

## Child Protection in Gliding Frequently Asked Questions

**The BGA regards gliding as a positive activity for young people.**

The BGA, through its Child Protection Policy and Procedures, encourages all participants in gliding to assist with safeguarding the welfare of all junior participants, including protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional harm.

- The BGA has issued a 'Child Protection – code of practice' (the blue card).
- Following this code of practice should help you to contribute to an overall safety culture that enhances gliding as a positive activity for young people, without exposing young people, you, or other adults to unnecessary risk.
- If you don't have a copy, ask your club for one. If this is not possible, contact the BGA Office for a copy.
- You should re-read the Club and BGA Child Protection Policies and best practice guidelines from time to time.

A set of answers to frequently asked questions is given below. The list is not exhaustive. Please contact the BGA CP Leader Karon Matten ([karon@gliding.co.uk](mailto:karon@gliding.co.uk) or 07880 547 176) if you have something else you need to ask

# Child Protection in Gliding FAQs

## Q. How might I come across a child protection issue in gliding?

A. Broadly there are 4 possible ways:

1. A young person feels comfortable enough with you and trusts you enough to share information about abuse they are receiving elsewhere in their lives
2. You notice patterns and signs on a young person that may indicate abuse
3. You see something going on at the club
4. A complaint or allegation is made about you

## Q. So what do I do next?

A. Stay calm. If further action is required, you must refer – do NOT investigate. For each:

1. If a young person tells you about someone else:
  - Allow the young person to speak without interruption, accepting what is said
  - Offer immediate understanding and reassurance, while passing no judgement
  - Advise that you will try to offer support but that you must pass information on
  - Immediately tell the Club CP Officer or Deputy
  - Write careful notes of what was said; use actual words wherever possible
  - Sign, date and pass your notes to the CP Officer or Deputy
  - Ensure that no gliding situation arises that could cause further concern

*NOTE: In an emergency (young person at imminent risk of significant harm) contact the Police via 999 or Social Service department direct. Inform the Club's CP Officer of the action you have taken*

2. If you have a concern about a young person's safety & well being:
  - Immediately tell your Club's CP Officer or Deputy
  - Write careful notes about what you have witnessed, heard or were told using factual information only
  - Sign, date and pass your notes to the CP Officer or Deputy
  - Ensure that no gliding situation arises that could cause further concern

3 & 4 If you wish to report or receive a complaint or allegation about any adult or about you:

- Immediately tell your Club's CP Officer or Deputy
- Write careful notes of what you have witnessed, heard or were told using factual information only
- Sign, date and pass your notes to the CP Officer or Deputy
- Ensure that no gliding situation arises that could cause further concern

*Note: Any adult in gliding has the right to report any concerns or suspicions in confidence and free from harassment*

## Q. What is a Disclosure & Barring Service check?

DBS certificates are obtained via an umbrella organisation from the Disclosure and Barring Service. The DBS check process is instigated when organisations ask individuals to fill in a form for a DBS check. The organisation then submits the application. Once applied for, searches are carried out. These searches may disclose information about the applicant. The information disclosed does not necessarily have any relevance to the suitability of the applicant to work with under 18s.

## Q. Who needs to have a DBS check at our gliding club?

A. Any individual who supervises any aspect of a regulated activity on a regular basis (see below for definition). In each club this will most likely be Flying Instructors and Winch Drivers, these being the two roles where adults could have regular, unaccompanied contact time with a young person. Additionally, each Child Protection Officer and Child Protection Deputy would also need to be DBS checked. However, your club may well have other roles which you may wish to consider.

## Q. 'Regulated activities' on a 'regular basis'? What do they mean?

A. 'Regulated activities' (as they might affect gliding) are organised wholly or mainly for young people under 18 AND take place on a regular basis.

'Regular basis' is defined as once a week or more; or 3+ times in any 30 day period; or overnight 2-6am once a week or more.

If the activity you are involved with is a regulated activity (see the BGA's flowchart to help establish this) then those supervising it, whether they are volunteers or paid workers, will need to be DBS checked.

## Q. What does 'supervising' mean for gliding?

Roles which are regarded as Regulated Activity to avoid any doubt – i.e. teaching, training, care, supervision, advice, treatment or transport plus those with day-to-day supervision or management of individuals providing regulated activity

## Q. We need to employ someone new, what do we do?

A. It depends if they will be supervising regulated activities (as per the flow chart).

Remember, currently there is no legal obligation to check anyone – but in gliding we encourage clubs to adopt good practice in relation to safeguarding young people, so depending on their role, you may need to apply for a DBS check for them.

**Q. We're training up new instructors, what do we need to do?**

A. It depends if they will be supervising regulated activities (as per the flow chart).

Remember, currently there is no legal obligation to check anyone – but in gliding we encourage clubs to adopt good practice in relation to safeguarding young people, so depending on their role, you may need to apply for a DBS check for them.

**Q. What if a young person needs assistance during the day?**

A. The young person should have (but may not have the need for because they are not so young) a designated adult they can turn to should they need assistance at the club. This may be their parent or carer; or someone who has been designated by the parent. However, the club must also designate a role such as the duty pilot or duty instructor – someone who will definitely be present during flying.

Then if a young person's day does go wrong, it can be picked up and dealt with quickly.

**Q. What happens if we check someone who doesn't need it?**

A. This should not happen if the club has followed the flow chart process. All clubs are additionally able to take advice from the Club Child Protection Officer or Deputy or the BGA Child Protection Leader should they be uncertain about the need for checks on individuals.

**Q. What about someone who has a criminal record. Can they continue to be club members?**

A. If the criminal record is related to the protection of children the BGA Child Protection Leader will discuss the appropriate action to be taken with the club Chairman or committee member. This may not mean that the individual would cease club membership.

**Q. So how about normal life at the gliding club, winches, driving, landing out, car sharing etc**

A. Common sense is required. (Many of the following points are not limited to under 18s)

In general, in gliding we trust one another with our lives on a regular basis and we create a safety culture by keeping an eye out for our mates and fellow club members. It is one of the things that make the sport and gliding lifestyle so special.

If you will be in a role in the club where you will be developing a relationship of trust with someone under 18 (and generally jolly beneficial such a thing is for all involved) then get a DBS check if you haven't already done so.

Regardless of whether you have a DBS check (not everyone needs them), or whether you do this sort of thing regularly, if you have to be alone with a young person, make sure you tell another adult why, where you are, what you are doing etc.

Talk to the parents; make sure they understand what is involved and ensure that they are comfortable. If need be, get something in writing (rather like a permission slip for school trips).

If any party is not comfortable with a proposed activity, don't involve the young person in it.

***Flying***

Normal club flying is not a regulated activity as it is open for all ages; i.e. it is not arranged mainly or specifically for young people.

Don't fly with a young person you don't feel comfortable with – people need to be mature enough to take instruction. As P1 you have responsibility for the safety of the flight, which means you decide whether or not the flight takes place - whatever the situation or pressure others may be exerting.

***Land outs***

If you fly cross-country, then landing out, with its associated risks, is a real possibility. But nonetheless, this is excellent (even essential) experience for an aspiring young pilot. Ensure you have discussed this with the young pilot and the parents or carers and have written permission from them to undertake such a flight (even if it is just a hand-written note). Leave this note with your club's office or with the club log sheets. As these opportunities may arise at short notice when the young pilot is already at the club and the parent has gone off for the day, it may make sense to get this written permission on file before the opportunity presents itself.

***Ground school training***

If it can't be done within earshot of others, tell someone what is happening, why, where and how long it is planned for, etc.

### **Winching**

Winch instructors should be DBS checked if they have regular, unaccompanied contact with a young person aged under 18 years (use the Flow Chart for Guidance). Have a discussion with the parents or carer before a young person starts to visit the winch. Get written permission.

And (as with flying) you have responsibility for safety at the grunty end of the winch launch, so don't be stuck at the other end of the airfield with someone you aren't entirely comfortable with.

### **Driving club vehicles**

This matter is probably best determined by reference to the club's insurance policies. The legal age for driving in the UK is 17. (i.e. under 18)

Your club will, naturally, train all drivers of club vehicles on their particular characteristics as well as the type of driving they will be taking part in (towing out winch cables, retrieving gliders etc) and the potential scenarios they may have to deal with. There will also be someone keeping an eye out who can have a word, should any driving activity get over enthusiastic (whatever the driver's age).

Common sense is required – no silly risks. Training cards might not be a bad idea. Some young people are more capable than others, so should your club let under 17s drive club vehicles, take it on a case by case and vehicle by vehicle basis – golf buggies being (generally) more benign than exciting tractors. Ensure that the thinking behind the club's policy is written down somewhere (see the related guidance on risk assessment, management and mitigation at <http://www.glliding.co.uk/bgainfo/clubmanagement/policies.htm> )

### **Lifts and car sharing**

With parental permission only. In an emergency, tell someone (preferably by phoning the parent or carer) what is happening, why and where you are going.

### **Consuming alcohol and recreational drugs**

The BGA does not condone alcohol consumption by under 18s. Alcohol licensing laws prohibit the sale of alcohol to or for under 18s. 'Recreational' drugs are not legal in the UK.

Grey area: the family caravan and other 'private' areas within the gliding club. Regardless of the legal perspective, what parents or carers choose to give or let their offspring consume is a private matter. As is what parents choose to consume when they have care of their own children. However, if you have a concern about a child's safety then refer to your blue card and act appropriately.

If you have care of someone else's young person, you should refrain from consuming substances that may affect your ability to deal with an emergency.

### **In the clubhouse – photos and videos**

What may be acceptable to you as an adult may not be to a young person or their parent. If in doubt, refer to age labels and don't show anything age inappropriate.

### **In the club house – sleeping arrangements**

There should be separate (single sex) areas for people under 18. If space is an issue, this may be achieved by using caravans, tents or perhaps a smaller clubroom like the TV room.

### **Apres flying and scrubbed days**

There are some very normal (and enjoyable) club social activities like eating out or going to the cinema, bowling, swimming etc.

Only with consent of the parent or carer and definitely not on your own.

### **Relationships**

Well they do happen, don't they? It's a grey area and a potential minefield in terms of being accused of busy-body style interference. Remember the age of consent is 16 in the UK.

And it is perfectly normal behaviour for a 17 and 18 year old to get romantically involved (and also those with wider age gaps) and it is perfectly normal for it to end in tears. It's a learning experience and those involved may be needing support at some point. However, be sensitive to the possibility that someone under 18 is not yet a fully mature adult so may not be entirely comfortable with being involved in a fully mature relationship. It boils down to the way that, in gliding, we all keep an eye out for our mates.