

Safeguarding Policy

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

Revision	Date	Reviewed by	Agreed by Committee	Changes
1	26 th September 2021	SACBR Committee	Agreed subject to minor changes making the document specific to SACBR	Policy discussed and circulated for comment
2	5 th October 2021	SACBR Committee	Agreed via correspondence	Minor update to text made. Policy finalised

Contents

- Background
- The Shropshire Association of Church Bell Ringers (SACBR) Nature of Operation
- Association 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
- Permission to Ring and Attend Association Outside Activity Forms

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 of age. However, should special circumstances arise involving vulnerable adults then appropriate measures will be applied.

Shropshire Association of Church Bell Ringers Nature of Operation

Operations of the Association

The Association covers the Archdeaconry of Salop in the Diocese of Lichfield.

The Association is territorial, and has affiliated towers and membership, open to residents to whom this policy applies. The Association 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 Association undertakes face-to-face training of young persons at local level and arranges events at which there is 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 local Diocese requires 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 Association meetings or practices.
5. Participation in other Association events e.g. outings etc.
6. Attendance at Association training events.

Those activities organised by the Association fall principally into categories 4, 5 and 6, and the Association Policy seeks to demonstrate how the recommendations of the various guidelines have been addressed and their application to Association Officers.

Safeguarding Policy Statement

1. The Association is committed to the safeguarding of children under 18 and, where appropriate, vulnerable adults, and ensuring their well-being.
2. The Association has a responsibility to prevent the physical, sexual, psychological, financial or discriminatory abuse or neglect of such children or vulnerable adults who attend Association events and practices.
3. The Association undertakes to exercise due diligence in the appointment and selection of those who work closely with children or vulnerable adults.
4. The Association will follow guidelines issued by the church authorities and meet such civil 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 its requirements for church workers, paid or voluntary, 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 Captain actively teaches or manages young people, the Church requires formal appointment of the post holder by the PCC with a DBS check and with approved Safeguarding Awareness training.

Similar requirements apply to the Church in Wales, Churches in Scotland and Roman Catholic church. Other arrangements may be applicable in other parts of the world and local advice must be sought.

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

Application of Principles to the Association

The Association 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 Association may run regular separate training events and also regular meetings and social events 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 Association activities, the organisers on the day are 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 an Association activity should involve a DBS checked driver and, wherever possible, a second adult present.

Association Procedures

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

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

The Association 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 normally be achieved through individual ringers' home churches. A list of registered persons will be maintained and kept in a secure manner.

The Association will keep a register of attendance at those events where registered persons are required to be present. The Association 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 is issued to the individual but are **not** held by their home Parish.

Operation of the Association 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.

Dealing with Incidents and Known Offenders

Complaints and Concerns

The Association will deal sympathetically with any complaints 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.

It is at the discretion of the Association to exclude any member (or non-member) from joining in any Association 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.

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.

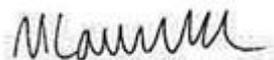
However, a known offender **may** be able to take part in ringing activities depending upon (a) the nature of their offence, (b) any court restrictions on their activities, (c) perceived risk and (d) the level of supervision that can be afforded.

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.

Review of Policy

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



Matthew Lawrence

Ringling Master
Shropshire Association of Church Bell Ringers

master@sacbr.org.uk

5th October 2021

Good Practice Checklist

Good Practice for Maintaining a Safe Environment in the Belfry

1. Parents' consent in writing must be sought prior to commencing events or meetings and they must 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 be the agreement that the parents are responsible for delivering and collecting the child.
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 appropriate Safeguarding Officer. Any behaviour of adult ringers which gives cause for concern must be dealt with by their removal from the immediate activity and may need to be discussed with an appropriate agency.
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 local 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 must 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 Association has 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 with Tower Captains and PCCs and between the Safeguarding Officers 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.

Permission to Ring and Attend SACBR Activity Forms

Permission to Ring Form

Church _____

Full name of child or young person

Date of birth _____

Address _____

Name of parent/ guardian _____

Contact phone number _____

Mobile number _____

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".

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.

Permission to Attend Outside Activity

Event _____

Full name of child or young person

Date of birth _____

Address _____

Name of parent/ guardian _____

Contact phone number _____

Mobile number _____

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 the following should be taken into account (e.g. travel sickness) - delete as necessary.

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 the agreed joining point.

Signed parent/ guardian _____

Date _____

Signed tower leader _____

Name and contact number _____

Copies to be retained by event leader and by parent/guardian.