

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

## Introduction

Devon & Somerset Gliding Club (DSGC) believes that members, their guests and visitors to the club are entitled to expect a warm welcome, courtesy and consideration from all involved in the pursuit of gliding, soaring and ab initio training. The daily operations on an active flying day may initially seem puzzling to the uninitiated but operating within a culture of safety is paramount whether that be the process of launching a glider, moving a vehicle or simply walking from one side of the field to the other while keeping a good look out. The development and maintenance of such a culture relies on everyone being able to trust one another, being willing to learn and to show consideration and a duty of care to their fellow participants.

We are keen to support the involvement of young people and to introduce them to the sport of gliding. In order to further this aim the club wishes parents to be aware of the limited levels of supervision DSGC are able to provide for their child, especially at times when the child is not involved in flying activities.

### **Definition for CHILD and JUNIOR.**

These two terms are used in club documentation for similar and sometimes overlapping reasons. As far as CLUB MEMBERSHIP is concerned a JUNIOR is one who has not yet achieved their 21st birthday and who benefits from appropriately discounted fees at DSGC. For the purposes of CHILD PROTECTION a CHILD is a junior who has not yet achieved their 18th birthday and thus falls within the law as it applies to Child Protection.

To this end we ask you to read the following and, as a condition of the child's membership, to return a signed copy to the club.

### **Children below the age of 16.**

Children aged below 16 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. This nomination must be provided beforehand to a club Management Committee member in writing.

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

### **Children below the age of 18.**

Young adults in this age bracket are still regarded by the law as a child. Parents must accept that they allow their child to attend DSGC on trust, recognising that club members will show every care and courtesy toward them (and expect such in return) but no formal hierarchy of care exists such as it does in a school setting. Parents must be confident that their child is sufficiently capable and mature to interact in that environment and find their own way home etc...

### **What parents can expect DSGC to do**

Many children can be given a trial flying lesson. However to receive instruction, 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.

DSGC sees flight safety as its highest priority. DSGC will do all it can to ensure your child

continues to be safe whilst involved in flying and ground activities. Briefings will commence with issues of general safety and progress to encompass ground operations and flying activities. 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. In practice however any member is able to stop any activity in an instant if they deem a situation to be becoming unsafe. We would expect any member to look out for a new member and chat about how things are done or to explain why we follow the procedures that we do. 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 that all members of any age may come and go when they please with no formality. There is no hierarchy of care for young people such as may exist in a school, a swimming club or the Scouts. 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 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 club-house, 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. This is in line with statutory guidance on Child Protection.

1. Juniors aged below 16 cannot stay unsupervised at the club overnight (see pg 1).
2. Juniors aged 12 and older can participate fully in all Basic and Advanced ground tasks around the airfield, however, there are some restrictions (Please see the Ground Operations Manual for full details):
3. Those under 14 are not permitted to perform any ground task without supervision by an authorized club member (In any case involving club vehicles, the "supervisor" must remain in the vehicle with the child; In all other basic tasks, a "supervisor" must be nearby)
4. Those 14 and over, but under 16, can be authorized to participate fully; however for activities involving club vehicles authorization can only be given by a member holding a full driving license.

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 as a footpath runs along the southern boundary. 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 ac-

ceptable 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. They will be encouraged to learn not only good airmanship, but also safe behaviour around aircraft and airfields.

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 Junior Coordinator.

- DSGC Welfare Officers are James and Julie Flory,  
tel: 01884 841326 or 07749 017281
- Junior Development Coordinator – Pete Harmer 01884 860722

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

Signed..... Date .....