

## **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

### ***West Haddon Photo Club***

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#### **POLICY STATEMENT**

West Haddon Photo Club (WHPC) is firmly committed to the belief that all children and young people have a fundamental right to be protected from harm, and fully recognises its responsibility for child protection. The safety and protection of all children and young people involved in WHPC meetings and activities is paramount, and has priority over all other interests.

The purpose of this Child Protection Policy is to ensure at all times the maximum protection from any kind of harm for all young people involved in WHPC meetings and activities. For the purposes of this policy WHPC have defined harm as:

- neglect
- physical abuse
- emotional abuse
- sexual abuse

This policy applies to all WHPC members, their guests and invited visitors to club meetings and activities. Its purpose is to protect the personal safety of all children and young people involved in these by actively promoting awareness, good practice and sound procedures.

WHPC Club Constitution states that guests and members under 16 must be accompanied at all meetings and activities of the club by a parent or appointed guardian.

#### **POLICY PROCEDURES**

##### **Responsibilities**

- WHPC committee members will act responsibly with regards to the welfare of the children and young people who come into contact with the club in connection with its activities.
- WHPC committee members have a duty to ensure that any suspected incident, allegation or other manifestation relating to child protection is reported using the procedures detailed in this policy.
- WHPC committee members are responsible for the implementation of this policy and to take appropriate action following any expression of concern and make referrals to the appropriate agency.
- It is not WHPC's policy to take photographs of children and young people participating in WHPC's activities and events, but if this occurs written permission from parents will always be obtained before any photographic material is used in the public domain.

## Reporting Procedures

- Any suspicion or allegation must be reported as soon as possible on the day of the occurrence to the Chair. Disclosure or evidence for concern may occur in a number of ways including a comment made by a child, physical evidence such as bruising, a change in behaviour or inappropriate behaviour or knowledge.
- It is the responsibility of the Chair to liaise with other relevant agencies where necessary and seek clarification from Social Services if there is any concern about the validity of any concern.
- Any suspicion or allegation of abuse must be recorded by the observer/s.
- All stages of the reporting procedure must be documented, marked CONFIDENTIAL and stored securely.

## Allegations against members, their guests or invited visitors

- When any form of complaint is made against a member, their guests or invited visitors, regardless of who the complaint is from, it must be taken seriously. The complaint should initially be dealt with by a member of the committee on site at the time the complaint is made.
- The member of the committee must report the complaint immediately to the Chair of WHPC, giving details of the circumstances.
- The Chair will obtain an initial account of what has occurred from all relevant parties, including the person against whom the allegation has been made, where possible.
- The Chair will have the right to suspend from club activities, any person who is a party to the allegation until a full investigation has been made. This applies to a member, their guests or invited visitors.

**Suspension does not imply in any way that the person suspended is responsible for, or is to blame for any action leading up to the complaint. The purpose of suspension is to enable a full and proper investigation to be carried out.**

- It is the responsibility of the Chair to make the decision as to whether to inform the Police and/or Social Services, depending on the nature of the allegation.
- The WHPC committee will co-operate fully with the Police, Social Services and all other parties involved.
- The Chair will ensure that the WHPC Committee is fully briefed. An agreed statement will be prepared for the purpose of accurate communication with external sources and for the protection of the legal position of all parties involved.
- The Chair will make a full written report of the incident and the actions taken. This report will be stored securely following appropriate data protection legislation.