



THE SOUTHWEST BELL RINGING COURSE

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The Southwest Bell Ringing Course is a four-day residential event that aims to provide high quality structured training in the art and science of bellringing in an atmosphere of friendship, encouragement and fun.

The teaching of young people & adults to ring is of paramount importance to the future of Church bellringing and as such the Course Organisers actively encourage all persons including those under the age of 18 to participate in the Course as both Students and Helpers.

In connection with this, the Course Organisers, Tutors, Helpers and Students alike all have a responsibility to ensure the safety and wellbeing of young persons & adults attending the course and to protect them from potential abuse in whatever form.

This policy has been implemented to provide a practical and realistic set of guidelines to ensure compliance with these responsibilities.

DEFINITIONS

Throughout this policy, the following definitions apply:

Adult	A person who is fully grown or developed
Child/ Young Person	Any person under the age of 18
Course	The Southwest Bell Ringing Course is run by The Southwest Bell Ringing Course Ltd.
Course Organisers	The Organising Committee of the Southwest Bell Ringing Course
Group	One of the specialist bellringing topics offered by the Course for which training is provided. Each group consists of one tutor & a number of students & helpers
Helpers	Those people attending the Course to assist with a particular Group
Safeguarding Officer	A person appointed by the Course Organisers to act as a Responsible person under this policy
Students	Those people attending the Course as learners in a particular group
Tutors	Those people appointed by the Course Organisers to lead and run a particular group.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The principles that underpin this policy are contained within guidance issued by the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers [“Safeguarding Policy: Maintaining a Safe Environment for Central Council of Church Bell Ringers -Safeguarding-Policy-October-2021.pdf](#), and associated resources [Resources for Ringers and Ringing Societies – CCCBR](#)

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The Course Organisers also recognise that course activity will take place within Church of England properties, [The Child Protection Policy for the Church of England, Protecting All God's Children \(4th edition 2010\)](#)), underpinned by [Safeguarding, Learning and Development Framework 2024](#) and [Promoting a Safer Church \(2017\)](#)

These in turn draw from the government inter-agency guidance [Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive \(2024\)](#), [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2023\) Statutory Guidance](#) and [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2023\) statutory framework](#) which covers voluntary, charity, social enterprise (VCSE) and faith-based organisations, and private sectors. As well as other government guidance and legislation.

The Course Organisers recognise that Millfield School will host all other non-church-based course activities, [Millfield School Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy](#) will apply when activity is taking place within their site.

In particular, the Course Organisers are fully committed to:

- The safeguarding, care and nurture of all young persons & adults attending the course.
- Responding without delay to any complaint made that a young person / adult attending the course may have been harmed; and
- Fully cooperating with statutory agencies during any investigation they make re: allegations concerning a Course participant.

TYPES OF ABUSE

Abuse has many forms. There are four identified categories of abuse as described in the inter-agency government guidance [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2023\)](#) and [Every Child Matters \(2003, 2023\)](#): physical abuse; emotional abuse; sexual abuse; neglect & financial abuse. Adults / Children may suffer from one or a combination of these categories of abuse. These categories are defined, and their impact assessed, in Appendix 1.

PARENTAL CONSENT

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Consent is required in advance from the parents or guardians of all children/ young persons (under 18 years old) wishing to attend the course. A permission form is required in respect of each child/ young person. A copy of this policy is available to the parents or guardians on request.

SAFEGUARDING TRAINING AND DBS (DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE) CHECKS

The Organising Team, Tutors and Leaders of Optional Sessions are required to complete the Church of England Basic Awareness (C0) and Foundation (C1) Safeguarding Training prior to attending the course, or the equivalent Church of Scotland/ Wales Training Course.

Helpers are required to have successfully completed the Church of England Basic Awareness Safeguarding Training (C0) as a minimum., or the equivalent Church of Scotland / Wales Certificates are to be submitted to the Lead Safeguarding Officer.

An enhanced DBS check for “Leadership and Child Workforce” (or similar) is also required of the Organisers, Tutors and Leaders of optional sessions and will be facilitated by the Course Organisers (if required) and submitted to the Safeguarding Lead Officer. The Safeguarding Lead has the final decision on if the relevant safeguarding training has been completed and if the enhanced DBS certificate presented is fit for purpose.

In the event that a session leader does not have Safeguarding training or a DBS check (e.g. due to a late substitution in case of sickness), a member of the organising team will join that group/session.

SAFEGUARDING OFFICERS

Two Safeguarding Officers, one male and one female, have been appointed by the Course Organisers to act as responsible persons under this policy and to whom all instances giving rise to concern, by either adults or young person/child, must be reported as soon as possible.

The Safeguarding Officers, and their respective contact numbers, are as follows:

Robert J. Woods, Lead Safeguarding Officer Tel: 07921938198

Carolyn Howell .Female Safeguarding Officer Tel:07714463849

The Safeguarding Officers are responsible for ensuring any reports of concern about the welfare of a child/young person & adults on the course are passed to the relevant statutory agencies without

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delay, as well as liaising with all other relevant bodies such as the School/College and/or Church authorities.

For the avoidance of doubt, the Safeguarding Officers, the Course Organisers or any other participant on the course, regardless of professional capacity, will NOT undertake, or be responsible for, the conduct of any formal investigation into allegations of abuse.

Any such investigation will be undertaken by the Local Government Authority and Police Force within whose geographic area the event or incident that gave rise to concern took place.

The Millfield School Safeguarding Officers will be in receipt & aware of the content of this Safeguarding Policy & should liaison needs arise, they will be informed of any matters of concern relating to adults/ a child making reports of any abuse apparent during the duration of this Residential Course.

Contact at Millfield School: Ceri Spooner Senior Events & Courses Manager: Tel: 01458 444328

RESPONSIBILITIES OF TUTORS

All Tutors are required to read and accept this Safeguarding Policy and to confirm that there are no circumstances which would make it inappropriate for them to act as a Tutor on the course.

The Tutors should convey the contents of this policy, and in particular the guidelines set out below, to all students and helpers in their group at the beginning of the course.

In practice, this will be at the "Getting to Know Your Group" session. This applies whether or not there are under-18s in the Group.

PRACTICAL GUIDELINES

The following guidelines should be adopted by all people on the course.

For the most part these represent the application of common sense. These guidelines are intended to be illustrative rather than exhaustive and should be read in that light.

A copy of these guidelines will be prominently displayed in the main gathering room at the Course venue.

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1. Avoid being alone with a child/young person whilst on the course. Always ensure there are at least two adults present, preferably one male and one female. This always applies throughout the course, but particular care should be taken in the following situations:
 - when teaching on a one-to-one basis.
 - when travelling to or from towers in a car.
 - when walking to or from the bedrooms – especially at night.
2. Avoid inappropriate physical contact. There may be occasions where physical contact is unavoidable, for example, where someone is having difficulty handling a bell.
3. In these cases, ensure that such contact is kept to a minimum and always bear in mind that actions and gestures can be easily misconstrued.
4. Do not strike or threaten a young person/child or adult in any way.
5. Do not shout at a young person/child or adult or use inappropriate language – words can be misconstrued as easily as actions.
6. Offer constructive advice rather than being over-critical about ringing abilities.
7. Should an allegation of abuse be made by a young person / child or adult, listen carefully to and do not disbelieve anything which the young person/child or adult says. Some action **MUST** be taken in such circumstances and you should seek immediate advice from one of the Safeguarding Officers.
8. Report any other incidents or concerns you may have to one of the Safeguarding Officers. Again, this must be done immediately. If you cannot find either Officer, then call one of the numbers given above.
9. Do not take photos or videos of any young person /child or adult without the express written permission. In the case here of a young person /child, it should be of their parent or guardian.
10. Be aware that messages put on the Course WhatsApp Groups could / will be seen by many people inside & potentially outside of the Course residents. Please do not post anything unsuitable for residents of the course to read.

CONCLUSION

The safety and wellbeing of Young Person's /Children & Adults attending the course is something that the Course Organisers take extremely seriously and to which they attach the utmost importance.

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Provided everyone adheres to the guidelines above and uses common sense in dealing with any situation that they find themselves in, then we believe that Young Persons /Children and Adults alike can be afforded the protection they deserve.

This Safeguarding Policy was reviewed and updated during 2025 and will be reviewed prior to the commencement of the course.

APPENDIX 1 – TYPES OF ABUSE

Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to, a child whom they are looking after. This situation (formerly Munchausen's syndrome by proxy) is now described as an illness induced or fabricated by carers with parenting responsibilities.

The impact of physical abuse

Physical abuse can lead directly to pain, injury, neurological damage, disability or – at the extreme – death. Harm may be caused both by the abuse itself, and by it taking place in the context of conflict and aggression. In turn, physical abuse has been linked to aggressive behaviour on the part of the child and to emotional, behavioural and educational difficulties. Where a child is disabled, injuries or behavioural symptoms may mistakenly be attributed to their disability rather than the abuse.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only as far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

The impact of emotional abuse

There is increasing evidence that sustained emotional abuse has adverse long-term effects on children's development and on their mental health, behaviour and self-esteem. It can be especially damaging in infancy. Underlying emotional abuse may be as important, if not more so, than other more visible forms of abuse. In families where the child experiences a low level of emotional warmth and an elevated level of criticism, negative incidents may have a more damaging impact. A

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dysfunctional home where there is, for example, domestic violence, or substance misuse, will have an impact on a child, even if they are not directly involved. In extreme cases, emotional abuse can lead to suicide.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetration or non penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material, or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

The impact of sexual abuse

Disturbed behaviour including self-harm, inappropriate sexualised behaviour, sadness, depression, and loss of self-esteem have all been linked to sexual abuse. In disabled children these behaviours have sometimes mistakenly been attributed to their disability. The impact of sexual abuse is believed to increase the longer abuse continues, the more extensive it is, the older the child, the extent of premeditation, and the degree of threat and coercion. Sadism and bizarre or unusual elements also affect the severity of impact. The adverse effects of sexual abuse may endure into adulthood. The support of a non-abusive adult carer who believes the child, helps them understand the abuse, and can offer help and protection, increases a child's ability to cope.

A proportion of adults who sexually abuse children have themselves been sexually abused as children.

They may also have been exposed as children to domestic violence and discontinuity of care. However, it would be quite wrong to suggest that most children who are abused will inevitably go on to become abusers themselves.

Sexual abuse occurs in all communities in the U.K. & is acceptable in none.

Neglect

Neglect is a persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or failing to ensure access to adequate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

The impact of neglect

Severe and/or persistent neglect of young children is associated with major impairment of growth and intellectual development, and long term difficulties with social functioning, relationships and educational progress. Neglect can also result, in extreme cases, in death.

Financial Abuse

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Financial abuse is a tactic abusers use to gain power & control in a relationship. The forms of financial abuse may be subtle or overt but in general includes tactics to conceal information, limit the victim's access to assets, or reduce accessibility to finances.

Action	Date	By Whom
Include reference to Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) Statutory Guidance and Framework	April 2025	Carolyn Howell.
Review and update of policy to reflect DBS checks and Safeguarding Training	April ongoing October, 2025	Robert J Woods.
Include mobile telephone no. of Carolyn Howell onto policy	April 2025.	Robert J Woods.
Updated Safeguarding Policy content as Organisation matters arise.	April 2025 ongoing October,2025.	Robert J Woods.
Millfield School Contact no. to be ascertained & included in policy.	April 2025.	Robert J Woods.
Safeguarding Policy read & updated accordingly. Sent to Course Lead for adoption.	October,2025.	Robert J Woods.
Course lead to receive Safeguarding Policy	October,2025.	Robert J Woods.