

Charity Number: 1134595

Jesus said, "I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last." John 15.16

We seek to make Jesus known in our community, through our joyful, loving service and worship

Central Council of Church Bell Ringers

"Registered Charity number 270036"

Guidance Note No.3 issued by the Tower Stewardship Committee

SAFEGUARDING POLICY FOR THE BELL TOWER

**THIS DOCUMENT SHOULD BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH
THE PARISH SAFEGUARDING POLICY 2018**

Child Protection in Bell Towers

The Incumbent, Churchwardens and PCC of any parish have a legal and primary responsibility to maintain a safe environment for all people in the Tower and elsewhere on Church premises and this entails particular actions in the case of children and young people. In practice, where ringing is concerned, this responsibility is discharged through the Tower Captain whose appointment, together with any formal Deputies, should be agreed with the Church administration. It is important that there is a good working relationship between the Tower Captain and Church Officials.

The leaflet "Protecting Young Ringers" has been issued to Bell Towers by the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers and outlines those actions necessary for maintaining a safe environment. The PCC endorses these recommendations and they should be on display in the Tower. Following these guidelines will ensure that young people can be fully and safely involved with ringing activities and that must be a priority for all concerned. The Tower Captain should be aware of and work in harmony with Parish Safeguarding policies.

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 Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser who will advise about any further action. They can then liaise with the Parish Safeguarding Officer.
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 Adviser.
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.
13. Tower Captains, their Deputy / Assistant and bell ringing teachers/trainers must be safely recruited in line with their responsibilities to teach or train children and/or manage those that teach or train children in accordance with the Church of England Safer Recruitment Practice Guidance . It is the responsibility of the Tower Captains and the local PCC to ensure that this happens.
14. The Tower Captain and Deputy / Assistant /bell ringing teachers / trainers must undertake Diocesan safeguarding training, in line with Diocesan expectations, which must be refreshed every three years.
15. A copy of these Guidelines should be displayed on the bell tower notice board.

Reviewed & adopted by PCC on 14th May 2018.

Signed on behalf of PCC by: *Shaun Baldwin*
Rev'd Shaun Baldwin, Vicar & Chairman of PCC

Legal requirements for working with Children.

In the past many Church workers, both paid and voluntary, have according to circumstance been expected to undergo Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for activities involving children. Such checks stem partly from the House of Bishops Policy Document "Protecting All God's children" re-issued in November 2010 which gives guidelines. The document is complemented by the document "Practice Guidance: Safer Recruitment" ratified by Bishops in July 2015. However, commencing **12th October 2009** new legal requirements will be phased in under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 which will apply in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The Act was subject to Government review and report issued in February 2011, and subsequently there was amendment under the Protection of Freedoms Act which became law in May 2012. The possible programme of phasing and its practical effects are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Under the 2012 Protection of Freedoms Act checks for working with vulnerable adults are confined solely to those requiring personal care and there is normally no requirement relating to ringing activities. However, additional guidance is to be developed for circumstances where adults may suffer or be at risk of abuse.

Regulated activities

The 2006 Act defined those activities which would legally require Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for workers dealing with children whether in a paid or voluntary capacity. The key consideration is where an adult has the opportunity to develop a relationship of trust with a child stemming from close and regular contact. The teaching, training or instruction, care or supervision of children and also in certain health and care institutions. For bellringers this has been clarified as being the activity of hands on teaching of children by the group leader or other designated person. In a mixed group, other adult ringers are deemed to be a peer group assisting or under the supervision of the group leader. The legal requirement is, therefore, confined to those actually physically teaching the young juniors on a regular basis and the various possible scenarios are shown on the appended table. DBS checks should not be otherwise necessary and in this respect attempts to blanket check all ringers including those supervised by a leader are illegal.

DBS checks (formerly known as CRB checks)

DBS checks can only be applied for in relation to positions, including those relating to children, by organisations which are registered with the DBS. DBS Applications are made online via The Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPA), and applicants will be assisted through this process by Mrs Marilyn Couper, the Parish Recruiter who is registered with CCPAS.

Sex Offenders Registers

There are a number of different lists of sex offenders currently held by Government organisations and in future these will be consolidated together with reports from other agencies such as Police and Social Services. Where a person is already registered to work with children in Regulated Activities, should their status change as a result of the monitoring process, they may be barred from such activity. In these circumstances organisations employing or using the individual will be immediately notified provided they have registered for updates. It **is an offence** to knowingly employ an individual who is barred. If a ringer is known to be on the Sex Offenders Register they must not be allowed to engage in Regulated Activities as it will be an offence.

Known Offenders

A known offender, like any other seeking rehabilitation, **may** be able to take part in other ringing activities depending on (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 Advisor 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 Advisor. It must always be borne in mind that the incumbent and churchwardens have ultimate sanction on allowing access to the Tower.

Agreements for an offender to take part in church activities are kept in confidence on a “need to know” basis as part of the pastoral care ethic regarding rehabilitation of the individual. The treatment of offenders can be an emotive subject for ringers and each must follow their own conscience. However, ringers should seek to support their churches stand point on rehabilitation, being mindful of restrictions and need for supervision. It is quite unacceptable for offenders to be named publicly on social media or through ringing society channels, nor should ringers act upon hearsay.

Potential offenders

An important aspect of the 2006 Act is the provision for informing authorities regarding any persons who may present a risk to children. In this context it is a legal duty for employers or users of volunteers, referred to as “Regulated Activity Providers”, to inform the DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) of any withdrawal of an individual from a post because of child abuse, any behaviour which gives cause for concern but is short of disciplinary procedure, conduct of a sexual nature or where the individual is believed to present a risk.

Where there is insufficient evidence to hand but concerns warrant, the case should be referred to the appropriate body which may be the ringing Society and Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor, and the police or social services.

Facing the unthinkable

Where there are indications by a child’s behaviour or conversation that abuse may be taking place, what response or action should be taken? The following are practical tips which should assist but are only initial safeguards. If abuse is disclosed some action **must** be taken.

- Listen to the child.
 - Do not ask any leading questions such as *who did it?*
 - Give the child your attention but do not over-react or show shock or distaste. Try to listen calmly and try not to show strong emotions about what is being said.
 - Say that you understand what they are saying and that you take it seriously but be careful not to say much more at this stage.
 - There might be elements of fancy or imagination in what children say but there will be a reason for having said it.
 - When children speak to someone outside the family they are generally looking for some help but they will probably be ambivalent and uncertain about precisely what.
 - Disclosures may be direct but are sometimes very indirect.
 - Do not make any promises such as *it will be alright* – it might not be. Nor *I won’t tell anybody* – you almost certainly will have to.
 - Seek immediate advice from the Church Safeguarding Officer in the parish, Mrs Rachael Ainsworth (01772 715610 or 07840 272400), or the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer, Mrs Sharon Hassall (07711 485170), or contact CCPAS 24 hour helpline (0845 120 4550).**
- If you have serious concerns that a child is at immediate risk, call the police or social services.**

If it is a child’s behaviour which gives cause for concern, consider whether

- There are bruises or other injuries, especially when regularly seen or of an unusual nature
- A child is nervous or wary of adults as though expecting chastisement
- The child is withdrawn, has solitary ways of behaviour that go beyond occasional bad mood
- Displays extreme aggression or bullying
- Displays sexualised behaviour, especially towards younger children
- Shows signs of neglect

In any of these cases see if colleagues share your concerns and speak to your incumbent. It may also be helpful to talk to your Church Safeguarding Officer, or Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor.

It is most important to remember that if such behaviour is triggered by matters at home rather than at church it may **NOT** be appropriate in the first place to speak to parents.

Related Documents:

- i. "Protecting Young Ringers: Guidelines for Maintaining a Safe Environment for Young People in the Belfry" Central Council of Church Bell Ringers*
- ii. Permission to Ring Consent Form*