

The Guild of Devonshire Ringers

Safeguarding Policy

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



Revision	Date	Reviewed by	Agreed by Committee	Changes
2	Jan 2026	Rowena Mansley Guild of Devonshire Ringers Safeguarding Officer		Revised and updated using the CCCBR template and advice from Exeter Diocese

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The Guild of Devonshire Ringers - Nature of Operation

Operations of the Guild of Devonshire Ringers

The Guild of Devonshire Ringers covers the county of Devon and diocese of Exeter and is divided into eight Branches (including Exeter Colleges Guild).

The Guild of Devonshire Ringers is territorial, and has affiliated towers and membership, open to 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 Guild of Devonshire Ringers 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

Exeter 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 are some ringing-

related activities which young ringers may take part in, 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, service ringing and social events in home tower.
2. Attendance at practice and service ringing in other towers.
3. Participation in both Branch and Guild activities e.g. outings, social events, business meetings, ringing meetings, training events
4. Participation in specific young ringers' Branch and Guild events e.g. outings, competitions
5. Participation in on-line ringing events, email groups, facebook groups and other social media
<https://cccbr.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Safeguarding-Best-Practice-Guidance.pdf>

Activities organised by the Guild fall principally into categories 3 to 5 and the Guild Policy seeks to demonstrate how the recommendations of the various guidelines have been addressed with reference to them.

Safeguarding Policy Statement

1. The Guild of Devonshire Ringers has a responsibility to prevent the physical, sexual, psychological, financial or discriminatory abuse or neglect of children or vulnerable adults.
2. The Guild of Devonshire Ringers undertakes to exercise due diligence in the appointment and selection of those who work closely with children or vulnerable adults.
3. The Guild of Devonshire Ringers 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). 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 their 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 Leader actively teaches or manages young people, the Church requires formal appointment of the post holder by the PCC with a DBS check and completion of approved Safeguarding Awareness training.

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 Guild of Devonshire Ringers

The Guild of Devonshire Ringers 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 Guild of Devonshire Ringers and Branches may run training events, meetings and social events which young people may attend. These will often involve young people having close contact with the same adults, giving scope for familiarity and building relationships. This close working with young people brings with it the **expectation** that suitably qualified persons be in charge when they 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 Guild of Devonshire Ringers guild and branch activities, then the organisers on the day are in effect carrying the same responsibility as a tower captain.

There must be clear written arrangements when children are travelling to Guild or Branch events in cars, other than with their own family members. If parents make mutual arrangements with friends to transport their children to these activities, then no DBS checks are required. If children are to be transported on activities arranged by the Guild or Branch in a vehicle organised by the Guild or Branch, then the driver should be DBS checked and written parental consent must be obtained. It is good practice for male and female adults to be present in the vehicle.

Guild of Devonshire Ringers Procedures

- The Guild of Devonshire Ringers will appoint an officer with specific responsibility for Safeguarding issues.
- The Guild Safeguarding Officer, Education Officer and Young Ringers' Coordinator will be DBS checked and will complete the **Basic and Foundations** Church of England Safeguarding Training
- Branch Ringing Masters, deputy Ringing Masters and other members who may be asked to lead Branch activities will complete the **Basic and Foundations** Church of England Safeguarding Training
- The Guild of Devonshire Ringers will provide a list of activities where the presence of DBS checked persons is required or recommended. This will be based on legal requirements and good practice guidelines ([appendix 2](#))
- Guild or Branch officers organising specific young persons' Guild or Branch events are responsible for ensuring that appropriately trained and DBS checked persons are in attendance. A register of attendance must be kept.

Operation of the Guild of Devonshire Ringers 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 issued by their parish, this may be used for the same activity 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** (application for this must be made within 30 days of application for DBS).

Applications for DBS check and certification and registration to the Update Service are all free of charge to volunteers. Registration with the update service negates the need for DBS re-applications.

Dealing with Incidents and Known Offenders

Complaints and Concerns

The Guild of Devonshire Ringers 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 Guild of Devonshire Ringers to exclude any member (or non-member) from joining in any 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.

A secure record will be kept by the Guild Safeguarding Officer of all reported issues and the action taken

Known Offenders

Whether coming in the form of an established ringer 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
- (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 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 reviewed and updated every year

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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
- Central Council of Church Bell Ringers Safeguarding in Bell Ringing 2019
- Church of England Parish Safeguarding Handbook 2019

Good Practice Checklist

Good Practice for Maintaining a Safe Environment in the Belfry

1. 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.
2. The contact details for the local church Safeguarding Officer should be available in the tower
3. If there is a child who it is believed is at immediate risk of harm, the emergency services should be contacted on 999. The appropriate Safeguarding Officer should then be contacted.
4. Any behaviour by 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.
5. An attendance register should be kept for all activities so that everyone is aware who was present at any given time.
6. 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.
7. Two adults (preferably one male and one female) should be present whenever children/young people are ringing or being supervised, taught or transported.
8. 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.
9. A tower risk assessment should be completed
10. Relevant health and safety procedures should be followed, and first aid should be 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 Parish Safeguarding Policy
12. Appropriate insurance should be in place prior to any teaching, training or ringing session.
13. Good liaison should be established between Tower Captains, PCCs and the Parish Safeguarding Officer.
14. 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.

Guild/ Branch activities – DBS/training checklist

Event	Attendance	Safeguarding training/DBS required or recommended
Local Tower ringing	Mixed age groups	- PCCs will ask Tower Captains to complete level 1 and 2 Church of England safeguarding training and have a DBS check - PCCs will ask that all ringers complete level 1 training https://safeguardingtraining.cofeportal.org/
Branch ringing/training events	Mixed age groups	Branch Ringing Master and deputy to complete both Basic and Foundations Church of England safeguarding training (or equivalent) https://safeguardingtraining.cofeportal.org/
Guild ringing/training events	Mixed age groups	Guild Education Officer to be DBS checked and to complete both Basic and Foundations Church of England safeguarding training (or equivalent) https://safeguardingtraining.cofeportal.org/
Transportation of young people on/to Branch and Guild events	In a vehicle organised by the Guild or Branch rather than parents	The driver should be DBS checked and written parental consent must be obtained. It is good practice for male and female adults to be present in the vehicle
Branch and Guild events specifically arranged for children and young people	Children and young people under 18	Guild young ringers' coordinator and deputy to be DBS checked and to complete both Basic and Foundations Church of England safeguarding training (or equivalent) https://safeguardingtraining.cofeportal.org/
On-line activities	Mixed age groups	Follow the guidance below: https://cccbr.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Safeguarding-Best-Practice-Guidance.pdf

Guild of Devonshire Ringers

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.

Guild of Devonshire Ringers

Permission to attend activity Form

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.