

# Chelmsford Camera Club

## Policy for Protection of Vulnerable Individuals

Chelmsford Camera Club expects that all Club Members and members of the public will be treated with respect, consideration and dignity. It also recognises a special responsibility for children, young people and vulnerable adults (collectively, Vulnerable Individuals), be they Club Members or members of the public.

This policy provides guidance to Members on their responsibilities to provide a safe environment for Vulnerable Individuals and their behaviour towards them at Club meetings and activities. It also includes a process for dealing with allegations or suspicions of abuse.

The policy will be brought to the attention of Members through announcement, website and notice board and referenced from the job descriptions of Committee Members where appropriate. New Members will also receive a copy in the Welcome Pack.

### Membership

- Membership of the Club is not open to children under the age of fourteen.
- Young people under the age of eighteen are welcome to join the Club with the proviso that written authority is obtained from a parent or legal guardian and those under sixteen are accompanied at all times by a Responsible Person. (See Appendix 1)
- Vulnerable adults are similarly welcome with the proviso that written authority is obtained where possible from their carer if they have one.
- The parent/guardian/carer may wish to specify (required in the case of someone under the age of sixteen) that the new Member may only attend Club activities if accompanied by the parent/guardian/carer or a nominated Responsible Person. (See Appendix 1)
- Note: 'a vulnerable adult is one that
  - has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs)
  - is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect
  - as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect'
  - Note that any person may be vulnerable at times so the Action section of this policy may be applicable to anyone.
- The Club will ascertain if a new member is a vulnerable adult. In some cases it will be a matter of judgement.
- All applicants for club membership and renewal must declare any conviction for offences against children or other vulnerable people.

### Operation

- Bad language will be discouraged by the Club but this is even more important in the presence of Vulnerable Individuals.
- The Club will not allow images of a suggestive, indecent or extremely disturbing nature to be displayed at Club activities.
- The Club will not organise activities that may allow the taking of suggestive, indecent or extremely disturbing images.

- All activities organised by the Club must have at least one Committee member present who is familiar with this policy. He or she must be prepared to terminate any activity that starts to run the risk of such images being seen or photographed.
- At activities such as portrait sessions, any participation of Vulnerable Individuals as models, be they Club members or members of the public, must only be allowed under the direct supervision of a parent, guardian or carer who should sign a form agreeing to this activity.
- When Members are invited to take photographs at external events, it is the responsibility of the organisers to obtain permission for photographs to be taken where appropriate. This may be in the form of a statement in the publicity for the event where individual requests are not possible. The Member arranging the photography should ask the organisers to confirm that this is in place.
- Always work in an open environment: a Vulnerable Individual should not be left alone with less than two other adults. This is particularly important when providing mentoring or offering transport on outings when the parent, guardian or carer must be present.
- If any Member of the Club shows an abnormal interest in younger people they must not be left alone with them even if a parent or guardian is present.
- Vulnerable Individuals should not be allowed to operate any equipment, including the tea/coffee making facilities.
- Permission to use any photographs of Vulnerable Individuals for publicity or general circulation must be given by the parent, guardian or carer before being used.
- Other than for these provisions for protecting Vulnerable Individuals, they should be treated in the same way as other Members.

#### Action

- If a Member suspects an instance of abuse within the Club environment, be it sexual, emotional or physical, it must be reported to the Chairman or a Committee Member as soon as possible and action must be taken.
- If a Vulnerable Individual reports abuse within the Club environment then they should be asked about the nature of it at the earliest opportunity, in addition to other investigations.
- If a Vulnerable Individual discloses that they are being abused, but not within the Club environment, they should be asked about the nature of it at the earliest opportunity.
- Care must be taken not to ask leading questions of the victim but to allow them to tell their story in their own way and only ask questions for clarification. Provide reassurance that they are doing the right thing in reporting the abuse and tell them that it will be reported only to those who need to know. Write down all that has been said.
- In all cases the Chairman should convene a group of at least three Committee Members to consider the best course of action. This will depend on the nature and severity of the abuse but could include a verbal or written warning, suspension or expulsion from the Club for an offending Member, and reporting to social services or the police. Investigation may be required, gathering times, dates, Members present or witnessing the abuse.

Date of last amendment: February 2023

Appendix 1

**Authority for Chelmsford Camera Club Membership**

As parent/guardian/carer for .....

I confirm that I have read the Policy for Protection of Vulnerable Individuals. I agree to him/her joining Chelmsford Camera Club and taking part in the Club activities without my supervision.

Signed ..... (Parent/Guardian/Carer)

or...

As parent/guardian/carer for .....

I confirm that I have read the Policy for Protection of Vulnerable Individuals. I agree to him/her joining Chelmsford Camera Club and taking part in the Club activities accompanied at all times by myself or the Responsible Person I have nominated below.

I understand that I am not required to join the Club but would be expected to pay the weekly fee that all attendees pay each time they attend.

Signed ..... (Parent/Guardian/Carer)

and, if required...

As the Responsible Person nominated to accompany ..... to Chelmsford Camera Club I undertake to accompany them at all times during Club activities and to ensure that they have safe passage to and from these activities.

I understand that I am not required to join the Club but would be expected to pay the weekly fee that all attendees pay each time they attend.

Signed ..... (Responsible Person)