

Merthyr Tydfil Camera Club

Club's Safeguarding Policy

1: Aims

Merthyr Tydfil Camera Club (The Club) aims to be as inclusive as possible to all members of the community, including members who are under the age of 18 (minors) or who are vulnerable adults as defined below.

The Club recognises that it has a responsibility to prevent any form of abuse to anyone but especially to any minor or vulnerable adult.

The aim of this Policy is to: -

- assist members by setting out their responsibilities to safeguard Minors and Vulnerable Adults
- provide guidance to members on adopting correct behaviours to protect Minors and Vulnerable Adults and themselves under different circumstances that might arise in the Club.
- have a process in place for reporting allegations or suspicions of abuse

All members, visitors, and the public, especially Minors and Vulnerable Adults, must be treated with respect and dignity, recognising any unique personal needs. Adherence to the Policy is a condition of all grades of membership of the Club - a member's attention is drawn to the Policy on the joining form, along with other Club policies and rules.

In the case of minors their parent or guardian must countersign the form as acceptance of the Policy. The Policy is available on the Club website.

2: Definitions

For the purpose of this policy the following definitions will be used: -

a) A minor

A minor is children under the age of 18 (Note should be made that the Club Constitution prohibit members under the age of 16 Years of age).

b) A vulnerable adult

A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 or over who "is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation".

3: Safeguarding Procedures

For minors and vulnerable individuals

- In general, Club activities are relatively low risk in the context of safeguarding and accompanied Vulnerable Individuals are welcome.
- Care should be taken to ensure that Minors and Vulnerable Adults remain supervised by their appropriate person - the minor's guardian or the vulnerable adults' carer.
- Members should avoid lone contact with Minors and Vulnerable Adults. Members should be aware that communication needs to be clear, unambiguous, and appropriate.
- When working with or alongside Minor and Vulnerable Adult Members should make sure they can be observed by others, and preferably that the parent, guardian, or carer is close by.
- Members should not offer lifts to Minors and Vulnerable Adults accompanied or authorised by a parent, guardian, or carer.

Portrait/Model Nights

Portrait/Model nights are a potential risk due to the interaction between Club Members and models, who are typically from outside the Club.

Some basic rules which will ensure that no issues arise are:

- Models should be treated with respect
- It is better not to use the imperative when asking for pose changes. "Will you. Could you. I wonder if you would." are all preferred to direct instructions - "move your head. Turn to me etc."
- Nobody should touch the model. Any adjustment to hair, clothing etc. should be done by the model and never by the photographer.
- No risqué shots should be taken at club events, no matter how willing the model is.
- All contact after the event will continue to be through the member who introduced the model. If any member wishes to ask the model to work with them subsequently, they must make any such request through the introducing member. Models should not be directly asked for their contact details.

Outside Events

- Members of the Club are sometimes invited by organisers of events to take photographs, give talks, or judge competitions.
- The Club encourages individual members to respond to such invitations.
- Such events may bring Members into contact with Minors and Vulnerable Adults.

- If members are photographing these events by invitation, then it is the responsibility of the inviting organisation to get permission for the photography from parents, guardians or carers if required.
- Asking permission from all parents, guardians or carers may not be possible and it is sufficient to have notices at the event that photography has been arranged.
- These could give a contact point for people who do not want photographs taken at the event.
- The member dealing with the initial request should ask the organisers to ensure that such arrangements are in place. This should be done such that the request and reply are on record, for example by e-mail.

4: Disclosure

If a Minor and Vulnerable Adult were to disclose abuse to a member that Member should take such a disclosure seriously. It is important that the complainant feels believed and supported no matter what is said, and the Member should:

- assure the Minor and Vulnerable Adult that their concerns were being taken seriously and would be dealt with.
- take appropriate steps to remove the Minors and Vulnerable Adults from any immediate harm.
- make a written note of the conversation.
- inform the Club Chair and Club Secretary.

The Club Chair and Secretary should then take immediate steps as appropriate. These may vary depending on the gravity of the disclosure but must include informing the Minors and Vulnerable Adults guardian, parent, or carer.

If what is notified appears potentially criminal the default position is that the police are informed, in which case the Club Chair should let the parent, guardian or carer know that this is the Club's response.

Some people are always vulnerable, such as those mentioned above and who need community care services, but any person may be vulnerable at times. This Policy could therefore be relevant to the treatment of any Club member.