

Southwark Cathedral – Rules and Guidance on Using the Bells

The guidance and rules applies to all bell ringers (both members of the Cathedral Society of Ringers and visitors), and they are part of the policy for tower safety and security.

1) Person in Charge.

- a) The Master (or Deputy Master) is normally the person in charge of the ringers.
- b) In the absence of the Master and the Deputy Master, a named person will be in charge for that ringing occasion.
- c) The named person may be a member of the Cathedral Society, or the leader of a visiting band.

2) Duties of the Person in Charge

- a) The person in charge is responsible for the operation of these rules and must ensure that:
 - if the ringers are the only occupants of the Cathedral, only relevant persons enter the Cathedral;
 - only relevant persons ascend the tower;
 - juniors and children are supervised by the correct number of adults;
 - child ringers (under 12 years) have written permission to ring from one of their parents or guardian;
 - people going up the tower have signed the record book;
 - they know how to use the walky-talky;
- b) Before ringing starts he/she must ensure that:
 - people in the ringing room know the fire procedure;
 - clock hammers are taken off before clock bells are raised (bells 6,7,8,11,& 12);
 - ringers are assessed as to their ability to ring Southwark bells.
- c) After ringing is finished he/she must ensure that:
 - the clock bells are lowered (bells 6,7,8,11 and 12);
 - all the ropes are hung on the spider (wooden bell), raised up and locked;
 - windows in the ringing room are locked;
 - the ringing room door is locked and other tower doors closed;
 - clock hammers are released;
 - all ringers have left the tower and marked the record book.
 - keys and record book are returned to the vergger;

There are details below on all of these points.

Notes:

1. When possible, the person in charge of a visiting band will be met by one of the local band, who will familiarise the person with the tower and arrangements for ringing.
2. The clock bells must be lowered after ringing, unless permission is given by the Master (or his Deputy) not to do so.

3) Visiting Bands

- a) Bands of visiting ringers must obtain approval from the Ringing Master before permission is given to ring.
- b) The Secretary of the Cathedral Society will send a copy of this document to the leader of the visiting band, and, before permission is given, the leader of the visiting band must send a written acknowledgement and acceptance of these rules.
- c) The leader of the visiting band must write to the Secretary of the Cathedral Society informing him/her about any junior members of the band, and how they will be supervised. (see section on Juniors and Children)
- d) Children under 12 years of age must have written permission from their parent(s) or legal guardian stating that they allow the child to ring. A copy of the permission must either be sent to the Secretary or shown to a member of the Cathedral staff at the time of the visit.
- e) Members of visiting bands must be made aware of these rules and agree to be bound by them.
- f) For regular visiting practice bands, the leader of the practice band must reconfirm acceptance of these rules on an annual basis.

4) Security

- a) The person in charge is responsible for security and should liaise with the verger to confirm what security arrangements are needed for the Cathedral entrance.
- b) If only the ringers are using the Cathedral, the person in charge must ensure that only authorised people enter the church. If the band does not all arrive at the same time, somebody must be at the door and only allow access to other members of the band.
- c) Keys to the tower are obtained from the Verger.
- d) At the end of ringing keys must be returned to the Verger who will take over responsibility for locking up the Cathedral.

5) Fire Procedure

- a) There is a copy of the tower fire procedure in the ringing room, on the wall near the door.
- b) Before ringing starts, the person in charge must read the procedure and tell other people in the room about the procedures.

6) Signing-In book

- a) The Verger will give the person in charge the tower signing-in book, which acts as a record of who is up the tower.
- b) The full name of all people going up the tower must be written in the book.
- c) The book is left at the bottom of the tower and will provide information to emergency services in the event of a security alert (such as a fire).
- d) When leaving, people must indicate that they have left the tower.

7) Walkie-Talkie Sets

- a) The Verger will give two walkie-talkie sets to the person in charge, along with operating instructions. These are for communication between the Verger, the Ringing Room and the person on the Cathedral entrance.

8) Access to the Ringing room

- a) There are 125 steps to get to the ringing room, and access is a narrow open gallery (with a handrail) some 80 feet up.
- b) Care must be exercised on the staircases and around the gallery at all times, and children must be supervised.

9) The Clock Hammers

- a) The mechanism to disconnect the clock hammers is in the room under the ringing chamber.
- b) There are two levers (one on each side of the pendulum case).
- c) The levers must be pushed down to the bottom position and secured in place with the screw.
- d) To reconnect the clock hammers, the levers are returned to the top position and held in place by the screws.

10) The Bell-ropes

- a) When not in use, the bell-ropes are attached to the rope “spider”, and hoisted towards the ceiling
- b) The spider is locked in position using a padlock.
- c) The key to the padlock in with the tower keys.

11) Entering the Ringing Room

- a) The key to the bell chamber is on set of tower keys.
- b) There is also a bolt at the top of the ringing room door.
- c) The bells will usually be left in the “up” position with the exception 6,7,8,11 and 12 (clock bells).
- d) Notices warning that the bells are up and ropes not to be touched must be displayed in a prominent position in the Ringing Room.

12) Turning the Clappers of Bells Up Wrong

- a) When raising the clock bells, the 11 and 12 will go up “wrong”.
- b) To turn the clappers on these bells, pull on the ropes behind and each side of the clock case and release them once the clappers have turned.
- c) In the event of any problem carrying out this task, the person in charge will need to enter the bell chamber (key on the tower keys).
- d) There is a hooked pole (kept outside the bell chamber) to pull the clapper over.
Clappers must **not** be turned when bells are ringing and **only** the hooked stick may be used.

13) Ringling the Bells

The tenor is 48cwt, which makes Southwark Cathedral bells one of the heaviest rings of bells.

- a) The person in charge is responsible for ensuring that people ringing the bells are competent to do so.
- b) Visitors must be asked for their ringing experience and if there is any doubt to their competency, the person in charge must take steps to ensure that it is safe for the visitor to ring.
- c) No person may ring more than one bell at a time.
- d) The person in charge is in charge of all activities in the tower, and ringers and tower visitors must follow his/her instructions to comply with these rules.

14) Juniors - Ringers or Visitors

- a) A junior is anybody aged 12 to 16 years.
- b) A minimum of TWO adults (18 years or over) must be present before juniors are allowed to ascend the tower.
- c) For every four juniors there must be at least two adults.

15) Children Under 12 Years Old

- a) In addition to the conditions for juniors, the following also apply;
 - i) Each child (under 12 years old) entering the tower must have his/her own supervising adult. Each adult can only supervise one child and cannot also supervise a junior.
 - ii) Before a child is allowed to ring, there must be written permission from the child's parent(s) or legal guardian. Even if written permission is given, the person in charge may still not allow the child to ring.

The rules on juniors and children are in line with the Cathedrals policy on child protection.

Extract from Southwark Cathedral Child Protection Policy

4 Servers and Bell ringers

- (1) Two adult people should be with the children at all times while they are within the care of the Cathedral. If, for any reason, one person is left with a group of children, doors to the area should be left unlocked and another adult person should be within reasonable proximity.
- (2) The gender of adults in attendance should reflect, where possible, the mix of the group.
- (3) It is the duty of parents or guardians to ensure the safety of children coming to and from the Cathedral.
- (4) No person under the age of 16 will be left in sole charge.
- (5) An up-to-date register of persons under 18 will be kept by the Head Server (for servers) and the Ringing Master (for Cathedral Society members) and kept in the Sacristy/Servers' Cupboard. The register will include:
 - (a) name, address, telephone number and date of birth of each child; and
 - (b) parent's or guardian's name (and address and telephone number if different).