
ADVICE FOR PARENTS CONCERNING YOUNG PEOPLE AT DEVON & SOMERSET GLIDING CLUB

Introduction

Devon & Somerset Gliding Club (DSGC) wants parents to be fully aware of the limited levels of supervision DSGC can practically provide for their child, especially at times when the child is not involved in flying activities.

Although we do not want to put unnecessary restrictions in the way of any young person keen to participate in gliding, we consider it important that parents clearly understand what they can, and cannot, expect the DSGC to do towards caring for their child whilst on the airfield and in our premises. To this end we ask you to consider the following and, if you understand and agree with it, to return one copy signed as indicated.

Children aged fourteen and below

Children aged fourteen and below are only allowed on the airfield and premises if they are in the continual care and supervision of their parents or an adult nominated by the parents.

Children aged 14 and below can be given a Trial Lesson. They must be heavy enough for the safe operation of the glider and they must be big enough to be strapped in safely and to see out. They would need to be close to 5 feet (1.5m) tall and weigh at least 98 lbs (45 kg). This often makes twelve years old a minimum age.

Exceptionally during a flying course DSGC will agree to no parental presence, provided the course instructor agrees, and the young person accepts he stays with the course group and the office has a contact phone number.

Young people who are fifteen and older

The DSGC accepts flying members aged 15 and above, and we accept that young people in this age group will often not have parental supervision whilst here.

What parents can expect DSGC to do

DSGC sees flight safety as its highest priority. DSGC will do all it can to ensure your child is safe whilst involved in flying activities both on the ground and in the air. This starts with a briefing that points out the immediate hazards and further briefings are given as an integral part of learning to fly a glider, and to drive the Club's ground vehicles. Air and ground safety tuition continues well past the first solo stage.

Once the young person goes out to the launch point to fly, their flying and safe conduct on the ground is the concern of the instructors involved. The safety aspects of flying and ground operations are structured and are the responsibility of the Chief Flying Instructor. He or she devolves safety through all the instructors under him or her.

Parents need to understand

Any young person joining DSGC is joining an adult members club and all members of any age come and go when they please with no formality. For young people this means that, unlike going to school where teachers take on some parental responsibility for part of the day, or a Scout camp where Leaders do the same thing 24 hours a day, coming to DSGC is different. Apart from the start of a pre-booked course, there is no one here who checks a young person has arrived and who accepts a degree of responsibility for them.

What DSGC cannot do

DSGC does not attempt to provide supervision for young people other than that associated with our flying activities. When any young person is not flying they may return to the clubhouse, go home, or pursue other activities with friends, the club does not and cannot supervise this.

The Club tries to treat all members the same regardless of their age but certain rules and procedures do apply to those under 18.

1. Children aged 14 and below cannot stay at the club overnight unsupervised.
2. No alcohol is served to anyone under 18 in the bar. (DSGC does not have a bar).

Sometimes young people want to stay at the club overnight either in tents or caravans that they provide for themselves. DSGC operates in daylight only and has no staff on duty at night. Although the airfield has gates and fences, unauthorised public access cannot be prevented. Parents must satisfy themselves that any overnight arrangements their children make are sensible and safe.

Another area of concern is transport to and from the airfield. The airfield has no public transport and although some young people who live within a few miles do cycle here the majority rely on their parents for travel. Parental transport is obviously ideal but not always possible. Your child may get to know a member here and be offered a lift, which may be acceptable to you or not. The important thing you need to know is if this happens it will not be an arrangement made with the agreement and consent of DSGC, simply because the club will not know about it.

Young people are welcome to be members and fly at DSGC but, because they represent a tiny proportion of the membership, it is difficult for the club to make special arrangements for all their individual needs.

If a young person has any concerns about his or her treatment at DSGC they should be advised to contact you immediately, there is a phone available 24 hours a day in the clubhouse. A young person with a problem should also report it to the Welfare Officer, CFI or Duty Instructor.

If any parent has any concerns about the information in this note or related issues or has any questions about the points raised in here please contact the Welfare Officer or CFI.

As parent of..... I acknowledge receipt of the above information.

Signed..... Date