

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

## **Safeguarding of Children in the context of Bell Ringing**

### ***Policy Statement***

The Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers (ODG) is committed to the safeguarding of child bell ringers. The welfare and protection of all young ringers will be actively promoted in all towers in the diocese. The Guild Children's Officer will ensure that guild members are informed of all aspects of relevant legislation and good practice, and the guidance below will be communicated widely. The ODG guidance is based on that provided by the House of Bishops, the Diocese of Oxford, and the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers.

Both the involvement of young people, and the value they derive from it, have long been features 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. It is important that we provide a workable framework for the teaching, nurture and well-being of our young ringers that keeps them safe from harm.

The Diocese of Oxford requires all Parochial Church Councils (PCCs) to have an acceptable policy for work with young people in each Parish. All ringing related activities for young ringers at Parish level will be subject to the requirements of the local PCC policy. However, the range of ringing related activities in which young ringers may take part may not all be covered by a Parish policy.

For example:

- Attendance at practice and Service ringing in towers other than their own
- Attendance at branch meetings or practices
- Participation in other branch events e.g. outings
- Attendance at guild meetings or events
- Attendance at branch or guild training events

## Appendix I

### Notes of guidance which give advice on how these activities should be managed as well as how to ensure compliance with the law and with good practice.

- All tower captains should be aware of the House of Bishops, the Diocesan, the CCCBR, their Parish and the Guild policies on safeguarding children. The CCCBR leaflet *Protecting Young Ringers (2011)* should be displayed in each Tower.
- CRB checks should be completed for those who **directly** teach 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 6am. Other adult ringers in the tower who offer helpful suggestions to learners or ‘stand behind’ are **not** required to undergo CRB checks.
- CRB checks should be carried out through the Parish arrangements and would require the applicant to fill in a National Confidential Declaration Form.
- It is good practice to have one male and one female in each Tower who has undergone CRB checks.
- A register should be kept in each Tower recording attendance at each practice or activity.
- 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 touch their hands in order to control the bell.
- Written 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 GP (see appendix IV). Specific parental consent must also be obtained for any activity that takes place away from the home Tower.
- If parents make mutual arrangements with friends to transport their children to ringing activities then no CRB 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 the driver should be CRB 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 perfectly in order 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. A child’s **first** name only should be linked to his/her photograph.
- 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 phone in each 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 Guild Children's Officer should be contacted or the Diocesan Safeguarding Children Advisor** (see appendix III).

## ***Appendix II***

### **Procedure for responding to inappropriate behaviour in relation to child ringers.**

The Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers (the Guild) is committed to safeguarding young ringers from the possibility of abusive behaviour while engaged in bell ringing activities. The Guild recognises that abuse of children can take different forms of varying degrees of severity. To this end all tower captains and all those actively involved in training young ringers are required to undergo CRB checks and, when it is available, to be registered with the Independent Safeguarding Authority. Other ringers are not required to undergo CRB checks, but towers are urged to be vigilant during practices and other ringing. 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 may give cause for concern. The tower captain should inform the Vicar and contact the Guild Children's Officer who will advise and, if appropriate, consult the Diocesan Safeguarding Children Advisor. The ringer in question may be asked to complete a confidential declaration.

If a ringer is found to have a record of inappropriate behaviour or is convicted of offences against children the Guild will take the matter extremely seriously. In consultation with the Diocesan Safeguarding Children Advisor and the Vicar of the parish concerned, the Guild Master (or nominee) and the Guild Children's Officer 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. 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 behaviour of the ringer in question is judged to have been so severe as to bring the Guild into disrepute, then the Guild may consider exercising its established process of censure or exclusion from membership as described in the Guild rules. This would be separate from any agreement made by the Vicar and the ringer concerned.

## ***Appendix III***

### **References to guidance from the House of Bishops, the Diocese and the CCCBR and contact information for the Guild Children's Officer and the Diocesan Safeguarding Children Advisor.**

#### MAIN DOCUMENTS TO REFER TO :

Diocese of Oxford : Protecting Children in the Diocese of Oxford, 2005.

The House of Bishops policy : Protecting all God's Children, 2004.

Both can be seen on the Diocesan website – <http://www.oxford.anglican.org/> – and search under “Child Protection”.

CCCBR information available from their website and search under “Child Protection”

<http://www.cccbr.org.uk/towerstewardship/pubs/gdlnChildProtection.php>

#### USEFUL CONTACTS

The Diocesan Safeguarding Officer is Stephen Barber (01865 208290)

The Children's Officer for the ODG can be reached at [children@odg.org.uk](mailto:children@odg.org.uk)

## ***Appendix IV***

**Model forms for the registration of young ringers and for parental consent for ringing activities.**

*Name of Church*

### **CHILD REGISTRATION RECORD for Bell Ringers, Year**

**NAME** *Please underline the first name the child is called by*

**Date of birth**

**National curriculum year group**

**School**

**ADDRESS**

**TELEPHONE CONTACT**

Parent/Guardian's home

Parent/Guardian's work

Parent/Guardian's mobile

Of another close relative/friend for use in an emergency. (Please give their name and relationship)

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

Suffers from any phobias, disability or known allergies?

- Is on any medication?
- Has been immunized against Tetanus within the last ten years?
- Has any health condition we should know about?
- Has any special dietary requirements?

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

Registered GP (name, address and telephone number)

**YOUR DETAILS**

**Parent/Guardian** *name*

**Address**

Signed ..... .Date .....

I understand that to assist in the keeping of a register to comply with the Child Protection Policy it is necessary to keep details on the database belonging to *Church name*. I understand that the database is only used by the *PCC and Church name* and that data will not be passed to a third party, except in the case of an emergency where my child may be at risk.

I understand that the original copy of this form will be retained by the Tower Captain and only passed to his/her deputy in the event of him/her being absent from a bellringing session.

I give my permission for the child named over this page to attend bellringing and to take part in any organised activity such as outings to other towers. (All ringing activities, including travelling to and from ringing, are covered by the insurance policy of the Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers for members of the Guild, and learners are covered whilst they are ringing under the instruction of a Guild member. All activities have been approved by the PCC, and all activities at *church name* are covered by the *Ecclesiastical Insurance Group*.)

I accept that I am responsible for transporting my child to and from the church for bellringing, and that the group leaders are not responsible when my child leaves the church.

**List any special instructions that we should be aware of:**

**Please confirm your consent by signing below.**

**Signed** ..... **Date** .....

If it becomes necessary for my child to be given urgent medical treatment and I cannot be contacted by telephone or any other means to authorise this, I hereby give my general consent to any medical treatment judged to be necessary and urgent by a medical practitioner and I authorise the leader in charge to sign any document required by hospital or other authorities.

**Signed** ..... **Date** .....

**Additional permission for other ringing activities.**

I also understand that when my child has reached a sufficient standard of proficiency in bellringing, he/she might find it beneficial to attend ringing events in other towers which are not part of the organised activities of the ringers at *church name*.

I give my permission for *child's name* to make such visits and I accept that I am responsible for transporting my child to and from the venues for these activities, and that the group leaders at these events are not responsible when my child leaves the tower.

**Signed** .....

**Date** .....

(N.B. The young person when attending these other events should carry a copy of this permission form together with the list of contact numbers and any relevant medical information.)

# Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers

## One-Day Course

### Parental Consent Form

This form is to be used to obtain Parental Consent for young people under the age of 18 to take part in a one-day ringing course.

1. Activity.....
2. ....

2. Organizer (Individual, Tower, Branch or Guild) .....

3. Young Person's Name .....

4. Address .....

5. Contact Address and Telephone Numbers during the course.....

#### 6. Medical Information

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

- a. Suffers from any phobias, disability or known allergies?  
.....

b. Is on any medication?  
.....

c. Has been immunised against Tetanus within the last ten years?  
.....

d. Has any health condition 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.  
.....  
.....

g. Registered GP (name, address and telephone number)  
.....  
.....

All helpers on the course have been approved for work with young people in their own tower. Guidelines laid down in the Guild's policy on Child Protection will be followed.

Parents will be 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.

**7. Declaration**

I agree to my son/daughter's participation in .....  
full details of which will be sent before the event.

I give permission for my son/daughter to travel by car to other towers during the day.

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

**Signed** .....

**Date** .....