



# ***The British Model Flying Association***

## **THE PROMOTION OF WELFARE AND CARE OF CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS IN MODEL FLYING**

### **POLICY, PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES**

Issue 1

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## **DEFINITIONS**

Within this document:

- A “junior member” or “junior” is defined as a person under 18 years of age.
- A “vulnerable adult” is defined as a person of 18 years of age or over but through mental or physical attributes requires a higher level of supervision than would be normally commensurate with an adult member.

# INTRODUCTION

## POLICY

The British Model Flying Association believes that the care and welfare of children is everyone's responsibility, particularly when it concerns protection from abuse. Not only does it protect the children but by providing a safe environment we will be encouraging youngsters to participate in model flying. The Children Act 1989 indicates that anyone who has the care of children should "*do what is reasonable in all circumstances for the purpose of safeguarding or promoting the child's welfare.*" Everyone has a part to play whether they be a full time employee, elected officer, club officer, instructor or a member of the BMFA. However, the parents, guardians, carers, friends and those for whom we are caring also have a vital part to play.

Similar principles also apply to those working with vulnerable adults at club level although the legislation and national infrastructure concerning the protection of vulnerable adults is different from that for the protection of children. **Therefore, in principle, clubs should follow the same guidelines if they work with or have vulnerable adults as members.**

Abuse can occur anywhere where there are children: at home, in school, in the park, at the club site or clubroom. Sadly, there is a small minority who will seek to be with children simply to obtain gratification from abuse. Similarly, abuse can occur simply because those involved lack the knowledge to prevent the situation arising.

The following simple principles apply to promote the protection of children

- The child's welfare is the first consideration.
- All children regardless of their age, gender, disability, race, religion or sexual identity have the right to be protected from abuse and to be treated with dignity.
- All those working with children should have the knowledge and awareness to permit them to make informed decisions to prevent placing themselves or children at risk.

Implementation of these policies and guidelines is not something of which to be afraid and should not prevent the continuing integration of children into the BMFA and its clubs. Protecting children from abuse and promoting their welfare is largely a matter of common sense and a little thought at the outset can prevent misunderstanding and inappropriate accusations.

**Therefore, all BMFA clubs that involved with children or vulnerable adults are strongly encouraged to adopt this policy, and the associated guidelines, to ensure they are following good practice and their legal obligations to protect both children and those working with them. BMFA full and part-time employees must comply with this policy. However, we would expect that all volunteers will also comply with this policy.**

The BMFA is committed to supporting its clubs and members in all aspects of model flying. Clubs and members should remember that the BMFA will support anyone who reports his or her concerns that a child is, or maybe, at risk of abuse. All such reports would be treated in the strictest confidence. However the information may need to be used where legal action is taken.

Further advice on any aspect of this policy can be obtained from the Chief Executive, the General Manager or the Development Officer at BMFA Headquarters.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The following organisations are thanked for their help in compiling these guidelines and policy:

The NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit

The Central Council of Physical Recreation

UK Sport

Sport England

UK Sport Coach

British Gymnastics

The Amateur Swimming Association

The Joint Angling Governing Bodies

The British Triathlon Association

The Criminal Records Bureau

Leicestershire County Council

# **HELP LINES**

**BMFA Chief Executive: 0116 244 0028**

**BMFA General Manager: 0116 244 0028**

**BMFA Development Officer: 0116 244 0028 or 01526 832871**

**NSPCC: 0800 800 500**

**Childline: 0800 1111**

**Social Services:** Details from your local telephone directory.

**Police:** Details from your local telephone directory or in an emergency call 999.

## **IMPORTANT**

Please note that the British Model Flying Association is committed to the protection of its junior and vulnerable adult members. Whilst we accept that you may not wish to involve the Association should you have a concern, we would appreciate that you either contact the BMFA representatives listed above in the first instance or advise them if you have contacted another agency.

By doing so, we can then co-operate with all involved to ensure that any concern is quickly and fully addressed.

Please note that if you have a concern, there is an incident report form at Appendix A which we would recommend you complete. This will assist you and the agencies you contact in their investigation.

# ABUSE OF CHILDREN

## WHAT IS ABUSE?

Abuse is a term used to describe ways in which children may be harmed, usually by adults and often by people they know and trust. It refers to damage to their physical or mental health and can take several forms. Whilst abuse can occur on an opportunistic basis, many abusers use sport for access by “grooming” the organisation or by “engineering” themselves into a position of trust where they have ready access to children. It is essential that the types of abuse, the signs of abuse and what to do if a child is suspected of being abused, are fully understood.

**Physical Abuse** – where someone physically hurts or injure children by hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning burning, biting, scalding, suffocating, drowning 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. Whilst most aspects of model flying are “non-physical”, physical abuse can occur if a child is pushed beyond their physical limits, such as recovering free flight models against the clock whilst in competition.

**Neglect** – where adults fail to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in a serious impairment of the child’s health or development (e.g. to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment). Neglect in model flying could include the failure to keep a child reasonably warm and dry on an exposed flying site or leaving a child alone on a flying site.

**Sexual Abuse** – where boys and girls are abused by adults or other children (both male and female) who use children to meet their own sexual needs. This could include full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse and fondling. Showing children pornographic material is also a form of sexual abuse. There is no need for intimate contact in model flying; therefore there should be no reason, under normal circumstances, for the opportunity for sexual abuse. However, clubs should be aware that abusers could “engineer” situations to provide the opportunity for this type of abuse by developing their relationship of trust in order to abuse the child away from the club environment.

**Emotional Abuse** – is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent effects on the child’s emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar 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 to feel frightened or in danger by being constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted which may make the child very nervous or withdrawn. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child. Emotional abuse in model flying may occur if children are subjected to constant criticism, such as when learning to fly, sarcasm, bullying or by consistently placing too high an expectation in their performance.

## **SIGNS OF ABUSE**

The signs that should alert you to a possibility of abuse or bullying may be:

Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body normally not prone to such injuries.

An injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent.

The child describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him/her.

Someone else (a child or adult) expresses concern about the welfare of another child.

Unexplained changes in behaviour (e.g. becoming very quiet, withdrawn, or displaying sudden outbursts of temper).

Inappropriate sexual awareness.

Engaging in sexually explicit behaviour.

Distrust of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected.

Displays difficulty in making friends.

Is prevented from socialising with other children.

Displays variations in eating patterns including overeating or loss of appetite.

Long term changes such as loss of weight or becoming unkempt.

However, as any parent or carer will know, these signs do not necessarily mean the child is being abused. There may be other circumstances within the child's life, such as a family bereavement or difficulties at school, that could be the cause of some of these signs. Similarly, there may not be any specific signs and you may just feel that something is wrong. This is where developing communication channels with parents or guardians has an important part to play.

## **WHAT TO DO IF A CHILD TELLS YOU HE/SHE IS BEING ABUSED**

**Always:** Stay calm and reassure the person

Take the person seriously.

Be honest and explain that you will have to inform somebody else.

Make written notes of what the person said as soon as practically possible after the event; do not trust your memory. Use the incident report form, Appendix A.

Maintain confidentiality; only tell those that need to know, but do so as soon as is reasonably possible.

**Never:** Rush into inappropriate action.

Make promises you cannot keep.

Take sole responsibility - consult with somebody else as advised above.

### **GOOD PRACTICE WHICH CAN HELP TO PREVENT CHILD ABUSE**

**Club Policy:** Ensure that your Club has a policy for the promotion of welfare of children.

Ensure that, as far as is possible, those working with children are suitable to do so.

Ensure that parents, carers and club members know how to voice their concerns.

Ensure that children know how to voice their concerns.

**Volunteer Policy:** Do not spend excessive amounts of time alone with children.

Do not take children alone on car journeys.

Do not take children alone to your home.

Do not engage in horseplay or sexually provocative games.

Do not permit inappropriate touching.

Do not permit the use of inappropriate language or sexual comments.

Do not ignore any allegations that a child makes.

Do not do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves.

If, for any reason, you have absolutely no choice and cannot comply with the above good practice, then always inform the parent or carer of the child, and a committee member of your club, citing the reasons why you were unable to comply and make a record of it.

**Physical Handling:** The requirements to touch children or vulnerable adults in a manner that may give rise to alleged abuse are extremely rare in model flying. At the most, it may be necessary to maintain physical proximity by placing a hand around the waist of a child or person, such as instructing control line flying, or by placing a hand on the shoulder or arm to reposition someone on a flight line. Occasionally, it may be necessary for you to put your arms around the trainee in RC flying to give stick instruction if a buddy box is not available, or to instruct on stick movement. Touching should not be necessary in other model aircraft activity, such as in workshops or presentations and is, therefore, to be avoided.

In all cases where physical contact is predetermined by the activity, it is recommended that these procedures are discussed with the child or vulnerable adult and their parent or carer to ensure that all are aware of the reasons behind the physical contact and that there is no misunderstanding. The parent or carer should give their written consent for any form of physical contact which should include the type/limits of contact. Care should always be taken to avoid inappropriate touching.

It may also be necessary to reasonably physically restrain a child or vulnerable adult to prevent he/she placing themselves in a hazardous situation. **In a high risk safety situation, priority must be given to the safety of the child or vulnerable adult before the protocols of handling.** However, care should always be taken to avoid inappropriate touching whenever possible.

## **DEALING WITH ALLEGED ABUSE**

Abuse can take place in a variety of settings: within the family, by other children, by other members of the community and within sports and social groups, such as model aircraft clubs.

The first thing to remember is that **you are not in a position to determine if abuse has taken place** but that it is your responsibility to do something about it if you have concerns. However, taking action of this kind is never easy; it takes courage, but you may be protecting a life by doing so. Whilst it may be possible to talk to the parents, guardians or carers, be aware that this could place the child at a greater risk in certain circumstances.

Flow diagrams to assist you to refer the matter correctly are on Pages 30 and 31.

### **Action to be Taken if Suspected Abuse is Being Committed by a Person Outside of Model Flying: that is by the parents or guardians, other children or someone else in the community outside of the of the club environment.**

**If you are working within your club**, then you should inform your Club Welfare Officer who should refer the matter to the Police or Social Services, the BMFA Chief Executive, the General Manager or the Development Officer.

**If you are working in a school or youth group**, then you should inform the head teacher or group leader who will follow local child protection procedures.

**If you are working in a local authority sports facility**, then you should inform the local authority sports development officer who will follow local child protection procedures.

**In any other situation, or if the designated person is not available or your concern is about that person or no action is taken**, then make direct contact with the BMFA Chief Executive, the General Manager or the Development Officer.

If the BMFA Chief Executive, the General Manager or the Development Officer are not available, you should then assume the responsibility and seek advice directly from the NSPCC, Childline, your local Social Services or the Police. All such contacts will remain confidential. Help lines are listed on Page 6. **In an emergency always contact the Police in the first instance.**

Use the Incident Report Form at Appendix A to make a record of your actions as this may assist both you and the authorities later should an investigation be undertaken. The Incident Form should be sent to the Police or Social Services within 24 hours and copied to the BMFA Chief Executive, the General Manager or the Development Officer.

### **Action to be Taken if Suspected Abuse is Being Committed by a Person Within Model Flying:**

Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a BMFA employee or volunteer, should always be reported directly to the BMFA Chief Executive, the General Manager or the Development Officer. Use the Incident Report Form at Appendix A to make a record of your actions as this may assist both you and the authorities later should an investigation be undertaken.

They will take the appropriate steps to ensure the safety of the child or confirm with any other agencies previously involved that these steps have been taken. They will also ensure that the safety of any other child that may be at risk. Such steps will include:

- The BMFA Chief Executive, the General Manager or the Development Officer will refer the allegation to the Social Services Department, if they have not already been informed, who may involve the Police. Alternatively, they may go directly to the Police in an emergency.
- The CWO will be informed unless circumstances deem it to be inappropriate.
- The parents of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from social services.
- The BMFA Chief Executive, or the General Manager or the Development Officer in his absence, will deal with any media enquiries. Clubs and members should refer any media enquiries to the BMFA Headquarters.
- The BMFA Chief Executive, or the General Manager or Development Officer in his absence, may, in consultation with the club:

Advise an interim suspension on the member's activities based upon the risk to the child and the seriousness of the allegation pending the instigation of any investigation, informing the member of the reasons why the decision was taken.

Determine if there is a requirement for an internal BMFA investigation.

Suspend with immediate effect any BMFA instructor qualification.

Advise on a suspension from BMFA and club events where children or vulnerable adults are involved.

The member involved has the right of appeal to the Board of Executives against the decision of the BMFA Chief Executive, the General Manager or Development Officer. Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Honorary Secretary.

The Chief Executive or General Manager or Development Officer will make a full report to the BMFA's Child Protection Working Group which will be convened specifically to address the allegation. Irrespective of the findings of any external investigation, the BMFA will assess all individual cases and determine if the person can be reinstated and how this can be handled sensitively. This decision will be based on all the information available, including the findings of any external investigation. Should there be any doubt on the person's ability to continue to work with children then his/her clearance to work with children will be withdrawn as the welfare of children is paramount.

If the BMFA Chief Executive, General Manager or Development Officer is the subject of allegation then the report must be made to the BMFA Vice Chairman who is also the Chairman of the Child Protection Working Group who will take appropriate reporting action.

Should an allegation be made some time after the event then the above procedures still apply.

### **DEALING WITH POOR PRACTICE**

If the allegations are against BMFA employees or volunteers and, after consideration by the BMFA Child Protection Working Group in consultation with the club, are clearly about poor practice and not abuse, then the allegation will be dealt with internally as a misconduct issue. The BMFA Child Protection Working Group, in consultation with the club, will decide whether the misconduct should:

- Result in a written warning to the member, with a copy to the club and a copy securely filed in BMFA Headquarters.
- If deemed to be very serious or a continuation of previously reported bad practice, result in the suspension or withdrawal of his or her clearance to work with children.

The member involved has the right of appeal to the BMFA Board of Executives against the decision of the Child Protection Working Group. Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Honorary Secretary.

## **GUIDE ON CLUB POLICY FOR CARING FOR CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS**

This guide is not definitive and clubs should be aware it may have to be tailored to meet the club's requirements and the individual needs of children and vulnerable adults, which should be determined in full consultation with the member and the member's family or carer.

It does, however, provide a starting point for the formulation of club policy and identification of responsibilities. **It should be noted that any disclaimer concerning the care of any member, particularly junior or vulnerable adult members, is not acceptable in law.**

It is to the club's advantage to appoint a member as the Welfare Officer who can act as a focal point for all child and vulnerable adult issues and be a point of contact for parents, guardians and carers. Ideally, the member should have experience of working with children or vulnerable adults but if this is not the case then training can be arranged through the BMFA HQ.

Responsibility for children and vulnerable adults is shared between the parents, guardians or carers and the club members and should be well publicised to ensure that all are aware of the division of responsibilities. The ideal medium is club rules but for these to be effective it is imperative that a copy of the rules and the BMFA policy is given to parents, guardians or carers in addition to the club members and that their attention is drawn to them.

Typically club rules concerning the care of children and vulnerable adults could be:

- All members, parents, guardians and carers are to comply with BMFA and club policies and guidelines for the promotion of welfare and care of children.
- A junior member is defined as being under 18 years of age.
- A vulnerable adult is defined as a person of 18 years of age or over but through mental or physical attributes requires a higher level of supervision than would be normally commensurate with an adult member.
- A responsible adult is defined as a senior member or parent/guardian who has the clearance, experience, knowledge and training commensurate with the type and degree of supervision required.
- Junior members must be supervised at all times by a responsible adult. The level of supervision is to be commensurate with the junior member's age, maturity, capabilities and levels of experience.
- Junior members under the age of 14 years shall not start an engine or carry a model with the engine running unless they are supervised by a responsible adult.
- No child or vulnerable adult shall undertake any activity which might place him or her at risk. In any event prior consultation with their parent, guardian or carer must take place if there is any doubt on the member's abilities to undertake a specific activity.

- No senior member is to be expected to assume responsibility for a child or a vulnerable adult unless he/she has been specifically requested to do so by the parent, guardian or carer. If required to do so, he/she is to assume complete and total responsibility for the child or vulnerable adult whilst he/she is in their charge.
- Notwithstanding the requirements of the previous paragraph, should a member discover a child or vulnerable adult that is unsupervised then he/she must assume responsibility for that person's safety in the first instance. The situation should then be rectified as soon as possible by seeking out the parent, guardian, carer or nominated supervisor. Any instance of such an occurrence is to be reported to the club committee as soon as possible and a record made of the occurrence.
- Whilst supervising children or vulnerable adults, members should avoid placing themselves in a position that could be open to misinterpretation or question in accordance with BMFA policy. Remember, the policy is there to protect you as well as children and vulnerable adults.
- Should any member, parent, guardian, carer or the person themselves have concerns about the welfare of children or vulnerable adults then he or she is to contact (*insert the nominated person*) or any of the help lines on Page 6.
- All members are required to respect the rights and dignity of children and vulnerable adults and to promote their welfare. Caring is largely a matter of common sense provided everyone is clear on what is expected of them and a few simple principles are adhered to. It is not a responsibility to be feared but is, nevertheless, essential if we are to ensure that we are to be a club that offers opportunities for all.

Clubs should also place the following or similar statement on the club's membership application form to ensure that the parent, guardian or carer of a child or vulnerable adult also agrees to abide by club policy:

***“Note to parents, guardians and carers:***

*Whilst this Club has a moral and statutory duty to take all reasonable steps to ensure the general welfare and protection of children and vulnerable adult members, in particular during the actual act of model aircraft flying and associated pre-flight and post-flight procedures, the Club will not undertake the all encompassing responsibilities of those acting in the role of guardians or carers unless specifically arranged.*

*Our activities at the flying site do not finish at a regular time. It is therefore your responsibility to ensure the well being of your charge over and above arranging a predetermined collection time. Should you wish to leave a child or a vulnerable adult at the flying site, it is your responsibility to arrange for one of the qualified club members to supervise him/her during your absence and, if necessary, make arrangements for the member to be able to make contact with you.*

*Should your child have any special medical or physical needs you are required to advise the Club in writing.*

*Should physical contact be required during model flying for instructional or any other purposes these will be explained to you and you will be required to record your agreement in writing defining the type and limits of contact.*

*Should the Club wish to use a photographic image of your child, the Club will follow the guidelines laid down by the NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit detailed on Page 25 of this document. In addition, your written consent will be required for the Club to do so.*

*In addition the BMFA and this Club have specific rules and policies relating to children and vulnerable adults, a copy of which has been provided to you, and you are required to study it carefully, in particular Page 19 of the BMFA policy and guidelines: “Guide For The Parents, Guardians And Carers Of Children and Vulnerable Adults”.*

*This membership form must be countersigned by the parent or guardian if the applicant is under 18 years of age or by the authorised carer of a vulnerable adult, thereby signifying acceptance of the conditions of membership.*

*Should you wish to discuss any issue, have any concerns or have suggestions on how we may improve our policies, then please contact: “(insert the nominated person)” or contact one of the help lines on Page 6 of the BMFA policy and guidelines as you deem appropriate.*

Should clubs consider diverging from these guidelines they are recommended to seek advice from either the BMFA Chief Executive, the BMFA General Manager or the BMFA Development Officer.

## **ROLE OF THE CLUB WELFARE OFFICER**

The role of the Club Welfare Officer is to:

- Help the club follow the guidelines laid down in the BMFA's Promotion of Welfare and Care of Children and Vulnerable Adults in Model Flying Procedures and Guidelines document.
- Ensure that new initiatives and information from the BMFA are communicated to the club and its members.
- Ensure that the promotion of welfare and care of children and vulnerable adults is an item on the club committee meeting agendas.
- Ensure that all club members working with children or vulnerable adults have received appropriate training and are suitably qualified.
- Establish contact with their local social services and obtain information on local advice and reporting procedures. The CWO should obtain a copy of the Area Child Protection Committee Procedures from their local Social Services.
- Process club members' applications to work with children or vulnerable adults including the interview, induction and any required clearances as detailed in this Policy, ensuring that confidentiality is maintained.
- Liaise with BMFA HQ on children and vulnerable adult issues.

The role of the Club Welfare Officer does not require him/her to be the recipient and 'solver' of club problems relating to children. Junior members will talk to those with whom they feel most confident and not necessarily to the Club Welfare Officer.

Who the club selects as its Club Welfare Officer is its decision but it should ensure that the chosen person has the ability to do the job and has undergone training which can be arranged through the BMFA if required.

## **INSTRUCTORS' RESPONSIBILITIES**

The BMFA advocates that instructors, especially those working with children or vulnerable adults, must always comply with the principles of good, moral and ethical frameworks and exemplary standards of conduct.

**Note:** Although the term “instructor” is used, it also encompasses those persons teaching or assisting in schools or youth groups. e.g. model aircraft workshops, presentations on model aircraft flying, buddy box flying etc.

In addition instructors should also comply with the following guidelines:

- Instructors should place the well-being and safety of the trainee above the development of performance. They should follow all of the BMFA’s appropriate guidelines appertaining to instruction.
- Instructors should develop an appropriate working relationship with the trainees (especially children and vulnerable adults) based on mutual trust and respect. Instructors must not exert undue influence to obtain personal benefit or reward nor abuse their position of trust.
- Instructors should encourage and guide trainees to accept responsibility for their own behaviour and standards of flying, adopting safe procedures.
- Flying instructors should hold either a BMFA approved instructor or BMFA registered club instructor qualification and ensure that their instruction and knowledge are to current best practice.
- Instructors must ensure that the activities they direct or advocate are commensurate with the age, maturity, experience and ability of the individual. Those activities which entail increased risks, such as starting an internal combustion engine by hand, must be carefully controlled and monitored to ensure that the trainee is in a position to reasonably undertake them.
- Instructors should at the outset clarify with the trainee exactly what is expected of him/her and what the trainee is entitled to expect from the instructor. In addition, it may be appropriate to consult with parents or carers.
- Instructors should fully co-operate with all other interested parties (e.g. other instructors, the club, the school or youth group and the BMFA) in the best interests of the trainee.
- Instructors should always promote the positive aspects of model flying (e.g. compliance with BMFA recommendations and club rules) and never condone unsafe or unacceptable behaviour, or practice.
- Instructors should always display high standards of behaviour, appearance and flying practice. Instructors should refrain from publicly criticising the trainee, fellow members, the club and the BMFA. Differences of opinion should be dealt with discreetly and through the appropriate channels.

## **GUIDE FOR PARENTS, GUARDIANS AND CARERS OF CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS**

Before entrusting your child or charge to his or her club you should check that:

- The club has a published policy to promote the care and welfare of children and vulnerable adults with which you are content.
- There are procedures in place should you wish to voice concerns.
- That those working with children and vulnerable adults are carefully recruited, suitably qualified and cleared to do so.
- There are suitable procedures for dealing with the intimate care of children and vulnerable adults, such as going to the toilet.
- That club encourages the involvement of parents, guardians and carers.
- Should physical contact be deemed appropriate for any reason, such as for instructional purposes, you have given your consent in writing detailing the limits and type of contact to which you agree.
- Should your child or the vulnerable person for whom you care has any medical or special need that you inform the club in writing.
- Should the Club wish to use a photograph of your child that you provide your written consent.

Do encourage your child or charge to talk about their training and the club environment and ensure that they know how to express their concerns if they are unhappy about any aspect of their care. If you have any doubts, contact the nominated club representative or contact any of the help lines on Page 6.

## **SELECTION PROCEDURE FOR THOSE WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS**

The purpose of vetting persons for suitability to work with children or vulnerable adults is to ensure that those who have a history that precludes them from this type of work are identified at the outset. It is not the solution to prevent abuse but forms a small, but nevertheless essential, part of the process.

Flow diagrams to assist you with the selection of suitable persons are on pages 32 and 33.

Vetting is not mandatory for sports or voluntary organisations under The Protection of Children Act 1999 or The Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000. Nevertheless, both of these Acts enable organisations such as the BMFA to adopt a responsible attitude and abide by these Acts in principle. Therefore the BMFA strongly suggests that clubs and members who are planning, or likely, to work with children or vulnerable adults comply with the following procedure. It is not necessary for those that work with children or vulnerable adults on an unforeseen basis to be cleared although all members working with children or vulnerable adults still have a duty of care towards those with whom they are working. Uncleared persons should never be permitted to work unsupervised with children or vulnerable adults.

In the first instance the Club must assure itself, from its experience and knowledge of the member, that he or she is suitable to work with children or vulnerable adults. The club should carry out a formal interview of the candidate to satisfy itself as far as is reasonably possible as to the suitability of the candidate.

The club should require all members who work with children and vulnerable adults to complete a self declaration form, Appendix B, and provide the applicant with a copy of this policy. It should also require the applicant to complete an application form, Appendix C, in which he or she is given the opportunity to outline the reasons why he/she wishes to work with children or vulnerable adults and his/her aspirations for the post. When the applicant signs the application form, he/she is also signing to having read, and agreeing to comply with, this policy.

If the club deems the applicant to be suitable the CWO will countersign the documents and return them to the applicant having verified the applicants identity. The applicant is to then send both forms in confidence to BMFA HQ as directed on the forms.

BMFA HQ will obtain at least two written references, Appendix D, from persons of responsibility, one preferably associated with the applicant's former work of working with children or vulnerable adults. If this cannot be obtained then training is strongly recommended. Written references will always be followed up by telephone to confirm validity.

If, at this stage, it is deemed by the BMFA that the applicant may not be suitable to work with children or vulnerable adults then the reasons will be fully explored and discussed with the applicant, and in conjunction with representatives from his or her club should he or she wish it, before any final decision is taken. If thought necessary, a formal interview will be conducted by BMFA HQ. Should the applicant be deemed unsafe to work with children or vulnerable adults at this stage, he or she and the club will be notified.

All members that apply to the BMFA to work with children or vulnerable adults will be required to undergo clearance (Disclosure) through the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) for England and Wales, The Scottish Office (Social Works Services Group) for Scotland and the DHSS Pre-employment Consultancy Services for Northern Ireland. Should an applicant have reasons to spend time alone

with children or vulnerable persons, an Enhanced Disclosure will be required otherwise a Standard Disclosure will suffice for all other applicants.

Disclosures will be free of charge for all members and will only be processed and handled by selected and CRB cleared persons within BMFA Headquarters. Confidentiality will be kept in accordance with the strict requirements laid down by the CRB.

The process for CRB clearance is fully explained on Pages 26 and 27, “Notes on Completing and Processing Forms”.

**A criminal record will only be of concern if it indicates that the applicant is unsuitable to work with children or vulnerable adults.** Should there be any reasons for concern, they will be fully explored and discussed with the applicant, and in conjunction with representatives from his or her club should he or she wish it, before any final decision is taken. Should the applicant be deemed unsafe to work with children or vulnerable adults then he or she and the club will be notified.

If the individual is deemed suitable both the applicant and the Club will be notified.

Formal induction training should be given if the candidate has no formal experience of working with children or vulnerable adults. Training can be arranged with Sport Coach UK through BMFA HQ. Should an applicant claim to have received previous clearance or training from the BMFA this must be confirmed with BMFA HQ. Any other training claimed must be supported with appropriate accreditation.

Notwithstanding these procedures, all those working with children and vulnerable adults must be monitored by the club to ensure that they are upholding the standards and responsibilities required of them.

## **INTERVIEW AND INDUCTION**

All BMFA full and part time employees that are required to work with children or vulnerable adults will be required to undergo an interview to an acceptable protocol and recommendations. It is recommended that volunteers, in particular the club welfare officer, should also undergo a similar process. All such employees and volunteers should receive a formal or informal induction during which:

- The applicant's identity should be confirmed against his or her passport, national insurance card, driving license or similar but not a household letter or bill.
- A check should be made that the application form has been completed in full (including the sections on criminal records and self disclosure).
- Their qualifications and abilities are substantiated
- The job requirements and responsibilities are clarified.
- They should sign up to the BMFA policy on the Promotion Of Welfare and Care Of Children and Vulnerable Adults in Model Flying.
- Their child protection training needs should be confirmed.

If necessary the following points should be raised in the interview:

- Any particular area which you wish to explore in more detail.
- Gaps in employment history.
- Vague statements or unsubstantiated qualifications.
- Frequent changes of employment.
- The applicant's attitudes and views on best practices when working with children and vulnerable adults.

## **CODE OF ETHICS AND CONDUCT**

The development of individuals' performance and abilities is achieved by:

- Identifying and meeting the needs of individuals.
- Improving their performance through a progressive programme of safe, guided practice. measured performance and/or competition.
- Creating an environment in which individuals are motivated to maintain participation and improve their performance.

All those working with children and vulnerable adults should comply with the good ethical practices as follows:

- They must respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person and treat everyone equally within model flying.
- They must place the well-being and safety of the child above that of the child's performance.
- They must develop an appropriate relationship with the child in their care based on mutual trust and respect. They must not exert undue influence on them for their own benefit or reward.
- Wherever possible, they must encourage children to endeavour to take responsibility for their own behaviour and performance.
- All those working with children and vulnerable adults must be qualified to do so by virtue of their personal suitability and clearance.
- The level of supervision afforded must be that commensurate with the child's age, maturity and abilities.
- At the outset, it must be clarified with the child and their family or carer exactly what is expected from both parties and how it will be achieved.
- Those working with children and vulnerable adults should always promote the positive aspects of model flying and never condone any form of malpractice.
- Those working with children and vulnerable adults should always maintain high standards of integrity.

## **BMFA AFFILIATED YOUTH GROUPS**

The majority of BMFA youth groups are an integral part of the organisation from which they are formed such as the ATC, Scouts, or a school and will have their own policies with which to comply. Therefore, the responsibility for ensuring the promotion of welfare and care of children rests with the parent organisation under these circumstances. **Notwithstanding, should you have any concerns whilst working within a school or a youth group, then refer your concerns to the head teacher or the person in charge of the youth group.**

Should the BMFA be requested to affiliate a youth group that does not form part of a nationally recognised organisation that has a recognised structure to cater for children, then the procedure for recruiting, clearing and training the group leader(s) is the responsibility of BMFA HQ and the procedures within this policy are to be followed by the BMFA HQ staff.

## **THE USE OF PHOTOGRAPHS AND IMAGES OF CHILDREN**

There is evidence that some people have used sporting events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young and vulnerable sports persons in vulnerable positions.

The following advice has been issued by the Child Protection in Sport Unit:

“There have been concerns about the risks posed directly and indirectly to children and young people through the use of photographs on sports websites. Photographs can be used as a means of identifying children when they are accompanied by personal information – this is “X” who likes music – this information can make a child vulnerable to an individual who may wish to start to “groom” that child for abuse. Secondly the content of the photograph can be used or adapted for inappropriate uses and there is evidence of this adapted material finding its way onto child pornography sites. Mobile telephones using graphics facilities can also present similar concerns.

Sporting organisations and clubs need to develop a policy in relation to the use of images of athletes on their website. The sport will need to make decisions about the type of images they consider suitable and that appropriately represent their sport. They will want to ensure that parents support their policy. When assessing the potential risks in the use of images of athletes, the most important factor is the potential for the inappropriate use of images of children.

If sporting organisations are aware of the potential risks and take appropriate steps, the potential for misuse of images can be reduced.

The CPSU would advise sporting bodies to:

- Consider using models or illustrations if you are promoting an activity.
- Avoid the use of first name and surname of individuals in a photograph. This reduces the risk of inappropriate, unsolicited attention from people outside the sport.

Easy rules to remember are:

- If the athlete is named, avoid using their photograph.
- If the photograph is used, avoid naming the athlete.
- Ask for written parental consent to use an image of a young person. This ensures that parents are aware the image of their child is representing the sport.
- Ask for the athlete’s permission to use their image. This ensures that they are aware of the way the image of themselves is to be used to represent the sport.”

In the interests of completeness, the above has been quoted verbatim from the CPSU advice leaflet and “child” and/or “model flyer” should be substituted for athlete. Although model flying does not present the opportunities that other sports presents for such malpractice, clubs are advised to be aware that a possibility may still exist and adhere to the above principles, especially those concerning children and vulnerable adults.

## **NOTES ON COMPLETING AND PROCESSING FORMS**

### **Incident Reporting Form**

Any person who makes a report on alleged abuse to any authority should complete the Incident Reporting Form as soon as possible after the event. On completion the reporter should provide a copy to the authority to which he or she has reported the incident and retain a copy for themselves. A copy should also be sent to:

The Development Officer  
The British Model Flying Association  
Chacksfield House  
31 St Andrew's Road  
Leicester  
LE2 8RE

### **Self Declaration And Application Forms**

The purpose of the BMFA's Children Protection Records is to advise clubs and organisations of persons who should not work with children because they have the potential of placing children at risk. Secondly, it allows the BMFA to fulfil its obligations in collating and reporting any complaints that are made against an individual which may put children at risk. The information is strictly confidential except for the legal obligation of reporting.

**Who should complete a Self Declaration Form and an Application Form?** All persons who by the nature of the role they fulfil have substantial access to children.

#### **Must I complete a Self Declaration and Application Form to work voluntarily with children?**

In law there is no obligation upon you to do so. However, in your own, your Club's and the BMFA's interest you are strongly recommended to do so. Unless the procedures are complied with, the BMFA cannot sanction any individual working with children.

**Who do I send my forms to?** All forms once completed by the applicant must be sent directly to the BMFA Development Officer. The Club officer will sign part A of the Self Declaration Form as it is essential that a relevant person at the Club has confirmed the applicant's identity by viewing appropriate documentation. This could be a passport, national insurance card, driving license or similar but not a household letter or bill. However, Part B is completed by the applicant following which it is sent directly to the BMFA Development Officer.

On completion by the applicant he or she should send the Self Declaration and Application Forms to:

The Development Officer  
The British Model Flying Association  
Chacksfield House  
31 St Andrew's Road  
Leicester  
LE2 8RE

**What Will Happen Then?** Selected persons within BMFA Headquarters will process the application with the Government authorities to ensure that the applicant is suitable to work with children. This will result in the applicant receiving a Disclosure application form from the Criminal Records Bureau (England and Wales only) which must be completed and returned to:

The Development Officer  
The British Model Flying Association  
Chacksfield House  
31 St Andrew's Road  
Leicester  
LE2 8RE

The form will be countersigned by a CRB designated person who will forward the form to the CRB. Scotland and Northern Ireland have separate clearance procedures which the BMFA will initiate. The CRB will then undertake the necessary checks following which a copy of the Disclosure will be sent to the applicant and to the countersignatory at BMFA Headquarters.

Following this it will be decided whether the applicant should be accepted to work with children as detailed on Pages 20 and 21, Selection Procedure for those Working with Children.

## **HANDLING PROCEDURES FOR FORMS AND DOCUMENTATION**

**What information will be kept on me?** The information would consist of: details of any relevant training you had undertaken, the personal identifier information forms, your referees' reports, a copy of your CRB disclosure certificate and details of any specific allegation, criminal convictions or other information that came to the notice of the BMFA that would put children at risk. All concerns or complaints will be referred to the authorities for investigation and the outcome recorded. This information will be securely protected and will record the date, source and originator of any text.

**How will the documentation be handled?** All forms when completed will be treated "In Confidence" together with any other associated documentation and reports on any individual or club. All "In Confidence" documentation will be stored securely on individual club's confidential files within the BMFA's Headquarters and only the Chief Executive, General Manager and Development Officer will have right of access to them.

**To whom will my information be disclosed?** All individuals on the BMFA's Children and Vulnerable Adults Protection Records will have the right to request to see the information that is held on them. This request must be made in writing to the Chief Executive and the BMFA must respond within 28 days.

All information will be made available to the authorities and official agencies, which have a statutory right to investigate child abuse, including the BMFA's Child Protection Working Group if it is carrying out an internal disciplinary enquiry. Relevant information will also be made available to the BMFA Board of Executives to consider appeals. The BMFA reserves the right to disclose information relevant to the protection of children to clubs and organisations sharing concerns on their protection. Under all circumstances confidentiality will be maintained by those who receive the information.

**How is the information updated?** The forms will be updated in line with the BMFA's requirements to meet the Data Protection Regulations.

## **LIST OF FORMS**

Appendix A Incident Record Form

Appendix B Self Declaration Form

Appendix C Application Form

Appendix D Reference Form

The CRB's Disclosure Application Form is also to be used when obtaining CRB clearance and will be provided by the CRB.

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