

Woodford and Wanstead Photographic Society

Policy for Protection of Vulnerable Individuals

Woodford and Wanstead Photographic Society expects that all Society 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 Society Members or members of the public. However, it should be noted the Society members and committee are not carers and cannot provide the individual care or personal needs of vulnerable members.

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

Membership

- Membership of the Society is not open to young people under the age of eighteen.
- Vulnerable adults are welcome provided that written authority is obtained where possible from their parent/guardian/carer if they have one.
- The parent/guardian/carer may wish to specify that the new Member may only attend Society 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 Society will ascertain if a new member is a vulnerable adult. In some cases it will be a matter of judgement.
- All applicants for Society membership and renewal must declare any conviction for offences against children or other vulnerable people.

Operation

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

Mobile and Online Communication. There are many ways for people to communicate. It is recommended that Society members should not communicate with a minor or vulnerable adult by text or online unless in a general communication to all members, or to avoid immediate risk to the minor or vulnerable adult. When using phone or email they should communicate with the Responsible Person rather than having direct contact with the minor or vulnerable adult.

Action

- If a Member suspects an instance of abuse within the Society 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 Society 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 Society 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 Society 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.

Appendix 1

Authority for Woodford and Wanstead Photographic Society 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 Woodford and Wanstead Photographic Society and taking part in the Society 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 Woodford and Wanstead Photographic Society and taking part in the Society 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 Society but would be expected to pay the membership fee that all attendees pay.

Signed (Parent/Guardian/Carer)

and, if required...

As the Responsible Person nominated to accompany

to Woodford and Wanstead Photographic Society I undertake to always accompany them during Society activities and to ensure that they have safe passage to and from these activities and during the activities.

I understand that I am not required to join the Society but would be expected to pay the membership fee that all attendees pay.

Signed (Responsible Person)