

BFMC Safety Bulletin 3 November 2025
Student Pilot Supervision Policy

Fellow members, it has become apparent that the committee needs to re-iterate the club's policy regarding pilots in training.

At the last AGM, in March 2025, the then club's Instructor and Safety Officer stood down from the post and there were no volunteers to take on the role. At that time the committee introduced a new policy to cater for pilots in training.

Policy Statement: Student Pilots

Any new pilot, who does not possess a BMFA 'A' certificate, or equivalent (such as Scottish Aeromodellers Association Bronze award), may not fly solo. The student pilot **must** be supervised by any fellow member who does possess a BMFA 'A' certificate, or equivalent.

Level Of Supervision

Supervision will fall into two categories, personal supervision, or immediate supervision.

Personal supervision involves the supervisor, the 'A' certificate holder, being directly adjacent to the student pilot, in the pilot's box, such that the supervisor can intervene to ensure flight safety. This may be by use of a buddy box system, or by having the ability to take over the transmitter if needed. This level of supervision will be appropriate for complete novices who have had no prior flight training or experience.

Immediate supervision involves the supervisor being present at the club within sight and hearing distance of the student pilot. It may be that this is achieved by standing alongside the student in the pilot box or possibly sat on the benches attached to the club tower. It is not anticipated that the supervisor will need to intervene directly but is present primarily to offer guidance such as, 'you're flying too low', 'you're flying too high', 'you're flying too far away', or 'you're flying too close' for example.

During the progress of a student pilot's learning, they should, quite reasonably, transition from requiring personal supervision to immediate supervision. The point at which this transition is made is a matter of judgement, a judgement made by the 'A' certificate supervisor and communicated around the membership by discussion.

The student pilot may possibly be an unsafe flyer with one class of model but could be confidently proficient with another class, using a gyro, for example. Although a student pilot can never attain an 'A' certificate, and consequently cannot fly solo, using a gyro, they may achieve safe flight.

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Legal Requirements

The BMFA handbook details model flyer's legal obligations in section 8. There is a legal requirement for a remote pilot to possess evidence of competency.

The BMFA handbook, section 8.3.6. states,

There are three acceptable methods for BMFA members to show evidence of Remote Pilot Competence

- *Have a valid BMFA Registration Competency Certificate (RCC), or*
- *Passing the CAA online DMARES test and having a 'Flyer ID', or*
- *Have a BMFA Achievement Certificate that was obtained before 31/12/2020 and also have declared to the BMFA that they have read and understood the conditions and restrictions that apply when operating within our Article 16 authorisation. (N.B. Certificates gained after 31/12/2020 cannot be used)*

Note: As of November 30th 2025 an RCC Test Pass is mandatory for every BMFA member, regardless of any previous Achievement Scheme awards.

The BMFA and CAA does not insist a student pilot be supervised, however BMFA Section 13.3 {e} states '*Inexperienced R/C flyers should never fly without an experienced helper*'.

Section 8.3.4 of the BMFA handbook states

'It remains the case that the remote pilot is directly responsible for the safe operation of their aircraft and should only fly if reasonably satisfied that the flight can be safely made. For radio-controlled aircraft, this includes ensuring that, wherever available, a failsafe is set to prevent the aircraft flying away in the event of loss of signal'.

The BFMC discharges these responsibilities by insisting student pilots are supervised as described above.

BFMC Resonsibilities

Safety is the responsibility of every club member, not just the committee. Quite clearly, the need for supervision elicits a need for supervisors. We have a number of 'A' and 'B' standard flyers within the club and the committee encourage those who have the ability and confidence, to offer their services as supervisors to new pilots. The committee recognises that it will not be appropriate for recently qualified 'A' pilots to offer supervision, in fact those with less than 6 months solo experience should not offer to supervise.

It is very easy to stand on the side lines and criticise either the student, or the committee, for potential safety transgressions but, rather than criticise. how about

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stepping forward to offer assistance. We have all benefitted, at some time, from training, guidance, and assistance from others. Please consider 'paying this forward' by offering help to those who are, currently, less able.

Regards,

BFMC Committee

November 2025