** if something feels unclear?

If the answer to any of these is “no”, **I will seek advice**.

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**This checklist reflects Methodist safeguarding expectations that:**

- Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility
- Clear boundaries protect all involved
- Early conversations prevent harm