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**UNDER 18 YEAR OLDS IN THE BELL TOWER POLICY**

**“York Minster invites everyone to discover God’s love through our welcome, worship, learning and work”**

**AIM**

* To extend welcome to under 18s who might ring or visit the bell tower
* To ensure safeguarding practices are in place and adhered to
* To ensure safety of any under 18s when in the bell tower

**Target Audience:** Under 18s who are with parents / carers who are visiting the bell tower (and whose parents/carers have agreed to the visitors’ agreement by separately signing in themselves)

1. The parent/carer should have read the Safeguarding Children and Adults Leaflet, sent via a web link, this policy, and code of conduct and information for parents (Both contained below).
2. Any under 18 who is visiting with a ringer must be supervised at all times, with a nominated responsible adult noted on the tower register.
3. In the event of an under 18 being a ringer, the usual visitor procedure will have been followed. If the under 18 visitor is with their parent/ carer then the parent will be asked to sign the register at the police entrance. In addition the Head of Tower (ahead of the visit) will:
4. Find out if the under 18 is capable of ringing on the Minster bells
5. If relevant, invite the under 18 to ring on the front 6, and if appropriate on 8, 10 or 12 bells.
6. Have a designated ringer to stand near to the under 18 the first time they ring (either form the local band or the child’s own parent) to ensure the safety of the under 18 and the bells
7. Ensure that, when not ringing, the responsible named adult noted on the register takes responsibility for supervising the under 18 – this includes ensuring they keep well away from ropes, do not climb on boxes, enter the centre of the ringing circle and that when seated do not cross their legs near a bell being rung (See code of conduct below).
8. Any under 14 who is visiting with a ringer must be supervised in coming up and down the stairs by their parents/carers.
9. At any point if the Head of Tower (or nominated person) feels that the child is not being supervised closely enough or that the child’s presence is causing difficulty for the safety of the child or others, the Head of Tower will ask the parents to take the child back down the tower.
10. If the nominated adult is to ring, then they must appoint another nominated responsible adult to closely supervise the child whilst they are ringing.
11. The rules of expected behaviour will be made clear to any under 18s (if old enough to understand them)
12. **At no point must an under 18 non ringer be left unsupervised**.

**APPENDICES**

1. Code of Conduct for Under 18s
2. Information for Parents/Carers
3. Adult to child ratios

**APPENDIX A - CODE OF CONDUCT for UNDER 18s**

**In the ringing chamber**

1. Babies, toddlers and those not yet able to sit responsibility by themselves must be closely supervised by the designated responsible adult accompanying them. Close supervision means the child will be held or within reach at all times so they cannot go near the rope circle or be in any other unavoidable danger.
2. Under 18s old enough and responsible enough to sit by themselves during ringing are allowed to do that on the strict understanding that they have their feet on the floor, do not sit cross legged and are behaving in a quiet and seemly manner throughout their time up the tower.
3. Under 18s need to understand that if they are instructed to do something by the named responsible adult or the Head of Tower (even if that is their parent) they must do as they are instructed if it relates to security, health, safety or well-being.
4. Any under 18 must be sitting on the benches at the edge of the ringing chamber (or closely supervised on the floor directly in front of the seats on the south side of the tower in the case of very young children) at all times during the ringing *(unless the under 18 is taking part in the ringing at that point).*
5. Under 18s must not touch any rope unless they are a ringer who has been asked to ring a particular bell by the Head of Tower or whoever is running the ringing.
6. Children must not go onto the boxes (unless they have been directed to as a ringer to ring a bell rung from a box). In cases where an Under 18 is ringing from a box, they must ensure that their feet do not overhang the box when ringing and that at the end of ringing they step down carefully from the box (no jumping down!)
7. Children must not climb on the ladder in the ringing chamber.
8. Children must not open windows or be held up to the windows in the ringing chamber.
9. If a child is unwell there will be an ice pack and a first aid kit in the ringing chamber for use. The responsible named adult must tell the Head of Tower if an Under 18 is feeling seriously unwell and the Minster Police (as designated first responder for first aid) will be contacted.
10. Under 18s must not go into the middle of the rope circle or the centre of the ringing chamber (unless they are ringers moving to ring a particular bell under the direction of the person organising the ringing).
11. Under 18s must walk not run in the ringing chamber.
12. Children must not touch the model working bell or the dumb bell unless the Head of Tower or parent of a volunteer ringer (or designated responsible adult who is a ringer) has given permission for them to do so. Children given permission to ring the model bell or dumb bell must be supervised by their parent at a level proportionate to the Under 18’s ringing expertise.

**Going up or down the tower steps**

1. Under 14s capable of walking up/down the steps themselves must hold onto the hand rail and must walk in a sensible manner, not run on the stairway.
2. Parent / adult responsible of accompanying a child must walk immediately **behind** the child on the way up the stairs and immediately **in front** of the child on the way down. That would enable the adult to break the fall of a child should they trip.
3. The named responsible adult must be the person immediately behind/in front of the child on the stairway.
4. *Babies and those children too young to walk up steps must be carried in a baby sling to enable the adult carrying them to have hands freed to hold the hand rail on the stairs*
5. *Those using slings must be able to put those on quickly, in case they need to carry the young child in an emergency egress situation*
6. *If a young child is too big for a sling but unable to climb up/down the steps unaided or at reasonable speed, the adult accompanying them must be capable of carrying the child up/ down the 100 steps (and up the tower, across the parapet walkway and down the north west tower).*

**APPENDIX B - Information for parents**

1. If you have any concerns regarding safeguarding please raise these with the Head of Tower. If you are unable or unwilling to do so with the Head of Tower, the York Minster Safeguarding Leaflet outlines the people you could contact instead.
2. Please be aware that there is a CCTV camera in the Ringing Chamber taking images during the ringing. Images from this camera are not taken off site and the camera is under the direction of York Minster Police. Images are not shared unless under investigative reason.

**APPENDIX C – Adult to child ratios**

The NSPCC recommends having at least 2 adults present when working with or supervising children and young people. They recommend the following adult to child ratios as the minimum numbers to help keep children safe:

0 – 2 years: 1 adult to 3 children

2 – 3 years: 1 adult to 4 children

4 – 8 years: 1 adult to 6 children

9 – 12 years: 1 adult to 8 children

13 – 18 years: 1 adult to 10 children

The NSPCC recommends having at least 2 adults present, even with smaller groups.

When young people are helping to supervise younger children, then generally, only people aged 18 or over should be included as adults when calculating adult to child rations.

In England the Department for Education publishes guidance for early years providers which sets out statutory requirements about adult to child ratios. The guidance sets out situations when 16 and 17 year olds may be included in the adult to child ratios.