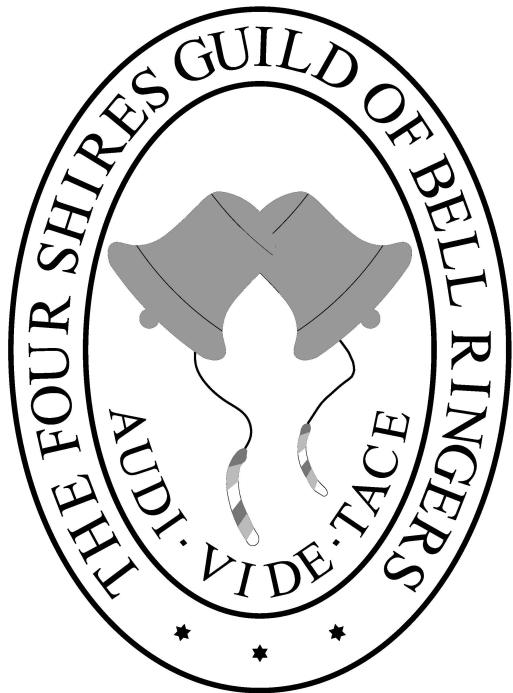


THE FOUR SHIRES GUILD OF BELL RINGERS



SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Maintaining a Safe Environment for Young People and Vulnerable Adults in bell ringing

THE FOUR SHIRES GUILD OF BELL RINGERS

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BACKGROUND

The background to this policy is provided by:

Children Act 1989

Home Office Guidance "Safe from Harm" 1993

House of Bishops' policy Protecting All God's Children 2004

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

Protection of Freedoms Act 2012

Church of England Parish Safeguarding Handbook 2018

Central Council of Church Bell Ringers Safeguarding in Bell Ringing 2019

It should be specially noted that whilst the Church includes "vulnerable adults" in their policies, legal definition is restricted to those under institutional care. Bell ringing activities do not normally come into this category and for practical purposes the following policies are aimed at those under 18 years.

The Four Shires Guild of Bell Ringers

Operations of the Guild

The Four Shires Guild covers the counties of Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire, centered on the historical point at which the four counties met when the Guild was founded in 1909.

The Guild is non-territorial, has no affiliated towers and is therefore dependent on permission by the owning authorities to allow ringing to take place. This is usually the Church of England, whose powers of control are delegated to the individual Parochial Church Council (PCC). The Guild does not normally undertake face-to-face training of young persons at local level.

The Guild does, however, arrange events on at least a weekly basis and this gives rise to the opportunity for close relationships to be established between adults and young or vulnerable people. It is in this context that the policy toward Safeguarding is drawn up.

Safeguarding in the context of Bell Ringing :

The involvement of young people has long been a feature of church bell ringing. The teaching of these young people and their acceptance and encouragement by adult ringers has made the world of ringing almost unique in the way in which the different age groups interact. The Dioceses of Gloucester, Oxford, Coventry and Worcester require all Parochial Church Councils to have an acceptable policy for work with young people in their respective parishes. All ringing-related activities for young people at parish level will be subject to the requirements of the local PCC policy. However, there is a range of different ringing-related activities in which young ringers may take part, not all of which will be addressed by a Parish policy. The following list indicates the range of activities but is not exhaustive:

1. Attendance at practice and service ringing in their own tower.
2. Attendance at practice and service ringing in other towers.
3. Participation in activities arranged locally e.g. outings, social events etc.
4. Attendance at local Society meetings or practices.
5. Participation in other Society events e.g. outings etc.
6. Attendance at Four Shires Guild meetings or events.
7. Attendance at Society Training events.

Those activities organised by the Guild fall principally into categories 2 and 6, and the Guild Policy seeks to demonstrate how the recommendations of the various guidelines have been addressed and their application to Guild Officers.

The Four Shires Guild of Bell Ringers

SAFEGUARDING POLICY STATEMENT

1. The Guild is committed to the safeguarding of children under 18 and, where appropriate, vulnerable adults and ensuring their well-being.
2. The Guild has a responsibility to prevent the physical, sexual, psychological, financial or discriminatory abuse or neglect of such children or vulnerable adults.
3. The Guild undertakes to exercise due diligence in the appointment and selection of those who work closely with children or vulnerable adults.
4. The Guild will follow guidelines issued by the church and, in all events, meet such legal requirements as may be in force.

FULFILMENT OF SAFEGUARDING REQUIREMENTS

Basic legal requirements.

Any ringers carrying out one-to-one physical training of young persons under 18 years of age on a regular basis are considered to be carrying out a "regulated activity". Regular basis frequency is defined as being minimum of (i) once a week, (ii) four days in 30 or (iii) involving overnight hours of 02.00 to 06.00. Anyone meeting these criteria will be required to undergo a background check through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) or, in Scotland, Disclosure Scotland check. On a local basis such checks will be initiated by the Parish Safeguarding Officer of the parish in which the ringing is taking place. It is an offence for anyone to knowingly allow a person who has a criminal record relevant to the protection of minors or vulnerable adults to carry out a regulated activity.

Church requirements and expectations

The church of England has issued several documents setting out their requirements for church workers, paid or volunteer, relating to both children under 18 and "vulnerable adults", the latter inclusion is not paralleled by state legislation except in the context of institutions. The principal documents may be referred to through the Church of England website under Safeguarding, these include:

Promoting a Safer Church

Practice Guidance series: Safer Recruitment

Practice Guidance: Safeguarding Training and Development

Practice Guidance: Risk Assessment for Individuals who may pose Risk

Parish Safeguarding Handbook

Where a Tower Leader actively teaches or manages young people, the Church requires formal appointment of the post holder by the PCC with a DBS check and undergoing approved Safeguarding Awareness training.

The Central Council of Church Bell Ringers has a full text version of

APPLICATION OF PRINCIPLES TO THE GUILD

The Guild does not normally undertake initial training, nor does it have responsibility for the running of individual towers as a parish activity. In this context there is no legal or Church requirement for DBS checked persons.

However, the Guild runs regular and frequent meetings, currently weekly, which host young people involving close contact with the same adults giving scope for familiarity and building relationships the same as for one-to-one training. This close working with children would bring with it the expectation that suitably qualified persons be in charge when young people are present. The argument for having "vetted" persons present is that they will be aware of the requirements for overseeing young people, will be able to deal with any problems which may arise and their very presence is a reassurance to parents and guardians. When young people attend Guild activities, then the organisers are on the day in effect carrying the same responsibility as a tower captain.

In addition, except where undertaken as a private arrangement, the pre-arranged transport of children to a Guild activity should involve a DBS checked driver and, wherever possible, a second adult present.

GUILD PROCEDURES

The Guild will appoint an officer with specific responsibility for Safeguarding issues.

The Guild will identify those activities where the presence of DBS checked persons is required or recommended.

The Guild will seek to ensure that sufficient persons so qualified are available for the identified activities. The registration/checking will normally be achieved through individual ringers' home churches. A list of registered persons will be maintained and kept in a secure manner.

The Guild will keep a register of attendance at those events where registered persons are required to be present. The Guild will seek assurance that proper training and advice has been given to those whose role involves managing activities where a DBS check is required.

In compiling a register of persons available to manage activities, a request may be made to the individual for sight of their DBS certificate and any certificate of Awareness Training, each of which are issued to the individual but are NOT held by their home Parish.

Operation of the Guild across Parish / Diocesan Boundaries

The Church recognises the movement of bell ringers between parishes

and across Diocesan boundaries and has approved the following:

Where a person holds a DBS certificate for working with children issued by their parish, this may be used for the same activity (i.e. bell ringing) in other parishes within the same Diocese.

Where a person wishes to use their DBS certificate for similar work in another Diocese, this is acceptable PROVIDED that the individual is registered for the DBS Update Service. Registration can only take place at the time a new or renewal application is made there being a 30- day window for registration.

Once a person is signed up to the update service, their status can be checked by any parish in which they wish to carry out activities and has the added advantage that no future renewal of DBS certificate is necessary.

Applications for DBS check and certification and registration to the Update Service are all free of charge to volunteers.

COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS

The Guild will deal sympathetically with any complaints of abuse and advise the appropriate authorities as outlined in Good Practice appendix.

It is at the discretion of the Guild to exclude any member (or non-member) from joining in any FSG activity. The person in charge of the activity has the right to ask any member (or non- member) to leave a practice or FSG event if there are concerns about the said person's conduct.

Known Offenders

Whether coming in the form of established ringers or seeking to become a ringer, any persons known to be on the Sex Offenders Register must not be allowed to engage in a regulated activity as this would be a legal offence.

However, a known offender may be able to take part in ringing activities depending upon (a) the nature of their offence, (b) any court restrictions on their activities, (c) perceived risk and (d) the level of supervision that can be afforded. Both the Church of England and the Police have agreed procedures known as Multiple Agency Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) for dealing with offenders returning to circulate in society. The church position is set out in Section 8 of the House of Bishops document "Protecting all God's Children". Any proposal for such a person to be accommodated must be reviewed very seriously with all concerned parties including the incumbent, ringing Society and Diocesan Safeguarding Officer and must have due regard to absolute safety of children and the reassurance of parents. A written agreement with the church **must** be obtained, this generally is between the individual, the parish and the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer.

Potential offenders

Where there is concern about the behaviour of a ringer, this should be brought to the attention of the Parish Safeguarding Officer who may also involve the Diocese. A decision may then be made as to how to proceed and where actions demand, police may need to be involved.

In the case of both known offenders and potential offenders It must always be borne in mind that the incumbent and churchwardens have ultimate sanction in allowing access to the tower. All ringers should appreciate that there is no automatic right to ring bells in any tower controlled by the church.

Review of Policy

This policy will be kept under review and subject to regular updating, in any event not less than every 2 years.

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Christopher F Mew

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APPENDIX A - Good practice for Maintaining a Safe Environment in the Belfry for Young People

1. Parents' consent in writing should be sought prior to commencing teaching, outings or Guild meeting visits and they should be made aware, in advance, of the content and arrangements for teaching, outings or visits. Any medical conditions of the child should be established in advance as should the agreement that the parents are responsible for delivering and collecting the child. It is good practice to invite the parents to a training session so they understand what is involved in learning to ring.
2. If there is a child who it is believed is at immediate risk of harm call the emergency services on 999 and then inform the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser. Any behaviour of adult ringers which gives cause for concern should be discussed with the Parish Safeguarding Officer who will advise about any further action. They can then liaise with the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.
3. Keep an attendance register, which all attendees must sign, so that everyone is aware who was present at any given time.
4. Children must be supervised at all times and should only be allowed into hazardous locations, such as the bell chamber, when accompanied by the Tower Captain / Deputy or Assistant
5. Always have two adults (preferably one of each gender) present whenever children/young people are ringing or being supervised, taught or transported.
6. Touching should be only that appropriate for teaching, supervision and/or in an emergency. Those helping children by ringing another bell or standing nearby should be aware of the need to protect personal space.
7. Relevant health and safety procedures should be followed and first aid available.
8. Local tower arrangements should always be approved by the PCC in line with the Parish Safeguarding Policy. The Tower Captain should have a copy of the Parish Safeguarding Policy and ensure that Ringers have access to it.
9. Ensure that the appropriate insurance is in place prior to any teaching, training or ringing session.
10. All local ringing societies should appoint a Safeguarding Officer, someone who can oversee the performance of safeguarding matters in their area.
11. Good liaison should be established between Tower Captains and PCCs and between the Safeguarding Officer of local societies and the Parish and Diocesan Safeguarding staff.
12. Please note that it is the responsibility of all visiting groups to ensure that those leading/supervising a group have had all relevant checks and it is not the responsibility of the host church, unless the host church is providing the leader/supervisor for a visiting group. All visiting groups should have a copy of this General Statement on Safeguarding Towers in relation to children available to them.



THE CENTRAL COUNCIL OF CHURCH
BELL RINGERS

FOUR SHIRES GUILD OF BELL RINGERS

Permission to ring form

Church.....

Full name of child or young person

.....
Date of birth.....

Address.....

.....
Name of parent/ guardian.....

Contact Tel. No..... Mobile:.....

Name of additional contact and number.....

Medical declaration: Are there any medical conditions (e.g. diabetes, epilepsy) or dietary concerns that we should know about your child? (This will not preclude your child from ringing, but notification now will help in the event of a medical problem). Please give relevant details below or state "none"

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Permission: I have been shown and understand what is involved in bell ringing and I am aware of the hazards present and the need for physical intervention if necessary. I give my permission for the above child/young person to take part in normal bell ringing activities of the group and understand that separate permission will be sought for outings and activities outside normal times and at other locations. Unless otherwise advised, I undertake to deliver and collect the child/ young person from these activities.

Signed parent/ guardian..... Date.....

Signed tower leader.....

Name and contact number.....

Copies to be retained by tower leader and by parent/guardian



FOUR SHIRES GUILD OF BELL RINGERS

Permission to attend outside activity

Church.....

Full name of child or young person
.....

Date of birth.....

Address.....
.....

Name of parent/ guardian.....

Contact Tel No.....Mobile:.....

Name of additional contact and number.....
.....

Medical declaration: I have previously advised status for this child, there being no additional issues relevant to the proposed activity/ but following should be taken into account (e.g. travel sickness)- delete as necessary.

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Permission: I have been given details of the proposed activity away from home church and I give my permission for the above child/young person to take part.
Unless otherwise advised, I undertake to deliver and collect the child/ young person at agreed joining point.

Signed parent/ guardian.....
Date.....

Signed tower leader.....

Name and contact number.....

Copies to be retained by tower leader and by parent/guardian