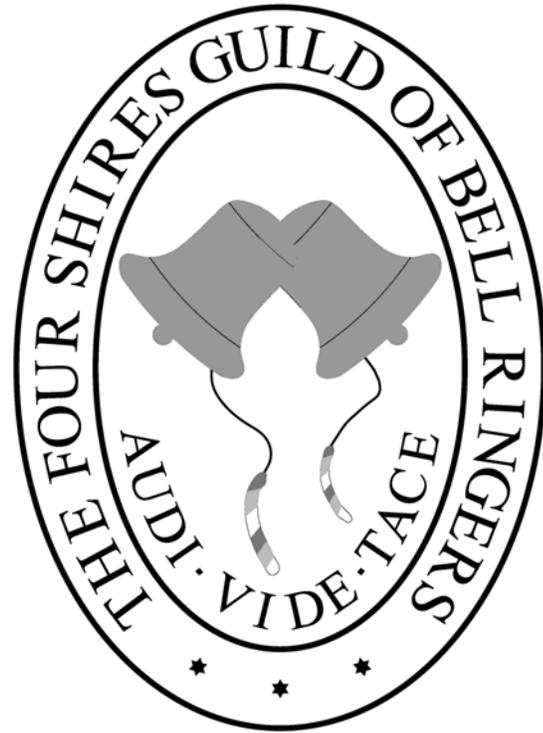


THE FOUR SHIRES GUILD OF BELL RINGERS



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Maintaining a Safe Environment for Young People in bell ringing

Rev:	Date:	Rev'd by:	Agreed by Com'tee	Changes:
0	Feb 2009	S Lewis-Skeath	Jan 2009	Initial agreed document
1	Jan 2010	S Lewis-Skeath	Dec 2009	Front page only

THE FOUR SHIRES GUILD OF BELL RINGERS

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BACKGROUND

The background to this policy is provided by:

Children Act 1989

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

Central Council of Church Bell Ringers guidelines Protecting Young Ringers 2004

Home Office Guidance “Safe from Harm” 1993

The Four Shires Guild of Bell Ringers

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

The Guild is non-territorial and as it does not own any bells or towers is therefore dependent on permission by the owners to allow ringing to take place. This is usually the Church of England, whose powers of control are delegated to the individual Parochial Church Councils (PCC).

Child Protection 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 the parish. 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 by their own band e.g. outings, social events etc.
4. Attendance at Branch meeting or practices.
5. Participation in other Branch events e.g. outings etc.
6. Attendance at Guild meetings or events.
7. Attendance at Branch or Guild Training events.

Clearly items 1, 3, and some aspects of 4, 5, and 6 will be covered by the individual Parish policy.

For

the rest, and particularly in the area of training courses, the Guild Policy should demonstrate how the recommendations of the various guidelines have been addressed.

The policy also needs to clarify the responsibilities of Guild members (including Officers).

Guild policy to ensure compliance with legislation and adopt good practice

The Four Shires Guild of Bell Ringers

POLICY STATEMENT

1. The Guild is committed to the safeguarding of children and 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 the proper care 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.

PROCEDURE

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

The Guild will identify those activities where CRB checked (and ISA registered) persons are required to be present.

The Guild will ensure that sufficient persons so qualified are available for the identified activities. The registration/checking may be achieved either through individual ringers' home churches or by the Guild. In the latter case the Guild will make arrangements with the registering authority as a recognised "organisation" and will need to ensure that disclosures received are kept in a secure manner. A list of registered persons will be maintained.

The Guild will keep a register of attendance at those events where registered persons are required to be present.

The Guild will give proper training and advice to those whose role involves managing activities where a CRB check is required

The Guild will deal sympathetically with any complaints of abuse and advise the appropriate authorities.

It is at the discretion of the Guild to exclude any member (or non member) from joining in any FSG activity. The Ringing Master 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.

This policy is under constant review and subject to regular updating.

Child Protection Officer for the Four Shires Guild of Bell Ringers:
Sophia A.M. Lewis-Skeath
email: sophia.dady@btinternet.com

The Central Council has published its own guidelines which cover the appointment of those with responsibility for tower management and training, and sensible procedures for the day to day management of the tower in respect to protection and development of young people.

These guidelines are consistent with the principles espoused by the House of Bishops' Policy. The Central Council recommends and encourages adoption of its guidelines as a practical measure to protect young ringers and maintain the open welcoming and friendly environment that has characterised church bell ringing for many years.

The Central Council of Church Bell Ringers has a full text version of the [Child Protection Guidelines](#) on its website www.cccbr.org.uk

All members of the Four Shires Guild of Bell Ringers must read and make themselves familiar with these guidelines:

The Central Council of Church Bell Ringers

Protecting Young Ringers

Guidelines for Maintaining a Safe Environment for Young People in the Belfry

Introduction and background

1. These guidelines are designed to ensure that young people can be fully and safely involved with ringing activities.

Ringers are keen that they should reflect the need to cherish and defend the exceptional features of ringing, being an activity in which young and old meet and take part on an equal footing. This enriches those of all ages who know and respect each other, not only for their abilities as ringers but also as individuals. The guidelines should be viewed as a framework for sensible behaviour. In exceptional circumstances alternative arrangements might be made through full consultation with the young person's parents or guardians and their relevant Diocesan Child Protection Adviser.

2. These guidelines are a working document for Tower Captains. They are not intended to be exhaustive and should be read in the context of Diocesan guidelines, PCC policy, and the Church of England House of Bishops' Policy on Child Abuse Protecting All God's Children 2004 1 and equivalent documents from other churches, as well as the Home Office publication Safe from Harm.

3. Ringers are urged to absorb these guidelines into the normal way that ringing is organised so as to minimise any fuss being made or any disruption caused.

4. The Children Act 1989 requires that all who work with young people (in voluntary or in paid employment) should keep them safe from harm. 'Children' are defined in the Act as anyone under the age of 18, or anyone who has been assessed as having a mental age of under 18 (vulnerable adults need similar protection from harm). We refer to these as young people in these guidelines.

5. Allegations of abuse will affect not just those claiming they have been abused, but those who are accused. Ringers all need to protect themselves and each other from such accusations by following good practice.

6. To protect young people and adults who work with them it is necessary to create an open environment where the possibility of abuse or a false allegation cannot occur.

7. Abuse can be emotional, verbal, physical or sexual.

8. Each diocese has published a set of guidelines that it is the responsibility of every PCC to administer.

9. Most PCC's will have appointed a responsible adult to be the first point of contact should notification of child protection issues be necessary, and that person's name or other means of making a complaint should be prominently displayed in the belfry.

10. It is the responsibility of the Tower Captain to liaise with the PCC and understand local arrangements. The Tower Captain should ensure that he/she knows who holds specific responsibility for Child Protection issues in the church.

11. The PCC is responsible for appointing all those involved in church activities that have responsibility for young people.

Among ringers this is likely to mean the Tower Captain and others who are likely to be in charge of ringing at any time.

Each person will need to complete a confidential self-declaration form and have this information checked by the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB), an executive agency of the Home Office. It does not imply any criticism of those asked to apply for a check. Ringers should be encouraged to apply without fear, in order to be able to ensure that young ringers continue to be recruited so as to secure the future of the Exercise. It is recommended that at least two adult members of the tower (preferably one of each sex) complete the declaration and CRB check procedure, and at least one of these should always be present when young people attend ringing.

12. Sensitive information about convictions or other matters will be taken into account only if it is relevant to the activity.

Information disclosed by the Confidential Declaration or the CRB will be assessed by the Diocesan

Child Protection Adviser or a Diocesan Risk Assessment panel and the incumbent advised on how to proceed. In most cases past conduct will not be relevant. However, people with offences against children or some other serious offences will not be able to be leaders of mixed age activities. Unless specifically required by the PCC, it is not necessary for all adult ringers to undergo this check or, for any who prefer not to do so, to be prohibited from taking part in ringing. Nor is it necessary for visitors to the tower to demonstrate that they have been "cleared" in this way, unless the Tower Captain has concerns.

13. We have referred throughout to the 'Tower Captain,' but it is important to remember that others in charge of ringing events where young people are present also carry the same responsibilities.

These guidelines offer an alternative procedure to that recommended in the House of Bishops' Policy.

Compliance with local agreed procedures is required.

Further information is available at www.disclosure.gov.uk or from the CRB, PO Box 110, Liverpool, L3 6ZZ. Information Line (0870) 9090811. This is something that is routinely done these days by all those whose paid or voluntary work or hobby brings them into contact with young people.

Cont. from the Central Council -

Protecting Young Ringers

Guidelines for Maintaining a Safe Environment for Young People in the Belfry

1. The parents or guardians of the young person (referred to here as the parents) should complete a consent form when the young person starts to learn to ring. This form should be updated annually and should set out the necessary rules for safe practice. The form should be available from the PCC, but a sample consent form may be downloaded from the Central Council website (www.cccbr.org.uk). The parents of young people already engaged in ringing should be asked to complete a consent form at the earliest opportunity.
The parents should be encouraged to come to an early lesson to see what is involved.
2. The Tower Captain should endeavour to establish that the young person has no known medical conditions that may affect safety.
3. The Tower Captain should make sure that the parents are aware of and are content with arrangements for young people travelling to and from ringing activities.
4. The parents should be told if there is any plan to use a video camera as a training tool, and the consent form should make this clear. The videotape should be erased after the teaching session, preferably in the presence of the parent or the Tower Captain.
5. The young people should undertake to ensure that suitable clothing is worn for all ringing activities. It should be loose under the arms to allow freedom of movement and not overtly provocative. These requirements should also be made clear to parents at the outset.
6. The parents should be informed that to act with sufficient speed in an emergency or when learning to control a bell, it may be necessary to raise one's voice, or make physical contact (e.g. by taking hold of the learner's hand to take control of the bell rope). This can be demonstrated to the parents during their early visit to a practice. Procedures for acting in an emergency should be rehearsed, e.g. following the instruction 'Let Go' if the bell gets out of control.
7. If an outing is planned, parents should sign a detailed permission form. Transport arrangements should be made so that young people do not travel in a car with just one adult. In the event of this being necessary as an exception, the young person should sit in the back.
8. Where a parent is always present during ringing, e.g. as a member of the band, the parent is responsible for the young person's welfare. However, it is important to bear in mind that there may be occasions when a parent cannot be there or the young person is taken out by other members of the band (e.g. to another tower). As with other aspects, it is advisable to follow the standard procedure in all cases so as not to make an issue of any changes in routine.
9. Two adults (if possible of different sexes) should normally be present whenever young people are taking part in ringing or being transported to or from ringing events. The Tower Captain should endeavour to ensure that at least two adults arrive at the start of any planned ringing.
10. The Tower Captain and any deputies who may run the practice or any ringing sessions where young people are present should be notified to the PCC, and will be responsible for ensuring that these guidelines are followed. It is likely that it will be these people who will need to undergo a criminal records check.

11. The Tower Captain should not delegate responsibility for the care of the young people unless it is to someone previously notified to the PCC and who has completed the criminal record check.
12. It is always good practice for an attendance register to be kept and completed, including the recording of the names of any visitors.
13. Young people should not be allowed into a potentially hazardous situation unaccompanied.
14. Normal Health and Safety issues should always be taken into consideration, and if possible a trained first-aider should be present. A first aid kit should be available and an accident logbook kept.
15. A copy of these Guidelines should be displayed on the belfry notice board.

Published by the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers, March 2004

The 13 Home Office Guidelines

1. Adopt a policy statement on safeguarding the welfare of children – as per this section.
2. Plan the work of the organisation so as to minimise situations where the abuse of children/vulnerable adults may occur.
3. Introduce a system whereby children may talk with an independent person.
4. Apply agreed procedures for children/vulnerable adults to all paid staff and volunteers.
5. Give all paid staff and volunteers clear roles.
6. Use supervision as a means to protecting children/vulnerable adults.
7. Treat all would-be paid staff and volunteers as job applicants for any position involving contact with children/vulnerable adults.
8. Gain at least one reference from a person who has experience of the applicant's paid work or volunteering with children/vulnerable adults.
9. Explore the applicant's experience of working or contact with children/vulnerable adults in an interview before appointment.
10. Find out whether an applicant has any conviction for criminal offences against children/vulnerable adults.
11. Make paid and volunteer appointments conditional on the successful completion of a probationary period.
12. Issue guidelines on how to deal with disclosure or discovery of abuse.
13. Train paid staff and volunteers, their line managers or supervisors and policy makers, in the prevention of child/vulnerable adult abuse – as per this section.



**PERMISSION TO RING AND ATTEND FOUR SHIRES GUILD
OUTINGS AND EVENTS**

Name.....

Date of birth.....

Address.....

Church.....

.....

Tower

Captain.....

.....

.....

School.....

TELEPHONE CONTACT:

Parent/Guardian's home.....

Parent/Guardian's work.....

Parent/Guardian's mobile.....

In case of emergency.....Relationship to child.....

Whilst in our care it is important we know whether your child

- Suffers from any phobias, disability or known allergies?
- Is on any medication?
- Has been immunised against Tetanus within the last ten years?
- Has any health condition we should know about?
- Has any special dietary requirements?

Please also tell us of any particular likes or dislikes your child has.

Registered GP (name, address and telephone number)

Parent/Guardian name.....

Address (if different to that of child's)

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Signed.....Date.....

I understand that to assist in the keeping of a register to comply with the Child Protection Policy it is necessary to keep details on the database maintained by the Four Shires Guild of Bell Ringers. I understand that the database is only used by the Guild Committee and that data will not be passed to a third party, except in the case of an emergency where my child may be at risk.

I understand that the original copy of this form will be retained by the Four Shires Guild of Bell Ringers.

I give my permission for my child..... to attend bell ringing and to take part in any organised activity such as outings to other towers (all ringing activities, including travelling to and from ringing, are covered by the insurance policy of the Four Shires Guild of Bell Ringers for members of the Guild, and learners are covered whilst they are ringing under the instruction of a Guild member).

I accept that I am responsible for transporting my child to and from the church for bell ringing, and that the group leaders are not responsible when my child leaves the church.

Special instructions that we should be aware of:

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Please confirm your consent by signing below:

Signed..... Date.....

If it becomes necessary for my child to be given urgent medical treatment and I can not be contacted by telephone or any other means to authorise this, I hereby give my general consent to any medical treatment judged to be necessary and urgent by a medical practitioner and I authorise the leader in charge to sign any document required by hospital or other authorities.

Signed..... Date.....

(N.B. The young person when attending Guild events should carry a copy of this permission form together with the list of contact numbers and any relevant medical information.)

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS:

The “Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006”

The Act aims to give protection to both children and vulnerable adults by extending the requirements for persons working with such groups to be suitably vetted and to provide an agency - Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) for so doing*. It affects both employers and voluntary groups engaged in activities involving children and with services to vulnerable adults.

The “Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006” will come into force on the 12th October 2009.

All ringers need to be aware of these changes, which significantly extend current vetting requirements.

**The Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) has been established as a self-funding non-Governmental organisation.*

January 2009