



## **Introduction**

Ringling is an activity which unites individuals both young and old, enriching those of all ages who know and respect each other for their abilities as both ringers and individuals.

In that ethos, The Devon Association of Ringers (DAR) is committed to the protection of the young and vulnerable and will ensure that in all events run by the Association and at all Towers the welfare and protection of such groups is of paramount concern.

The policies set out in this document apply to all Association events, Towers and all members. This policy has been approved by the Committee and will be reviewed annually or more frequently should a change in legislation require this.

In particular, Tower Captains and DAR Officers should familiarise themselves with this policy and associated documents. Tower Captains should further familiarise themselves with their own Church and Diocesan requirements. All ringers are urged to absorb these policies and associated guidance so they become part of the normal way that ringing is organised.

This policy is not exhaustive. It is important that we remain vigilant to the possibilities of abuse at all times and in the many forms that it can take.

This Policy should also be read in conjunction with the guidance issued by the Central Council of Church Bellringers:

<http://www.cccbr.org.uk/towerstewardship/notes/GN3v8.pdf>

Tower Captains should also be familiar with these publications:-

"Promoting a Safer Church 2017" and "The Parish Safeguarding Handbook Aug 2019" Both are available to download from: [www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding](http://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding)

## **Who is a child or young person?**

For the purpose of this policy a Child or young person is any person under the age of 18 years.

## **Who is a vulnerable adult?**

This definition is less precise and we should recognise that we may all be considered vulnerable at particular times in our life. However to assist, a vulnerable adult may be defined as a person aged 18 or over whose ability to protect themselves from violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation is significantly impaired through physical or mental disability, illness, old age, emotional fragility or distress; and for that purpose, the reference to being impaired, is to being temporarily or indefinitely impaired.

Whilst the majority of this policy relates to the protection of children we should not lose sight of the fact that on occasions there may be adult ringers who require support and protection. The Association recognises that abuse can take many different forms with varying degrees of severity.

## **Responsibility of Towers**

Individual Towers through the Tower Captain and Parochial Church Council (PCC) must adhere to the Church of England Safeguarding Policy found at:  
<https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/promoting-safer-church>

and associated guidance and arrangements set out by the Diocese of Exeter found at:

<https://exeter.anglican.org/resources/safeguarding/>

A list of useful contacts is included at the end of this policy should further information be required.

## **Procedures**

All Tower Captains should be aware of the House of Bishops, the Diocesan, the CCCBR, their Parish and DAR policies on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

As Church Officers, all Tower Captains should have undertaken safeguarding training to at least Foundation Level. (Pre 2021, Tower Captains were required to undertake the Leadership Training, referred to as C2)

- The Tower Captain, the Children's Officer and anyone who trains or teaches children under 16 will be 'safely' recruited in accordance with the guidance, and will be subject of a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check prior to commencing their roles.
- Appropriate training should be undertaken by all Tower Captains as well as those teaching children and vulnerable adults, including requisite safeguarding training.
- On every occasion, when there is a child under 16 present, who is not accompanied by a parent or other responsible adult, an adult should be nominated to be responsible for safeguarding on that occasion. This adult should be aware of the acceptable behaviour expected in the ringing room and be prepared to take action if any inappropriate activity occurs. The person responsible in the tower should ensure that everyone present can identify the nominated person and can approach them if necessary. If this procedure is followed there is no requirement to appoint a Children's Officer for every tower. This adult should be identified on the attendance register for the occasion and for best practice should also be DBS checked.
- Always have two adults present when children under 16 are being taught.
- Invite the parents or guardian of any trainee to come and watch a training session before allowing their child to start to learn and encourage them to attend the first training session and ensure that they fully understand what is involved in learning to ring.
- Make sure that a parent or guardian is responsible for delivering and collecting the child to and from the tower.
- Ask parents or guardians to sign the form giving permission for the child to be taught to ring. (See Appendix (1a))
- Keep an attendance register.
- Be aware of the Insurance position for children.
- Never allow children in the Bell Chamber amongst the bells apart from an initial demonstration visit (if it is safe to do so).
- However, children may be permitted amongst the bells for the purposes of learning simple maintenance. They should be accompanied by a DBS checked adult and are never alone. Two adults should be in attendance for this activity.
- Get parents or guardians to sign the detailed consent form for tower outings. (Appendix (1b))

- Care should be taken when emailing children and groups: use the 'blind copy' "bcc" to conceal individual's addresses; if using email to make arrangements for outings or special practices consider copying in the Children's Officer, Tower or Branch Secretary as well, so that the message is in the public domain.
- Group communications (such as email or What'sApp) should be through parents initially. As children approach adulthood (16+) they can be included in groups in their own right. Every effort should be made to ensure content of messages is appropriate and that addresses of young people are concealed where possible.

Towers should display The Central Council Child Protection Poster. Available at: [https://cccbr.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/SM\\_Safeguarding\\_PlusAppendices\\_2019\\_Ver\\_2-Guide-plus-appendices-1.pdf](https://cccbr.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/SM_Safeguarding_PlusAppendices_2019_Ver_2-Guide-plus-appendices-1.pdf) (Appendix C of that document)

## **Responsibility of the Association**

The DAR will promote the welfare of Children and the vulnerable at all times.

The Association has a named Safeguarding Officer (contact details at end of policy) who is available to provide advice, guidance and support. Whilst Safeguarding in individual towers is the responsibility of the Tower Captain and the PCC; events run by DAR are the responsibility of the Association.

All DAR members are expected to behave appropriately at all times and where concern is raised regarding the protection of a child or vulnerable person then the matter should be reported as per the guidance below. Any incidents or complaints of inappropriate behaviour will be subject to review and may require referral to the appropriate authorities in line with best safeguarding practice.

In all circumstances concerns from both within a tower or within the DAR can be raised with the DAR Safeguarding Officer, who can advise and support as required. All such contact will be treated in the strictest confidence and in line with: "Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013" available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children>

In organising events DAR will ensure that those who are running such events are appropriately selected, and if appropriate, vetted for the role. Any questions over an individual's suitability should be raised confidentially with the DAR Safeguarding Officer.

## **Guidance for towers hosting visiting groups**

It is recommended that the following sentence should be included when giving permission to visiting groups to ring in our towers:

**"This tower follows the safeguarding policy of the Church England Exeter Diocese and expects all visiting bands to conform to this policy".**

- The Exeter Diocese Safeguarding Policy for the protection of children and vulnerable adults can be found on the Exeter Diocese of website: <https://exeter.anglican.org/resources/safeguarding>, or from your Parish Safeguarding Officer.
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks are required to enable the direct teaching of any young ringers on a frequent or intensive basis or overnight, and those who supervise these teachers (this is 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 through the parish arrangements and would require the applicant to fill in a National Confidential Declaration Form. DBS clearance certificates can be used in other towers if in-date, and for the same context. That is, DBS obtained through the parish office for the specific activity related to ringing and teaching of ringing, can be used for teaching and supervision in other towers. DBS obtained for other activities may not be used unless portability was applied for at the time of issue.
- It is good practice to have one male and one female in each tower who has undergone DBS checks.
- 16 and 17 year olds who are members of a group which is otherwise composed only of adults, and where no under 16s are present, can be treated as adults.
- Parents or guardians should be encouraged to 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/guardians should be told that it may occasionally be necessary, for safety reasons, for the teacher to speak loudly to the child and to touch their hands in order to control the bell.
- Written 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/guardians and the child's GP. Specific consent must also be obtained for any activity that takes place away from the home tower.

- There must be clear written arrangements when children are travelling in cars, other than with their own family members. If parents make mutual 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 DAR or tower in a vehicle organised by the DAR (or tower), then the driver should be DBS checked and parental consent must be obtained. 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 acceptable for parents to photograph their own children at bell ringing activities. However, if the DAR or tower takes photographs (or makes any other images) of children for publication in a newsletter, newspaper or on a website etc. then parental permission must be obtained; there should be a consent form (see Appendix (1c) which includes the information about how, and where, photographs will be stored. A child's first name only should be linked to his/her photograph. Photographs may not be shared on social media without the knowledge and permission of parents.
- 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 always having someone with a mobile phone in the tower.
- 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. If there are any concerns about the behaviour of anyone in relation to a child then the Parish Safeguarding Officer should be contacted or the Diocesan Safeguarding Children Advisor
- The Tower Captain in particular is expected to note and report any inappropriate behaviour. From time to time, a ringer's conduct in relation to children and vulnerable adults may give cause for concern. The Tower Captain should inform the Vicar or Parish Safeguarding Officer who will inform and, if appropriate, consult the Diocesan Safeguarding Children Advisor. The ringer in question may be asked to complete a confidential declaration.

Should a ringer be found to have a record of inappropriate behaviour or has been convicted of offences against children or the vulnerable, consult with the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor and the Vicar of the Parish concerned to seek advice on the appropriate precautions to be put in place for their protection, and that of young and vulnerable ringers. Support can and will be given. Depending on the nature of the risk, these precautions may include increased supervision of the ringer, or a

requirement that the ringer agrees not to attend practices or other ringing activities in any tower where children are present. If the person is not prepared to co-operate or the behaviour is judged to have been so severe then the DAR may consider removing membership from that individual and banning them from attending any ringing events where children may be present. Such action would be separate from any action or agreement made locally with the Parish Safeguarding Officer, Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor, Vicar and local ringers.

Any question or queries around this policy and guidance should be raised with the DAR Safeguarding Officer.

## **Contact Information**

### **DAR Safeguarding Officer**

Charles Conibear

[chasconib@gmail.com](mailto:chasconib@gmail.com)

Mobile 07718080755

### **Director of People and Safeguarding for The Diocese of Exeter**

Anthea Carter-Savigear

The Old Deanery

The Cloisters

Exeter EX1 1HS

Tel: 01392 294947

Email: [Anthea.Carter-Savigear@exeter.anglican.org](mailto:Anthea.Carter-Savigear@exeter.anglican.org)

### **Safeguarding Adviser for the Diocese of Exeter**

Charlie Pitman

Tel: 01392 345909

Mobile: 07889 542640

Email [charles.pitman@exeter.anglican.org](mailto:charles.pitman@exeter.anglican.org)

### **Assistant Safeguarding Advisers for the Diocese of Exeter**

James May

Tel: 01392 345910

Mobile: 07889 542646

Email: [james.may@exeter.anglican.org](mailto:james.may@exeter.anglican.org)

Costa Nassaris

Tel: 01392 294969

Mobile: 07950 457665

Email: [costa.nassaris@exeter.anglican.org](mailto:costa.nassaris@exeter.anglican.org)

**Guild of Devonshire Ringers Safeguarding Officer**

Robert Brown

Email: [safeguarding@devonringers.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@devonringers.org.uk)

**Other useful links:**

**Safeguarding Church of England**

[www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/promoting-safer-church](http://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/promoting-safer-church)

**Safeguarding Catholic Church**

[csas.uk.net](http://csas.uk.net)

**Central Council of Church Bell Ringers**

<https://cccbr.org.uk/>

**NSPCC**

[www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

**Action on Elder Abuse**

[www.elderabuse.org.uk](http://www.elderabuse.org.uk)

**CEOP**

[www.ceop.police.uk](http://www.ceop.police.uk)



Appendix (1a)

## PERMISSION TO RING

Church: .....

Tower Captain and Contact Person: .....

Full name of child or young person: .....

Date of Birth: .....

Address: .....

Name of Parent or Guardian .....

Address if different from above: .....

Home Telephone Number: ..... Mobile number.....

Email Address: .....

It is important we know whether your child –

- a. Suffers from any phobias, disability or known allergies?
- b. Is taking any medication?
- c. Please also tell us of any particular likes, dislikes or fears your child has.
- d. Any other relevant information

(This will not preclude your child from ringing, but notification now will help in the event of a medical problem.)

I understand what is involved and I am aware of the hazards present.

I understand that a separate permission will be sought for certain activities and outings lasting longer than the normal meeting times of the group.

Signature of parent or guardian:

.....

***The information requested on this form can be completed by a carer, but only those with parental responsibility can sign the consent (NB: This may not include a foster carer)***

Name of an additional contact:

.....

Telephone (for additional contact):

.....

**Any additional information:**



Appendix (1b)

## **PERMISSION FOR YOUNG PERSON TO ATTEND EVENT**

**EVENT:** .....

**Date of Event:** .....

**Event organiser/leader:** .....

**Person attending name:** .....

**Address:** .....

**Parent or Guardian:** .....

**Contact Address and telephone:**

.....

.....

**Mobile Phone Number:** .....

Whilst in our care it is important we know whether your child: -

- a. Suffers from any phobias, disability or known allergies?
- b. Is taking medication?
- c. Has been immunised against Tetanus within the last ten years?
- d. Has any health conditions we should know about?

e. Has any special dietary requirements?

f. Please also tell us of any particular likes, dislikes or fears your child has.

**Medical information**

.....  
.....  
.....

**GP Details:** .....

**Surgery or Health Centre:** .....

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**This event is being run in line with guidelines set out by the Devon Association of Ringers and the Central Council of Church Bellringers**

**Parents/Guardians are responsible for their child while travelling to and from the event. There will be designated organisers/tutors to supervise and help with any queries during the day. For their own protection, we ask all participants to remain on the premises (tower/church) at all times**

**Declaration (Please delete and initial as appropriate)**

I agree to my son/daughter's participation in this event and understand that full details will be provided before the event.

I give permission for my son/daughter to travel by car to other towers during the day as arranged by the tower/DAR

I further agree to my son/daughter receiving medical treatment, including anaesthetic, as considered necessary by the medical authorities present.

**Signed:** .....

**Date:** .....



Appendix (1c)

## PHOTOGRAPHIC CONSENT

**Event**.....

I hereby give my consent to allowing a photograph of: (insert name of child/young person)

.....

to be taken during the above DAR event and for it to be included in the (Please tick as appropriate)

Devon Calls (Newsletter)

DAR Website

DAR Facebook

Other (please detail): .....

Signed **Parent or Guardian** .....

PRINT NAME: .....

Date: .....

Signed **Child**: .....

PRINT NAME: .....

Date: .....