

## SCAM Warning

A number of ministers appear to have had their email addresses hacked – so you should not automatically trust emails from them, especially if they are asking you to 'do them a favour' or to buy Google Play cards or Amazon Vouchers. Katrin and I have already received text messages, described below, and they look very real and could easily trick you if not careful.

How does the scam work? – below is an account from a church member in the Southampton Methodist District:

*A church member received an email which showed up as being 'from' the Minister. He had no reason to suspect that it was not from the Minister, as they have email contact about all sorts of church matters. He opened the email. It asked him if he was available, because the sender needed a favour, and was signed from the minister. Still unsuspecting he replied and then received a response asking him to go to a shop and purchase a Google Play card, claiming that the sender had forgotten their niece's birthday and it was urgent.*

*He became suspicious, then noticed that the grammar and punctuation were poor. He therefore did not respond, but alerted the Minister.*

*The email address the messages had been sent from, and it was not the Ministers. Instead it was from the email address: office [23127@gmail.com](mailto:23127@gmail.com).*

*A few days later the Minister was contacted by another Member, to ask if she had just texted her.*

*The sender signed as the Minister. claimed to be in a meeting, but to need a favour. She replied to the first message, and was then asked to go to a shop and buy a Google Play card. But was given a different reason. She was told that the card was needed for a woman who was in hospital battling cancer.*

*The phone number from which the texts were sent was 07451 200598.*

If you receive an email do not open it. Depending on your email provide, please add to your JUNK folder and BLOCK the sender.

If you receive a text message BLOCK and delete the number.

You can also find more useful advise here: [Online Safety](#)

As ever, if you have any questions or concerns please give me a call on 07483 362 735 or email me at [safeguarding@sheffieldmethodist.org](mailto:safeguarding@sheffieldmethodist.org)

Many thanks

Alison Hill

District Safeguarding Officer