

## **Guildford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers**

### **Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults in the context of Bell Ringing**

#### ***Policy Statement***

The Guildford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers (GDG or Guild) is committed to the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

The GDG policy and procedures are based on those provided by the House of Bishops, the Diocese of Guildford, and the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers.

- The GDG will conform with the diocesan procedures relating to the safeguarding of young ringers. See Appendix 1.
- The Guild Safeguarding Officer will work with the Guild Executive to ensure that guild members are informed of all aspects of relevant legislation and good practice, and the guidance will be communicated widely.
- The welfare and protection of all young or vulnerable ringers will be actively promoted in all towers in the diocese.
- The GDG recognises its members' duty to protect all children and young people, and all vulnerable adults, associated in any way with its practices.

#### ***Procedures***

In order to comply with Diocesan Guidelines the following is recommended as best practice, but tower captains should be aware of the House of Bishops', the Diocesan, the CCCBR, their Parish and the Guild policies on safeguarding children and young people and institute practices suitable to their own circumstances.

- The tower captain and anyone who supervises the training or teaching of children and young people will need Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance (See Appendix 1). In practice, this applies to the person in charge or responsible for children or young people whilst in the tower. Such a person must be in supervision at all times when children or young people are in the tower or engaged in ringing-related activities, unless accompanied by a parent or legal guardian.
- DBS clearance certificates can be used in other towers within the Diocese if in date and in the same context. That is, DBS certificates obtained through the ringer's home parish office for the specific activity related to ringing and teaching of ringing, can be used for teaching and supervision in other towers and on courses. DBS certificates obtained for other activities may not be used unless the holder is a current subscriber to the Update Service.
- It is the responsibility of the parish authorities where the ringing is taking place, i.e., the parish safeguarding officer or incumbent, to ensure the tower captain and any person supervising the training or teaching of children and young people has been subject to a DBS clearance, evidenced by a certificate obtained by their or another parish office in respect of them. Where an activity is organised by the GDG, the organising person should ensure a person with

certificated DBS clearance is in supervision throughout the activity whilst children or young people are present.

- Where a ringer acts not on behalf of any tower but is performing a role involving interaction with children and young people from several towers, it is expected that such a person has been the subject of a DBS check. It is strongly recommended that the person is accompanied by other adults in the course of their activities with children and young people, and it would be preferable if at least one other adult is DBS checked. The Guild would encourage the attendance of parents at such meetings, and written, informed parental consent is required when parents are not present. (Informed consent means that the adult (with legal parental-responsibility) consenting understands the nature of what they are consenting to, e.g., how it will be managed or supervised, or what is involved).
- The GDG advises its members to note that a DBS clearance certificate does not prove that an individual is a safe person; it is important to recognise that DBS certificates should form only one aspect of a tower or group's safeguarding measures, and should be complemented by a range of other approaches, including the presence of an additional adult, the keeping of registers, close communication with the parents or legal guardians of children or young people learning to ring.
- Always have two adults present when children and young people are being taught.
- Invite the parents of any trainee to come and watch a training session before allowing their child to start to learn. Require a parent to attend the first training session and ensure that the parent fully understands what is involved in learning to ring.
- Make sure that a parent is responsible for delivering and collecting the child to and from the tower.
- Ask parents to sign a form giving permission (informed consent) for the child to be taught to ring. See Appendix 1.
- Keep an attendance register identifying the presence of both adults and children on any occasion.
- Do not allow children up amongst the bells apart from an initial demonstration visit (where it is assessed as being safe to do so), or to take part in supervised maintenance activities or demonstrations. Appropriate risk assessments must be undertaken before all such activities, and these may need to take into account the age of the participants.
- Parents should sign an informed consent form for tower outings, unless the parent will accompany their child throughout.
- Care should be taken when emailing children and groups: if appropriate use the 'blind copy' field to conceal individuals' addresses and adhere to good practice by copying-in the parents of children and young people.
- The Diocese requires all bell-ringers over the age of eighteen years old, all tower captains and all those teaching bell-handling to others to undertake safeguarding training. The level of training required is summarised in the Safeguarding Training page of the Diocese's website: [Safeguarding Training | Diocese of Guildford \(cofeguildford.org.uk\)](https://www.cofeguildford.org.uk) (See Appendix 1 of this policy document).

To assist tower captains, and to protect both young people and those who ring with them, more detailed guidance is included in Appendix 1 below.

## Appendix 1

- The Diocesan safeguarding policy, practice guidance and protocols can be found on the Diocesan website: <http://www.cofeguildford.org.uk/about/safeguarding-inclusion/safeguarding-policy-guidance-protocols>.
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks should be completed for those who **directly** teach or supervise young ringers on a frequent or intensive basis or overnight, and those who supervise these teachers (usually the tower captain). The current definition of *frequent* is once a week or more often; the current definition of *intensive* is 4 days or more in a 30 day period; and overnight means between the hours of 2 and 6 a.m. Other adult ringers in the tower who offer helpful suggestions to learners or 'stand behind' are **not** required to undergo DBS checks.
- DBS checks should be carried out via the Diocesan Safeguarding team through the person appointed by the parish to administer such applications.
- If it is possible, it is good practice to have one male and one female in each tower who have undergone DBS checks conducted by the parish.
- Parents should attend their child's first session at the tower. The tower captain should explain what is involved in ringing and stress safe behaviour in the ringing room. Parents should be told that it may occasionally be necessary, for safety reasons, for the teacher to speak loudly to the child and to come into physical contact with their person in order to control the bell. Those teaching children and young people to ring, and those supervising or in charge, must ensure that physical contact is minimal, being for the shortest period and the least intrusive as possible, and is entirely appropriate and justifiable in respect of the purpose of teaching bell-handling safely. Physical contact should never be secretive, or for the gratification of the adult, or represent a misuse of authority.
- Written, informed parental consent should be obtained before a young ringer joins the tower and this should include a record of any relevant medical information, contact numbers for the parents and the child's General Practitioner (GP). Specific parental consent must also be obtained for any activity that takes place away from the home tower. The CCCBR have devised a Permission to Ring form which can be downloaded from the Tower Stewardship Committee's area of the CCCBR website. When completed this form may contain sensitive personal data, and care should be taken that this information is kept confidential. Forms should not be pinned on the tower notice board, but should be retained safely and confidentially for future reference.
- There must be clear written arrangements when children are travelling in cars, other than with their own family members. If parents make arrangements with friends

to transport their children to ringing activities then no DBS checks are required. If children are to be transported on activities arranged by the Guild, branch or tower in a vehicle organised by the Guild (branch or tower) then at least one adult who is DBS checked should be present and parental consent must be obtained in advance. Children must be safely seated in the car according to legislation relating to their height. It is good practice for male and female adults to be present in a car and when this is not possible then the children should sit in the back.

- It is permissible for parents to photograph their own children at bell ringing activities. However, if the Guild/branch/tower takes photographs (or makes any other images) of children for publication in a newsletter or newspaper or on a website etc., then parental permission must be obtained; there should be a consent form which includes the information about how, and where, photographs will be stored. It is good practice for a child's first name only to be published with their photograph, although the GDG recognises that this is not always practical, e.g., where photographs accompany quarter-peal or peal reports published in The Ringing World or on Bell Board. Photographs may not be shared on websites, including Bell Board, or social media without the knowledge and permission of parents.
- The current expectation by the Church is that training should be undertaken by all bell-ringers, dependent on particular roles, as shown in the following table. Training is provided free of charge, and online by the Diocesan Safeguarding Team and accessed by any bell-ringer individually through the Safeguarding Training page of the Diocese's website: [Safeguarding Training | Diocese of Guildford \(cofeguildford.org.uk\)](https://safeguardingtraining.diocese.org.uk). The Guild is committed to supporting ringers to access and complete this training.

	Requirements by person:	Tower Captain	Trainer of children	All bell ringers	Comments
	Role-description and PCC-appointed	YES	NO	NO	
	DBS check conducted by the parish	YES	YES or directly supervised by an adult DBS-checked by the parish.	NO	
CORE TRAINING	Basic Awareness training Level C0 *	YES	YES	YES	Renewable each 3 years
	Foundation training Level C1*	YES	YES	NO	Renewable each 3 years
	Leadership training Level C2**	ENCOURAGED But not mandatory in the Guildford Diocese	ENCOURAGED But not mandatory in the Guildford Diocese	NO	Renewable each 3 years

\*Available to access online, free-of-charge; \*\*delivered in groups by video-call (see Contacts section below).

Every effort should be made to ensure that First Aid help can be quickly obtained either from a member of the band or from someone living near the church and that rapid contact can be made with the emergency services – for example by having a mobile telephone in each tower and by displaying the access entrance's post-code and *What3Words* application code.

- Every effort should be made to ensure that Health and Safety matters are considered and reasonable steps taken to remedy any deficiencies. At a minimum there should be emergency lighting, fire extinguishers and a first aid kit available. Risk assessments should be undertaken where appropriate.
- It is important that members of the tower should be vigilant when young ringers are present, especially when they are sitting out. From time to time, a ringer's conduct in relation to children may give cause for concern. **If there are any concerns about the behaviour of anyone in relation to a child or other vulnerable person then this should not be ignored. The GDG deems it the responsibility of all members to protect and safeguard all who come into contact with its activities, including children, young people and vulnerable adults.** The action to be taken is outlined in Appendix 2 below.
- If a ringer is found to have a record of inappropriate behaviour, or is convicted of offences against children, the Diocesan Safeguarding Children Advisor and the incumbent of the parish concerned will offer advice on the appropriate precautions for the protection of young ringers that should be included in any agreement the parish decides to make with the offender regarding his/her activities.
- In the event of a serious concern or allegation raised against a member of the GDG, the Diocesan Safeguarding Team will work closely with the GDG Safeguarding Officer or Master, and with other Safeguarding partner agencies such as the Police and the Local Authority Designated Officer for allegations against adults working with children (LADO) to assess and manage risk during any investigation and on its conclusion. Consideration will be given to risk-management within the member's parish and other GDG towers and activities. Risk-assessment and risk-management will consider whether the subject of the concern or allegation holds a GDG honorary officer position or has a particular role, and the implications in terms of risk. The GDG Executive Committee may deem it necessary, through process of an Extraordinary Meeting, to remove the member from office, role or responsibility, either temporarily or permanently.

## **Appendix 2      What to do if you have a concern**

- Record the details as you know them.
- Report your concerns to your tower captain and your incumbent or Parish Safeguarding Officer, and inform the Guild's Safeguarding Officer. 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.**

### **What to do if you receive a disclosure from a young or vulnerable ringer**

- 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, or evidence of a possible criminal offence, report it to the police.
- Follow the steps outlined under **What to do if you have a concern** above.

### **Making records**

- Write the child's actual words, not a paraphrase.
- If recording allegations, make it clear that they come from a third party.
- Distinguish fact from opinion.
- Date and sign as the recorder; do not ask the person disclosing to sign.
- State your full name and role in the church.
- Give the record to the incumbent.

## **Appendix 3      Vulnerable adults**

Adults can be, from time to time and in certain contexts, vulnerable in respect of being susceptible to exploitation by others. Vulnerability derives from an imbalance of power; including, but not limited to, power associated with perceived or actual authority, financial resources, level of education or skill, and ability to articulate opinions and experience, or to advocate for themselves or others.

Whilst such imbalances are likely always to be present amongst social groups of people, members of the GDG have a duty to promote the inclusion and welfare of all members, and thus to report any concerns whereby it is considered that an adult is or maybe being taken advantage of by another. Such reports should be made, in the first instance, to the tower captain, or to the incumbent or parish safeguarding officer. Wherever illegal activity, or the potential for genuine harm, is identified, reports should be made directly to the police.

## **Appendix 4      Useful information**

### **MAIN DOCUMENTS TO REFER TO:**

The Diocesan safeguarding policy, practice guidance and protocols can be found on the Diocesan website: <http://www.cofeguildford.org.uk/about/safeguarding-inclusion/safeguarding-policy-guidance-protocols>.

CCCBR information available from their website and search under “Child Protection” <https://cccbr.org.uk/safeguarding/>.

## CONTACTS

The Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor is Jackie Broadfoot:  
(07918 559387); [jackie.broadfoot@cofeguildford.org.uk](mailto:jackie.broadfoot@cofeguildford.org.uk).

The Guildford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers’ Safeguarding Officer is Jonathan Hetherington: contact details can be found in the GDG Annual Report.

The Diocese’s Safeguarding Core Training on-line courses can be found using the following link:

<http://www.cofeguildford.org.uk/about/safeguarding-inclusion/safeguarding-training>.  
A certificate can be created on completion. The courses are free to access.