

The Winchester and Portsmouth Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers

Safeguarding Policy

Maintaining a Safe Environment for Young People and Vulnerable Adults in Bell Ringing

| Revision | Date | Reviewed by | Agreed by Committee | Changes |
|----------|-----------------------------|---|---|---|
| 0 | 20 th March 2021 | W&P Guild Safeguarding Officer | 20 th March 2021 | Initial suggested document |
| 1 | 5 th May 2021 | W&P Guild Safeguarding Officer | Sent to Master 05/05/2021 | On line sessions and minor errors |
| 2 | 6 th Dec 2021 | W&P Guild Safeguarding Officer | Sent to Guild Sec for sending out to Dist Sec | Change to training requirements |
| 3 | 28 th April 2022 | W&P Guild Safeguarding Officer | | Revision and updating of legislation and policies |
| 4 | 1 st June 2022 | Winchester and Portsmouth Diocesan Safeguarding Teams | | Revision and updating of legislation and policies |

Contents

- The Winchester and Portsmouth Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers (W&P Guild) Nature of Operation
- W&P Guild Safeguarding Policy Statement
- Requirements to meet Church and Legal Obligations
- Fulfilling Safeguarding Requirements
- Dealing with Incidents and Known Offenders
- Review of Policy
- Good Practice Checklist
- Best Practice for online sessions
- Annex A Training Requirements

Background

The background to this policy is provided by:

- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Church of England; Promoting a Safer Church 2017.
- The Care Act 2014
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Church of England; Parish Safeguarding Handbook 2018
- Central Council of Church Bell Ringers Safeguarding in Bell Ringing 2019
- Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation 2018
- Church of England; Safer Environments and Activities Guidance or the Code of Safer Working Practice 2019
- Church of England; Responding to Safeguarding Concerns or Allegations that relate to Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Guidance 2018
- Church of England; Safer Recruitment and People Management 2021
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- Mental Capacity Act 2005

The aim of this policy is to make bell ringing safe and inclusive for all, including children, young people and vulnerable adults/adults at risk. This policy considers children to be under 18 years of age and young people between 16 years to under 18 years. The explanation and/or definition of “adults at risk” or “vulnerable adults” differs greatly not only in the varying legislation but also within agencies and organisations. For the purposes of this policy the Care Act 2014 definition has been adopted and defines an “adult at risk” as the following;

Any person over the age of 18 years and has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and;

- *Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect; and;*
- *As a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse or neglect.*

Every effort will be made to accommodate those who wish to become bell ringers. However, it should be noted that due to the locations in which the activity of bell ringing takes place the practicalities and accessibility may at times be restrictive.

The Winchester and Portsmouth Diocesan Guild

of Church Bell Ringers Nature of Operation

Operations of the W&P Guild

The W&P Guild covers the dioceses of Winchester and Portsmouth and is divided into seven districts with some of these districts crossing the boundaries of the two Dioceses.

The W&P Guild is territorial, and has affiliated towers and membership, open to residents and non-residents to whom this policy applies. The Guild is 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 W&P Guild undertakes face-to-face instruction and training of those under 18 years in the art of bellringing at both a local level and at prearranged events. It is recognised that there is the potential for risk of abuse and in order to keep those being instructed and those doing the instructing safe and free from harm this policy has been written to protect those who are either under 18 or vulnerable. Good practice which is recognised in the Church of England practice guidance recommends that there should always be two adults present when instructing or training those under 18 years old thereby affording protection to the student but also to the tutor.

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 local Diocese requires all Parochial Church Councils (PCCs) to follow the Church of England Safeguarding policies when working with children and vulnerable adults/adults at risk in their respective parishes. All ringing-related activities for young people at parish level will be subject to the requirements of the Church of England Safeguarding policies. 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 Guild meetings or practices.
5. Participation in other Guild events e.g., outings etc.
6. Attendance at Guild training events.

Those activities organised by the Guild fall principally into categories 4, 5 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.

Safeguarding Policy Statement

1. The W&P Guild is committed to the safeguarding of children, young people, and vulnerable adults/adults at risk, and ensuring their well-being.
2. The W&P Guild has a responsibility to prevent the physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, financial or discriminatory abuse or neglect of children, young people and vulnerable adults/adults at risk.
3. The W&P Guild undertakes to safely recruit those who are appointed and selected to work with children, young people or vulnerable adults/adults at risk.

4. The W&P Guild will follow guidelines issued by the relevant church authorities (predominantly the Church of England) and adhere to the requirements of legislation and/or other legal frameworks as may be required.

Fulfilment of Safeguarding Requirements

Basic Legal Requirements

Bell ringers carrying out one-to-one instruction and training of those 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 the above criteria will be required to undergo a background check through the Disclosure and Barring Service (frequently referred to as a DBS 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 those under 18 years 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 officers, paid or volunteer, relating to teaching and working with those under 18 years and vulnerable adults/adults at risk. The principal documents can be accessed to through the Church of England website under Safeguarding. A direct link has been attached for ease;
<https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/policy-and-practice-guidance>

The main policies include:

- Promoting a Safer Church
- Safer Recruitment and People Management
- Safeguarding Learning and Development Framework 2021
- Risk Assessment for Individuals who may pose Risk
- Parish Safeguarding Handbook
- Safer Environments and Activities Guidance or the Code of Safer Working Practice
- Responding to Safeguarding Concerns or Allegations that relate to Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Guidance
- Responding to, Assessing and Managing Concerns or Allegations against Church Officers guidance
- Responding well to domestic abuse guidance
- Responding well to Victims and Survivors of Abuse
- Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults

Where a Tower Leader actively teaches or manages children/young people under the age of 18 years or vulnerable adults/adults at risk, the Church of England requires formal appointment of the post holder by the relevant PCC which must include a DBS check, safer recruitment and the completion of approved and appropriate Safeguarding training prior to the Tower Leader starting in the role. (NB the training

must be commensurate with the religious denomination of the premises ie those ringing in church of England premises must undertake the church of England national safeguarding training).

Similar requirements apply to the Church in Wales, Churches in Scotland and Roman Catholic church.

The Central Council of Church Bell Ringers (CCCBR) has a full text version of updated *Safeguarding in Bell Ringing* on its website www.cccbr.org.uk/safeguarding.

Application of Principles to the W&P Guild

The W&P Guild does not normally undertake initial training, nor does it have responsibility for the running of individual towers as a parish activity. Where first stage training is provided suitable safeguarding provision will be made.

However, the W&P Guild may run regular separate training events, hold regular meetings and also hold social events which can include those under 18 years resulting in them having contact with the same adults and therefore there is the potential for risk in terms of over familiarity, grooming and inappropriate relationships. This close working with those who are under 18 years would bring with it the **expectation** that suitably qualified persons be in charge when young people/children are present. The argument for having appropriately “vetted” and “safeguarding trained” persons present is that they will be aware of the requirements for overseeing those under 18 years, will be able to deal with any problems which may arise, and their very presence is a reassurance to parents and guardians. When those under 18 years attend Guild activities, then the organisers on the day are in effect carrying the same responsibility as a Tower Captain.

In addition, other than where transport is undertaken as a private arrangement, the **pre- arranged** transport of those under 18 years to a W&P Guild activity must involve a DBS checked driver and a second adult must be present throughout the journey affording both protection to the passenger but also the driver. Appropriate signed consent form for that journey must be obtained from the parent/guardian prior to the journey taking place.

W&P Guild Procedures

The W&P Guild will appoint an officer with specific responsibility for Safeguarding issues. This role will be safer recruited and have an accompanying role description incorporating the required level of DBS check and safeguarding training.

The W&P Guild will identify those activities where the presence of DBS checked persons who have been safer recruited are required or recommended.

The W&P Guild will seek to ensure that sufficient persons so qualified are available for the identified activities. Such persons will be appropriate to the location of the event and their registration/checking will in the majority of cases be achieved through individual ringers’ home churches. A list of registered persons will be maintained and kept in a secure manner by the W&P Guild safeguarding Officer.

The W&P Guild will keep a register of attendance at those events where registered persons are required to be present. The W&P Guild will seek assurance and confirmation that the appropriate safeguarding 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 must be made to the individual for sight of their DBS certificate and any certificate or confirmation of Safeguarding training or other required training (i.e. First Aid), each of which is issued to the individual but are **not** held by their home Parish.

The W&P Guild website and any W&P Guild publications will not knowingly publish material which could be detrimental to the interests of children, young people and vulnerable adults/adults at risk and will abide by the normal media conventions and recommendations of the Press Complaints Commission.

No material will be published which is restricted due to being the subject of legal proceedings or resulting judgements. Where material is published that specifically relates to youth activities, accompanying photographs and names will only be published where the signed consent of the parents/ legal guardians and the child/young person has been obtained. Such consent will be deemed to cover the use of the

material on the W&P Guild website and in all W&P Guild publications, but not its transmission to or use by other persons or site. See Website for the form.

Operation of the W&P 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 but only if that parish they are visiting accepts it.
- 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, and again only if the diocese accepts it.
- 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 Applications for DBS check and certification and registration to the Update Service are all free of charge to volunteers.

Dealing with Disclosures, Allegations and those that may pose a risk to others.

Complaints and Concerns

The W&P Guild will deal sensitively and appropriately with any disclosures, complaints or allegations of abuse and immediately advise the appropriate authorities as outlined in Good Practice appendix. This will normally be the local Parish and Diocesan Safeguarding Officers. Church of England guidance requires the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer to be informed within 24 hours of the disclosure, complaint or allegations being raised.

It is at the discretion of the W&P Guild to exclude any member (or non-member) from joining in any W&P Guild organised activity. The person in charge of the activity has the right to ask any member (or non-member) to leave a practice or event if there are concerns about the said person's conduct. Information can be shared regarding those that pose a risk with other guilds for safeguarding purposes should the need arise.

Those that may pose a risk (Known Offenders) or for persons under investigation.

Whether coming in the form of established ringers or seeking to become a ringer, any persons known to be a Registered Sex Offender (RSO) will not be permitted to engage in a regulated activity as this would constitute a legal offence.

However, a known offender or those that pose a risk to themselves, or others **may** be able to take part in ringing activities depending upon (a) the nature of their offence/risk, (b) any court/police/civil order restrictions on their activities, (c) perceived, known and potential risk and, (d) the level of supervision that can be afforded.

Both the Church of England, Probation and the Police have agreed procedures known as Multiple Agency Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) for managing convicted offenders in the community. The church position is set out in Section 6 of the House of Bishops Promoting a Safer Church; House of Bishops policy statement (2017), (Link attached;

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-05/PromotingSaferChurchWeb.pdf>), and

Section 7 of the House of Bishops Practice Guidance: Responding to, assessing and managing safeguarding concerns or allegations against church officers (2017) (Link attached;

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-12/Responding%20PG%20V2.pdf>)

Any person who potentially poses a risk and who wishes to engage in bell ringing will be reviewed and risk assessed prior to any bell ringing taking place. Those involved in the risk assessment and decision to include will generally be the incumbent, ringing society safeguarding officer, Parish safeguarding officer, church warden, Tower Captain and Diocesan Safeguarding Officer. A written safeguarding agreement with conditions may be required with the person concerned along with a support and monitoring team.

Review of Policy

This policy will be kept under review and subject to regular updating. We will review the policy at the March Executive Committee and as part of this process will ensure that all our procedures are up to date and that they conform the National Diocesan and Parish safeguarding requirements. It then will be put forward at the W&P Guild AGM for approval by the members.

Name: John Davey

Safeguarding Officer

The Winchester and Portsmouth Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers

Contact details

See the W&P Guild website for details. <https://wpbells.org/>

Good Practice Checklist

Good Practice for Maintaining a Safe Environment in the Belfry

1. The parents or guardians of those under 18 years (referred to here as the parents) are to complete a consent to ring form before the person under 18 starts to learn to ring. The parents should be encouraged to attend the initial session thereby gaining an insight into what is involved in church bell ringing. This form **MUST** be kept secure, whilst accessible to the person(s) responsible for the under 18s in the ringing chamber. The consent forms should be updated annually.
2. Parents' consent in writing should be sought prior to commencing events or meetings and they should be made aware, in advance, of the content and arrangements for such activities. 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.
3. The parents and/or the individual should ensure that they/the person under 18 years is appropriately dressed for the activity of bell ringing due to the location, risks (Health & Safety) and nature of the activity. These requirements should also be made clear to the parents at the outset.
4. If there is a person under the age of 18 years who it is believed is at immediate risk of harm, call the emergency services on 999 and then inform the appropriate Diocesan Safeguarding Officer. Any behaviour of adult ringers which gives cause for concern should be dealt with by their removal from the immediate activity and raising the matter with the Diocesan safeguarding Officer. There may on occasion need the matter referring to an appropriate agency.
5. Keep an attendance register, which all attendees must sign, so that everyone is aware who was present at any given time. This should be made available to the PCC, Parish Safeguarding Officer and Diocesan Safeguarding Officer on request.
6. Those under 18 years and vulnerable adults/adults at risk must be supervised at all times and should only be allowed into hazardous locations, such as the bell chamber, when accompanied by the local Tower Captain / Deputy or Assistant.
7. Always have two adults (preferably one of each gender) present whenever those under 18 years or vulnerable adults/adults at risk are ringing or being supervised, taught or transported.
8. 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). 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. Emergency contact details and medical / additional needs information should be obtained from the parents in case of emergency.
9. The parents should be told if there is any plan to use a video camera or still photography as a training tool or for any other purpose. A separate consent form must be completed and signed by the parents (and the under 18). All photographic recordings should be destroyed after use at a time agreed with the child and parents, preferably in the presence of the parents and Tower Captain.
10. Relevant health and safety procedures should be followed and first aid available.
11. 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 Church of England Parish Safeguarding Policy and ensure that the W&P Guild Safeguarding Officer has access to it if required.
12. Ensure that the appropriate insurance is in place prior to any teaching, training or ringing session.

13. All local ringing societies should appoint a Safeguarding Officer, someone who can oversee the performance of safeguarding matters in their area and ensure members are DBS checked, safer recruited and receive appropriate safeguarding training should the role require such.
14. Good liaison should be established with Tower Captains and PCCs and between the Safeguarding Officers of local societies and the Parish and Diocesan Safeguarding staff.
15. Where a parent is always present during ringing, e.g., as a member of the band, the parent is responsible for their own child's welfare. However, it is important to bear in mind that there may be occasions when a parent cannot be there or the person under 18 is taken out by other members of the band (e.g., to another tower). In these circumstances then the guidelines already documented in this policy will be followed ensuring their wellbeing and safety is paramount.
16. Tower Captains are responsible for ensuring that these guidelines are followed and a copy should be displayed on the belfry notice board.
17. All consent forms are available from the W&P Website or from the Guild Safeguarding Officer.
18. 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.

Best Practice Guidance;

Organising and Running Online Ringing Sessions & other Events

Hosts should expect to run a session where all participants behave, speak and are treated respectfully and appropriately and where CCCBR (Central Council of Church Bell Ringers) Safeguarding Guidelines are observed throughout the session.



DBS certification: a ringer holding an up-to-date DBS certification will be present at on-line sessions where under-18s could attend.

Waiting / breakout Room: enable the waiting room so that an adult is not alone in a meeting or breakout room with a person under 18

Welcome: begin the session with a welcome and reminder to attendees of on-line Safeguarding guidelines. Repeat for latecomers as appropriate.

Safeguarding concern: Alert attendees that if anyone has a safeguarding concern, they should raise it with an appropriate trusted person, such as family member, friend, Tower Captain or report directly to a Safeguarding Officer (Local Association or CCCBR, <https://cccb.org.uk/safeguarding/>) or the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer.



Record of attendance: as with all ringing, best practice is to keep a dated record of attendees

Meeting ID: all participants at session should use an easily identifiable name as their Meeting ID in both Ringing and Communication Platform. Under 18's should use first name only.

Video: should be enabled for all attendees during at least some of the event, so the host can see all people attending.

Comments in chat: disable private chat if possible. Comment in chats should be visible to all ringers (or to the host only).

Consent for under 18s: a parent or carer or known "responsible adult" should ideally be visible at the beginning of the session and for younger children should be encouraged to be present throughout the session.



Recording or screen shots: permission is required from all attendees and parent/carer for U13's.

Contact details: should not be shared.

Name: (Safeguarding Officer) John Davey

Sig: ...Original Signed.

Dated: ...07/12/2021

Safeguarding Training Requirements

Training requirements should be obtained through your local PCC for the local Leadership level (formally C2/C3) and for the Basic Awareness pathway (formally C0) and Foundations pathway (formally C1) levels, these courses are on line at: <https://safeguardingtraining.cofeportal.org>

| Requirement for Person | Tower Captain or Leader | Bell Ringer Instructor | All Ringers | Guild Safeguarding Officer | Comments |
|--|-------------------------|------------------------|-------------|----------------------------|--|
| Role Description appointed by PCC | YES | YES | | | |
| Confidential declaration and DBS Check | YES | YES | | YES | |
| Basic Awareness Pathway | YES | YES | YES | YES | Renewable every 3 years An online course - available to access by all via the national safeguarding portal |
| Foundations Pathway | YES | YES | | YES | Renewable every 3 years An online course - available to access by all via the national safeguarding portal |
| Local Safeguarding Leadership Course | YES | | | YES | Renewable every 3 years |
| | | | | | |