

GROUND LEVEL 5 INCH MAIN LINE ASSOCIATION POLICIES

Issued by the GL5 Committee

01/04/26

1) Vulnerable Groups

The Ground Level 5 inch Main Line Association (the Association also known as GL5) will comply with the requirements of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006. To ensure compliance, the Association sets out behaviours for activity that involves a Member's interaction with individuals who may be children, young persons or vulnerable adults who are considered to be vulnerable though physical, mental or behavioural needs. Children, young persons and vulnerable adults may be Members or visitors at events and the policy applies to all.

It is recognised that such individuals may require specific support and assistance in respect of:

1. Guarding against accidents, ensuring the physical safety of themselves and others, and protection of property.
2. Taking care that individuals are not placed in situations where they may be alone with one other only and at risk of abuse whether physical, sexual or language.
3. Ensuring that in group or public settings the vulnerable person is treated appropriately with respect, space and security.

It is required that such an individual is supervised closely at all times by a person (supervising adult, parent or guardian) that brought them to the event, or to whom control has clearly been handed. This is the key element of protection.

All Members, other than the supervising adult, are not to interact with such individuals without the prior agreement and continued attendance of the supervising adult, except in cases of emergency or to ensure safety.

If any member observes or is informed of activity that may contravene this policy it must be immediately reported to the Responsible Person (see appendix) who will be required to ensure that the supervising adult takes immediate action.

Because of the specific hazards of operating small railways no child of ten years age or under may be excused these safeguarding requirements, nor may they be brought into any operating part of the railway. Also in view of these hazards, normally only non-vulnerable adult Members may enter an operating part of the railway. However, young Members of age 11 to 17 years, and vulnerable adult Members, may be granted permission to operate as any other adult Member if they are able to pass a simple Examination of Ability (see appendix). Such permission granted will be permanent unless an adverse event occurs that requires permission to be reassessed.

The Examination of Ability will be a test of competence for item 1 above – the ability of the individual to guard against accidents. It is considered that item 2 – the avoidance of inappropriate contact, will continue to be ensured as the individual will normally only be able to operate in environments with multiple participants. Item 3 - group respect, will continue to apply.

2) Equal Opportunities

The Association will observe the requirements in the Equalities Act 2010 and recognises that everyone has a contribution to make and a right to equal opportunity. Thus, no individual with whom we interact will be discriminated against on the grounds of, for example: gender, race, ability, sexual identity, religion, belief, or age. We aim to promote equal opportunities and will not tolerate discrimination or harassment.

3) Unacceptable Behaviour

Everyone will be treated with dignity and respect. The Association will not permit, for example: bullying, harassment, inappropriate physical contact, speech or communication that may cause harm or be viewed as demeaning or unacceptable to the recipient.

4) Health and Safety

The Association will ensure the safety and welfare of its members and visitors by taking note of relevant guidance from The Health and Safety Executive and specific railway and model locomotive organisations. The Association has no premises and will therefore observe the requirements of locations where it holds events, as well as undertaking practical activity such as risk assessments where appropriate.

5) Data Protection

The Association will observe the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) updated in 2018. The GL5 Membership Secretary has a duty to hold members' personal details securely and only disclose those to another person when it is necessary for the pursuit of GL5 business. The Committee notes that GDPR applies to GL5 activities but, as a small member's organisation, it does not have to register with the Information Commissioner's Office. All new members, and those current who renewed in 2023, are required to acknowledge this statement on the form that they complete: *For the purposes of the UK General Data Protection Regulations (2018), members are advised that your details are being retained (kept securely) on a computer database, but that any information will never be divulged to third parties or beyond GL5 necessary use. You must give your consent if you wish to be a member.*

6) Conflict of Interest

In the Association Constitution it is stated: *10. Members who have commercial trading interests in 5" gauge modelling may not be eligible to serve on the committee except by agreement of the members present at the AGM/EGM.*

7) Financial Management

In the Association Constitution it is stated: *11. No member may acquire for personal gain or profit from any part of the association's funds or from the association's activities or assets.*

8) Disciplinary

In the Association Constitution it is stated: *9. Members shall do all in their power to assist in the running of the association. Any member acting in a way detrimental to the interests of the association may be liable to expulsion by a vote of the committee*

9) Response to potential breach of policy

Any person who suspects a breach of policy during an event should in the first instance discuss it with the Responsible Person, who may take action or report it to a Committee Member. On other occasions an individual may refer an alleged breach to the Chairman or Secretary in writing, so that action may be taken and/or the matter taken to the Committee. The Committee may resolve to take disciplinary action in respect of any breach. However should the Event Officer or the Responsible Person at an event feel a person present is in contravention of any policy and/or Constitution of The Association, they have the right to insist that person removes themselves from the event and to ban further participation until such a time as the Committee has considered the case.

Appendix:

Responsible Person

A Responsible Person acts in the role of Safeguarding Officer (as described in other organization's policies) and will be appointed by the Committee for each event that GL5 holds. The Responsible Person may have other roles at an event and these can be combined with that of Events Officer who may be managing other logistics. The Responsible Person will make their identity and role known at the event verbally or by other appropriate means.

Examination of Ability

The individual Member (a young person or vulnerable adult) will be assessed by two Members who will be appointed by a majority of the Committee, and the examination shall take place at a miniature railway location agreed as appropriate. The individual must be able to participate on their own with just the two examiners present. The examiners shall set their own questions, which must not be communicated in advance, and practical tasks should be set. The examination should take one-half hour or more and the result, pass or fail, with reasons, may be communicated verbally to the individual at completion. A written, confidential report must be submitted to the Committee within seven days who will communicate the decision to the responsible adult within 30 days. A list of examinee names and passes will be recorded by the Secretary and notes made on the Member's record.

Three grades of examination may be taken by request of the individual. For each, the examiners must satisfy themselves that the individual is fully aware of the hazards involved, is able to assess risk, knows how to conduct themselves to minimise risk to themselves, to other persons and to any locomotives, rolling stock, property or railway infrastructure. The three grades are:

Yard Work - Working in a railway yard including operating a diesel outline model locomotive that is powered by battery and may be remote controlled or driven.

Main Line Battery - Operating a 5" gauge driven model locomotive that is powered by battery in a yard and on the main line to include signals.

Main Line Steam - Operating a 5" gauge steam model locomotive in a yard and on the main line to include signals.

A pass in Main Line Steam will permit the operation of any type of powered locomotive and include a pass in Yard Work.

Note that GL5 does not permit the carriage of passengers during working hours at its events. The training of any individual in preparation for an examination may occur outside of GL5 hours at the agreement of the operating railway.

Note that an Examination of Ability is required for persons under the age of 18, however, the insurance under which GL5 operates requires that all persons under the age of 16 are supervised while involved in railway activity. GL5 therefore requires that an identified, competent adult is on location with a young person under the age of 16, whether having passed an Examination of Ability or not, at all times and is aware of their movements and activity.