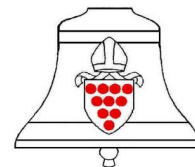


Worcestershire and Districts Change Ringing Association

Safeguarding Policy and Good Practice Guidance



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

Revision	Date	Reviewed by	Agreed by Committee	Changes
0	21 Feb 2022	<u>W&DCRA</u> Safeguarding Contact		Initial suggested document, compiled by D Awkati using CCCBR template
1	22 Feb 2022	Members of W&DCRA Committee		Redrafted by D Awkati. Document retitled. Minor changes on wording. Addition of online safeguarding good practice guidance
2	25 Feb 2022	Members of W&DCRA Committee	At Central Committee meeting.	Minor adjustments to wording. Addition of numbering. Deleted suggestion of keeping list of DBS checked people. Inclusion of W&DCRA logo on forms. D Awkati
3	19 May 2024	Members of W&DCRA Committee	At Central Committee meeting	No changes. Reviewed and agreed still current and valid. D Awkati
4	12 Nov 2024	W&DCRA Safeguarding Contact	Advised to Central Committee	Updated Safeguarding Contact's email address in section 7

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1. 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 children i.e., people under 18 years of age. However, should special circumstances arise involving vulnerable adults then appropriate measures will be applied.

2. Worcestershire and Districts Change Ringing Association (W&DCRA)- Nature of Operation

2.1 Operations of the Association

The Association is territorial covering most churches in Worcestershire and stretches to surrounding districts. It encompasses churches as far north as Dudley, as far south as Eldersfield, as far west as Eastham and as far east as Willersey. The Association is divided into three Branches: Northern, Southern and Western 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 arranges events at which there is an opportunity for close relationships to be established between adults and young or vulnerable people. It is in this context that the policy towards Safeguarding is drawn up.

Face to face bell ringing training, including that of young persons, is usually organised at local level by Branches or individual towers and is therefore also subject to individual church safeguarding policies.

2.2 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 working with young people in their respective parishes. **The requirements of the local PCC policy must be complied with for all activities and circumstances relating to young people, the Association policy provides support and specific**

guidance in relation to ringing matters. 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 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 and members.

3. Safeguarding Policy Statement

1. The Association is committed to the safeguarding of all and in particular, 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.
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.

4. Fulfilment of Safeguarding Requirements

4.1 Basic Legal Requirements

Any ringers carrying out one-to-one physical or on line training with 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. (Not usual for bell ringing but would apply e.g. in cases of residential training courses or perhaps travel to/from an event).

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.

4.2 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 Captain/Leader actively teaches or manages young people, the Church requires formal appointment of the post holder by the PCC with a DBS check and for them to undergo approved Safeguarding Awareness training.

4.3 The Central Council of Church Bell Ringers Requirements and Expectations

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 . There is also an on line best practice guidance on the website and appended to this policy document.
<https://cccbr.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Safeguarding-Best-Practice-Guidance.pdf>

5. Application of Principles to the Association

The Association does not normally undertake initial bell handling training, nor does it have responsibility for the running of individual towers, this is a parish activity. Where first stage training is provided suitable safeguarding provision will be made.

However, the Association may run separate training and practice events, 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, then the organisers on the day are in effect carrying the same responsibility as a tower captain.

In addition, except when undertaken as a private arrangement, the **arranged** transport of children to an Association activity should involve a DBS checked driver and, whenever possible, a second adult present.

5.1 Association Procedures

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

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

The Association will 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 DBS registration/checking will normally be achieved through individual ringers’ home churches.

The Association will obtain assurance that proper training and advice has been given to those whose role involves managing activities where a DBS check is required.

5.2 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.
- The DBS certification must be issued by the person's parish, DBS certification via other organisations such as work related will not be acceptable for bell ringing.

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

6. Dealing with Incidents and Known Offenders

6.1 Complaints and Concerns

The Association will deal sympathetically with any complaints of abuse and immediately advise the appropriate authorities as outlined in the 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.

6.2 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 Multi Agency Public 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 Authorities and the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer.

6.3 What to do if you have a concern

- Record the details as you know them
- Report your concerns to the relevant tower captain and incumbent or Parish Safeguarding Officer, and inform the W&DCRA Safeguarding Contact. If you feel that your concerns are not being dealt with appropriately, contact the Diocesan Safeguarding team.
- Don't delay in reporting your concern - the priority is the safety of children
- DO NOT talk to others, investigate, or alert any possible perpetrator.
- If you have genuine concern relating to the immediate welfare of a child, you must telephone 999 and communicate your concerns to the police.

6.4 What to do if you receive a disclosure

- Keep calm. Listen carefully. Do not interrupt, interrogate or ask leading questions. Your role is to listen and to recognise there is a concern – not to investigate it.
- Let the person know that you will have to pass the information on to the tower captain and incumbent (unless they are the subject of the disclosure); you must not promise secrecy.
- If the person is hurt seek medical help.
- If there is immediate danger, report it to the police.
- Follow the steps outlined under 'What to do if you have a concern' above.

6.5 Making records

- Write the actual words said, not a paraphrase
- If recording allegations make it clear that they come from a third party
- Distinguish fact from opinion
- Date and sign
- State your full name and role in the church
- Give the record to the incumbent

7. Review of Policy

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

Diane Awkati

Safeguarding Contact

Worcestershire and Districts Change Ringing Association

safeguarding@wdcra.org.uk

8. Good Practice Checklist

Good Practice for Maintaining a Safe Environment in the Belfry

1. Parents' consent in writing should be sought prior to commencing teaching practices, 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.
2. Contact arrangements and social media interaction with the child should always be via their parent/guardian.
3. 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 personnel. Any behaviour of adult ringers which gives cause for concern should be dealt with by their removal from the immediate activity and may need to be discussed with an appropriate agency.
4. Keep an attendance register, which all attendees must sign, so that everyone is aware who was present at any given time.
5. 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.
6. Always have two adults (preferably one of each gender) present whenever children/young people are ringing or being supervised, taught or transported.
7. 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.
8. Relevant health and safety procedures should be followed and first aid available.
9. 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.
10. Ensure that the appropriate insurance is in place prior to any teaching, training or ringing session.
11. All local ringing societies should appoint a Safeguarding Contact, someone who can oversee the performance of safeguarding matters in their area.
12. Good liaison should be established with Tower Captains and PCCs and between the Association Safeguarding Contact and the Parish and Diocesan Safeguarding staff.
13. 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.

Developed in collaboration with the Church of England, National Safeguarding Team.

Best Practice Guidance

9. 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 Safeguarding Guidelines are observed throughout the session.

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

Waiting 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://cccbr.org.uk/safeguarding/>)

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 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.

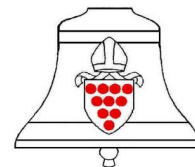
Recording or screen shots: permission is required from all attendees and parent/carer for U13's.

Contact details: should not be shared.



See CCCBR website for further information and FAQs
<https://cccbr.org.uk/safeguarding/>

10. Permission to Ring and Attend W&DCRA or Tower Activity Forms



10.1 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 for photographs/ videos: Photographs and videos may be taken and used to promote bell ringing. These may be used in articles and published eg in The Ringing World magazine or local church documents or included on church or Association websites or social media pages such as Facebook.

Please advise whether this is okay: Yes/ No

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.

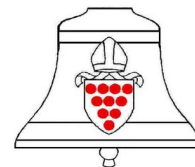
Unless otherwise advised, I undertake to deliver and collect the child/ young person from these activities.

Signed parent/ guardian _____

Date _____

Copy to be retained by tower leader.

10.2 Permission to Attend Association/Branch/Tower 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: 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 participating, but notification now will help in the event of a medical or health problem). Please give relevant details below or state "none".

Permission for photographs/ videos: Photographs and videos may be taken and used to promote bell ringing. These may be used in articles and published eg in The Ringing World magazine or local church documents or included on church or Association websites or social media pages such as Facebook.

Please advise whether this is okay: Yes/ No

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 _____

Copy to be retained by event leader.