

Oxford Society of Change Ringers

Safeguarding Guidelines

This document is intended to provide a number of guidelines to provide children and vulnerable adults with a safe environment to enjoy bell ringing and related social events with the Oxford Society.

The safety and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults is paramount, and any concerns or known breaches of these guidelines should be reported as soon as possible, either to the Safeguarding Officer, the Society President, or directly to the police.

The Safeguarding Officer will ensure that a number of officers (President, Secretary, Ringing Master, Deputy Ringing Master, Safeguarding Officer) are in possession of an up-to-date Enhanced DBS certificate, and the Society will make provision for this if required.

Society members should avoid being alone with a child or vulnerable adult, including when travelling to and from ringing events. It is recommended that at least two people, preferably one male and one female, be present at all times during ringing events, ideally waiting in a public area until sufficient people are present before entering a bell tower.

Physical contact with a child or vulnerable adult should be avoided, unless the safety of said person or others is at risk. Any verbal feedback during ringing events should be constructive, proportionate, and should not be open to misinterpretation.

Children are not permitted to enter the belfry or perform maintenance on the bells. They should also not ring a bell that is known to be mechanically compromised. (eg. with a broken stay)

The parent or guardian of a child is encouraged to provide transport to and from ringing events where possible, and should ideally accompany said person throughout. Where this is not possible, alternative transport arrangements should be made in advance, with the explicit permission from the parent or guardian.

Society members are reminded that it is illegal to purchase alcohol for anyone under 18 years old, and that many public houses have a strict policy on admission of under 18s. Young people are discouraged from attending such social events, unless accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Direct communication with children and vulnerable adults using email or social media is discouraged by the Society. Ringing events should be arranged through official channels where possible.

A "Permission to Ring" form, including emergency contact information to be completed by the child's parent or guardian, will be held by the Secretary and updated on an annual basis, with copies issued to the Ringing Master and Deputy Ringing Master.