

# Southwell and Nottingham Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers

## Safeguarding Guidance for Towers, *as approved by General Committee on 10 March 2018*

The following guidance is provided by way of support for members of the Southwell and Nottingham Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers (SNDG), particularly those in positions of Tower Leadership.

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 requires particular actions in the case of children and young people. Thus both responsibility and accountability for safeguarding at the level of individual towers within the Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham sits with the relevant Incumbent, Churchwardens and PCC, and not with the SNDG.

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, including the Parish Safeguarding Officer.

### Training

The level of training required to be undertaken by both individual ringers, tower captains and those responsible for teaching ringers should be discussed and agreed with the Parish Safeguarding Officer. However, the following guidance has been received from the Diocesan Safeguarding Office.

- All ringers should be encouraged to complete the C0 module. The aim of the module is to provide a basic awareness of safeguarding, particularly within the context of the Church of England. Module C0 is an on-line learning package, which can be accessed here: <http://southwell.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/C0-Introduction-to-Safeguarding-website-info.pdf>. In general, it takes no more than an hour to complete.
- All tower captains/ringing masters and those ringers involved in the direct teaching of children and vulnerable adults should complete the C1 module in addition to the C0 module described above. C1 covers the roles and responsibilities of individuals working directly with children and vulnerable adults, the principles of self-protection and how and when to report safeguarding concerns. Module C1 is delivered as a three hour face-to-face session, at a variety of locations throughout the Diocese. A mixture of evening and weekend dates are available. Advanced booking is essential, as each course is limited to 25 attendees. Details of the face-to-face sessions can be found here: <http://southwell.anglican.org/mission-ministry/safeguarding/>.
- Tower captains/ringing masters should also consider completing module C2 which expands on the previous modules and explores the roles and personal vulnerabilities of parish officers in implementing parish safeguarding procedures and responding to serious situations. This is especially important where, in the event of a concern being raised, it may not be possible for the Tower Captain to seek immediate advice from the Parish Safeguarding Officer. Course C2 is delivered as a face-to-face session, lasting three hours. Sessions are run frequently around the diocese. A list of dates and venues can be found here: <http://southwell.anglican.org/mission-ministry/safeguarding/>

### DBS Checking

Again, requirements should be discussed with the local Parish Safeguarding Officer. However, the following should be used as a guide.

Bell ringers involved in the teaching and/or supervision of children and young people should be DBS checked. Tower captains and ringing masters should also be DBS checked.

Individual bell ringers are not required to be DBS checked unless they are involved in the teaching and/or supervision of children and young people.

DBS checking should, in general, be processed by the parish Safeguarding Officer. If this is not possible, then the Diocesan Safeguarding Office should be contacted: <http://southwell.anglican.org/mission-ministry/safeguarding/>

DBS checking is not required for:

- Helping with young people by ringing another bell or standing behind
- General ringing at practices, meetings and on outings
- Visitors to towers
- One-off teaching or deputising
- Transporting juniors as a **one-off ad hoc** arrangement or as part of an arrangement between families. Note that DBS checking **would** be required for formally arranged transport of juniors, irrespective of frequency.

It should be recognised that DBS checking is a tool used as part of the whole safeguarding process, and is not a guarantee. Good practice and vigilance remains critical. DBS checks are generally renewed every three years, though parishes may also require DBS-checked individuals to complete an annual self-declaration.

### Good Practice

1. The Central Council Good Practice Guidelines for maintaining a safer environment in the belfry should be displayed in the tower. The guidelines can be found here: <https://cccbr.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/statement-of-cofe-requirements-for-safeguarding.pdf>
2. Parents' consent in writing should be sought prior to commencing to teach a child to ring, and prior to the child going on an outing or visiting another tower (for a Guild meeting, for example). The consent should be fully informed and parents must be made aware, in advance, of the content and arrangements for teaching, outings or visits. Any medical conditions which the child has should be established in advance, as should the fact that the parents are responsible for delivering and collecting the child to ringing (unless there is pre-planned transport in place for an outing, for example).
3. A register of attendees must be kept for all ringing sessions. The register must include the first and second name of all ringers present, both regular attendees and visitors.
4. Two adults (where possible one of each gender) should normally be present whenever young people and/or vulnerable adults are taking part in ringing or being transported to or from ringing events.
5. Those ringers helping children by ringing another bell or "standing behind" should be made aware of the need to protect personal space. Touching should only be that appropriate for teaching, supervision and/or an emergency.
6. Relevant health and safety procedures should be followed and first aid equipment must be available. It is recommended that a poster is displayed in the tower which states the location of the first aid equipment, emergency contact numbers, the post code of the tower and the actions to be taken in event of a fire.
7. 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 (or deputy).

All local tower arrangements in relation to safeguarding should 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.

## **Visiting Bands**

It is the responsibility of all visiting groups to ensure that those leading/supervising a group have all the relevant checks and measures in place. It is not the responsibility of the church, unless the host church is providing the leader/supervisor for the visiting group.

To encourage best practice, referring individuals requesting to bring a visiting band to the Central Council General Statement on Safeguarding is encouraged. This guidance can be found here: <https://cccbr.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/statement-of-cofe-requirements-for-safeguarding.pdf>.

## **Reporting Concerns**

If a child or vulnerable adult is believed to be at immediate risk of harm, the emergency services should be contacted by telephoning 999. The Parish Safeguarding Officer and Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor should also be informed, as should the Guild Safeguarding Officer.

Less urgent concerns about behaviour of any adult ringers should be raised with the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor, who will be able to advise about any further actions and also liaise with the local Parish Safeguarding Officer. The Guild Safeguarding Officer should be informed of any referral to the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor.

Contact details for the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer can be found here: <http://southwell.anglican.org/mission-ministry/safeguarding/>.

The Guild Safeguarding Officer can be contacted via [safeguarding@southwelldg.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@southwelldg.org.uk).