

# **ADVICE FOR PARENTS CONCERNING YOUNG PEOPLE AT MIDLAND GLIDING CLUB (MGC)**

## **Introduction**

Midland Gliding Club (“the Club”) wants parents to be fully aware of the limited levels of supervision the Club 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 Club 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 under the age of fifteen**

Children under the age of fifteen 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.

During the ‘flying hours’ of the course, usually 8.30 am to 6 pm, the Club will agree to no parental presence, provided the course instructor agrees, the young person accepts he stays with the course group and the office has a contact phone number.

There is no specific lower age limit for flying in a two-seater, but young people should be mature enough to understand and comply fully with instructions. 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.

## **Young people who are fifteen and older**

The Club accepts flying members from the age of 15 upwards and we accept that young people in this age group will often not have parental supervision whilst here.

## **What parents can expect the Club to do**

The Club sees flight safety as its highest priority. The Club 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. 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 the Club 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 the Club 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 the Club cannot do**

The Club 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. Under 18's staying in club overnight accommodation are given single rooms where possible and are not allowed to share double rooms or bunk rooms with an un-related adult.
2. Under 16's cannot stay at the club overnight, except with a parent/guardian or a specific agreement for an individual to act "in loco parentis"
3. No alcohol is supplied to anyone under 18 in the bar to follow the Licensing Act 2003 under which we have a Club Premises Certificate. However, those aged 16 and 17 may under the Act consume beer, cider and wine with a meal.
4. Anyone without a full driving licence is not allowed to drive any vehicle on the airfield. This prohibits young people driving the Club's vehicles.

Sometimes young people want to stay at the club overnight either in tents or caravans that they provide for themselves. The Club 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 virtually 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 the Club, simply because the club will not know about it.

Young people are welcome to be members and fly at the Club 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 the Club 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 Helen Crowson (deputy safeguarding lead) in the club kitchen or one of the office staff.

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 either Sarah Platt (the safe-guarding lead) or Ben Jenner (junior co-ordinating instructor.)

## **Going Solo**

Hopefully, it goes without saying that people learn to glide with the intention of going solo at some point.

An individual may fly solo from the age of 14 when they have satisfied the instructor that they are safe to do so. By signing a membership form you are effectively agreeing that, when appropriate, you are happy for your child to be allowed to fly solo. Whilst we make every effort to make our sport as safe as possible, there are inherent risks that you should recognise. Please feel free to phone and discuss these risks if you would like further advice from a senior instructor.

**If and when they are ready to fly solo, they will need a parent/guardian to have signed a specific medical declaration and give this the club. You may do this at anytime in advance of them going solo.**

**The medical declaration can be downloaded at:**

<https://members.gliding.co.uk/library/bga-requirements-guidance/bga-medical-requirements-annex-a-and-annex-b/>

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

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