



Safeguarding Policy

As adopted 15 May 2021

1. Definitions

This policy uses definitions of the term 'safeguarding' from statutory guidance. Safeguarding children is defined as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Safeguarding vulnerable adults is defined in the 'Care and Support Statutory Guidance' issued under the Care Act 2014 as:

- Protecting the rights of adults to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect
- People and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect
- People and organisations making sure that the adult's wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, taking fully into account their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action
- Recognising that adults sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances and therefore potential risks to their safety or well-being.

2. Background and Scope

The St Martin's Guild ('the Guild') is a voluntary association of bell ringers, centred on the Birmingham area, with the objectives of maintaining ringing for church services; practising, encouraging and advancing the art of change-ringing; and providing a fund to support belfry restoration and improvement projects within its area.

The Guild is committed to ensuring that our procedures comply with the safeguarding guidelines issued by the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers (CCCBR), the Dioceses, and legal requirements. The Guild appoints a Safeguarding Officer annually who also provides guidance and assistance to Guild members regarding safeguarding issues if able to do so. If not, they will refer Guild members in need of assistance to the appropriate sources of guidance. If the Safeguarding Officer post is vacant, responsibility for this role rests with the Guild Master or their nominee.

The Guild's activities include the teaching of new ringers and the Guild undertakes face-to-face training of ringers as well as arranging events at which there is the opportunity for close relationships to be established. It is in this context that this policy has been designed.

All ringing related activities at parish level will be subject to the requirements of the local PCC policy. However, there are a range of different ringing related activities and not all of these will be addressed by a parish policy. The following list indicates the range of such activities:

- Attendance at practice and service ringing in their own tower
- Attendance at practice and service ringing in other towers
- Participation in activities arranged locally (outings, social events)
- Attendance at wider Guild meetings and practices
- Participation in Guild organised events (outings, social events)
- Attendance at Guild training events

3. Safeguarding requirements

Any ringers carrying out one-to-one training of young persons or vulnerable adults on a regular basis are considered to be carrying out a 'regulated activity'. Anyone meeting this criteria will be required to undergo a background check through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). On a local basis such checks will be initiated by the Parish Safeguarding Officer of the parish in which the ringing is taking place.

It is an offence for anyone to knowingly allow a person who has a criminal record relevant to the protection of minors or vulnerable adults to carry out a regulated activity.

The Church of England has numerous documents setting out the requirements for church workers and these include:

- Promoting a Safer Church
- Practice Guidance: Safer Recruitment
- Practice Guidance: Safeguarding Training and Development
- Practice Guidance: Risk Assessment for Individuals who may pose Risk
- Parish Safeguarding Handbook

The CCCBR has a full text of 'Safeguarding in Bell Ringing' on its website:

www.cccbr.org.uk/safeguarding

4. Safeguarding procedures

Safeguarding relates to the protection of the health, well-being and human rights of individuals, to allow people, especially children, young people and vulnerable adults, to live free from abuse, harm and neglect. All Guild members should have safeguarding in mind and treat others with respect.

At Guild organised events, a member of the Standing Committee will be present and responsible for safeguarding. If this is not possible, the Guild Master will appoint someone suitable to fulfil this role. The Guild's Safeguarding Officer sits on the Standing Committee and is aware of, and advises on, all events organised by the Guild.

The Guild Officers will identify those activities where the presence of DBS checked persons is required or recommended. The Guild will seek to ensure that sufficient persons so qualified are available for the identified activities. A list of registered persons will be maintained and kept in a secure manner by the Guild's Safeguarding Officer (Guild Master or nominee if the Safeguarding Officer post is vacant).

The Guild will keep a register of attendance at those events where registered persons are required to be present. In compiling a register of persons available to manage activities, a request may be made to the individual for sight of their DBS certificate and any certificate of Awareness Training, each of which is issued to the individual but are not held by their home Parish.

The Guild's website and all Guild publications will not knowingly publish material which could be detrimental to the interests of children and vulnerable adults. Communications will abide by the normal media conventions and recommendations of the Press Complaints Commission.

Any individual planning to attend a Guild event and who is subject to restrictions should provide details to the Safeguarding Officer, who will liaise with the Diocese of Birmingham Safeguarding Team.

5. Raising Concerns

Any concerns should be raised direct to the St Martin's Guild Safeguarding Officer. In their absence, or if the concerns relate to them, the matter should be raised with the Guild Master or another of the ringing officers.

If a young or vulnerable person is in danger then the police should be notified immediately by dialling 999.

6. Handling Allegations or Incidents

The Guild will deal sympathetically with any complaints of abuse and immediately advise the appropriate authorities. This will usually be the local Parish and Diocesan Safeguarding Officers.

It is at the discretion of the Guild officers to exclude any member (or non-member) from joining any Guild organised activities. The Guild Officer (or nominee) in charge of the activity has the right to ask any member (or non-member) to leave an event if there are concerns about the said person's conduct.

In the handling of safeguarding issues, those involved will ensure any information is kept confidential in line with the handling of sensitive data under Data Protection legislation.

7. Known Offenders

Whether an established ringer, or someone seeking to learn to become a ringer, any persons known to be on the Sex Offenders Register must not be allowed to engage in a regulated activity. This would be a legal offence. However, a known offender **may** be able to take part in ringing activities depending upon:

- The nature of their offence
- Any court restrictions on their activities
- Perceived risk
- The level of supervision that can be afforded.

Any proposal for such a person to be accommodated must be reviewed very seriously with all concerned parties including the incumbent, ringing society and Diocesan Safeguarding Officer. Written agreement with the church **must** be obtained: this is generally between the individual, the parish, and the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer.

8. Contacts

- St Martin's Guild Safeguarding Officer (Trish Everett):
07968 362501 / 0121 449 1088 / trish_everett@hotmail.com
- Diocese of Birmingham Safeguarding Team: <https://www.cofebirmingham.com/safeguarding>
- Domestic Violence Helpline: 0808 2000 247

9. Review of policy

This policy was agreed by the St Martin's Guild at a Business Meeting held on 15 May 2021. Any amendments to this policy require the approval of a Business Meeting. The policy will be kept under continuous review to ensure its relevance and compliance with the law.