

We Are Family

WAF Code of Conduct for all Group Activities and Events Version 1.6

We Are Family (WAF) activities and events, such as parent support groups, socials, family meet-ups and playgroups, are intended as safe places for adoptive parents to share the ups and downs of adoptive parenthood; they are not therapy groups. The groups are run by parents for parents. We ask that parents attending any activity or event follow this code of conduct.

Attendees: Adoptive parents can join a WAF group and take part in activities and events at any time after the placement of their child(ren). Some activities are for parents only and others are open to the whole family. Prospective adopters (at Stage 2 or above) are welcome to join and participate in the Prospective Adopters Group events.

Choice of venue: Sensitivity must be applied when choosing a venue for an activity or event. WAF exclusively uses Zoom for online meetings.

- For parent support groups, a key factor in the choice of venue is that bystanders or outsiders cannot overhear conversations within the group. We strive for a private and, wherever possible, comfortable meeting space. Unless otherwise specifically stated, the location, time and date of meetings must be kept confidential.
- For family meet-ups, socials or playgroups, a private location is less of a concern but it's still important to choose safe and accessible venues. Unless otherwise specifically stated, the location, time and date of meetings must be kept confidential.

Confidentiality: Anything that is said within a WAF activity or event must stay within the group and must remain confidential. This includes the identity of other attendees. Please do not refer to any conversations outside of the sessions. If you have to, keep it general, and do not mention names, places etc. Confidentiality will only be broken beyond this if there is a safeguarding issue. This could be an allegation, concern or disclosure related to a child or adult and would be reported in the first instance to the WAF Safeguarding Lead as set out in WAF's Safeguarding Policy. Any further action would be taken dependent on the issue. Please read our Safeguarding Policy for more information.

Listening support: We strive for a non-judgmental atmosphere. Parents need to feel safe enough to share the hard bits about theirs and their children's lives, along with the good bits. With this in mind, we kindly ask that you do not give advice. For instance, we try to avoid phrases like 'You should...' or 'Have you tried...?', remembering times when we ourselves have needed to off-load or vent and were met with unsolicited advice. Sharing personal stories and learning curves, however, is always welcome as that is talking from your own personal experience. This acknowledges that all families are different. What works for one family may not work for another, and we know our families best.

Please be respectful of other parents' emotional space and be mindful of their need to be able to share often difficult feelings. Please avoid interrupting. Similarly, if a parent should wish only to listen and not to contribute to conversations, that is fully appreciated.

If you have a personal issue that you feel cannot be dealt fully within the group activities or events, you may consider professional support or therapy. Group members cannot give advice, but will listen to your concerns, and may identify other avenues for help/support based on personal experience.

Attendance: WAF group activities and events are free (though some playgroups WAF members attend may charge a small entry fee) and generally work on a drop-in basis, so there is no need to let the group leader know you will be coming. If you have started going to a parent support group, however, and cannot make a session, it is always appreciated if you could please let the person who is leading the group know you won't be attending (no need for an explanation – we all have children!).

Time: WAF activities and events start promptly and finish on time; please do your best to arrive on time and help us to keep to the allotted finish time.

Follow up: One of the aims of WAF is to allow parents to meet other parents and to build their personal support network. However, any contact, including giving support, outside of a WAF activity or event, is on a personal basis for which WAF cannot accept any responsibility.

[WAF's Terms and Conditions of Membership](#) as well as various WAF policies and procedures set out further details about many of the things covered above; please refer to these for more information.

Welcome!

7th November 2019