



Membership guidelines

Created and run by adoptive parents, **W.A.N.D.S.** (Wiltshire Adopters – Networking, Development and Support) offers adoptive parents living in Wiltshire suggestions for positive solutions, empathic, practical advice and support, information sharing and networking.

W.A.N.D.S. will strive to offer you:

- Confidentiality
- A way forward
- Positivity and laughter
- Relief that you are not alone
- A sense of perspective
- Empathic and non-judgmental understanding

Safety

At **W.A.N.D.S.** we are committed to ensuring your and your family's safety.

We want to ensure that only adopters, or people who have been vetted, have access to information such as the location of any activities that we offer.

For these reasons we are inviting you to register as a member of **W.A.N.D.S.** by completing the membership registration form and we will ask you to provide evidence of your adopter status.

The membership is free, and we will provide you with a membership card to facilitate attendance at all meetings and activities.

We will not share the information you provide on your membership registration form, and it will be stored safely.

As evidence of your adopter status you can provide any document you are comfortable showing us which confirms that you have been approved as an adopter (this can be a letter, email or any other document from your adoption agency), or you can ask an adopter who is already a member of **W.A.N.D.S.** to confirm that they know you as an adopter, or agree to us contacting your social worker.

If you show us a document, we will not take a copy, nor will we make any notes of the information it contains. We will only record the fact that a member of **W.A.N.D.S.** has received evidence of your adopter status, what that evidence was and the location and date on which they received this. You may have experienced something similar when registering with a childcare provider.

If you have any concerns or questions about this, please do not let this put you off from joining and contact us on admin@wearewands.org.uk to talk about alternatives. We are very open to feedback and would welcome your views to help us ensure we strike the right balance from a safeguarding point of view.

Please note that you will be responsible for your own safety and wellbeing, and that of your child(ren) and any other family members or guests, when you attend any event organised by **W.A.N.D.S**

Positive support

At **W.A.N.D.S** we are committed to offering all adopters living in Wiltshire opportunities to share experiences, voice frustration and express all feelings, that may include sadness, joy, loneliness, disappointment, grief, frustration, etc. with others who understand and can empathise. It is therefore very important that all members of **W.A.N.D.S** acknowledge that everyone's feelings are important and real to them and that we all create an atmosphere of respectful acknowledgment and encouragement.

If you are experiencing a particularly difficult situation, the activity organiser may provide you with a more confidential space to discuss your issues with him or her and to help you find some positive solutions.

To ensure that everyone attending meetings or events has a positive experience we ask all members to:

- Make sure everyone is able to contribute:
 - more talkative people: show a little restraint,
 - quieter people: your contributions are very welcome;
- Respect each others' opinions and feelings and show acceptance;
- Give undivided attention to the person who is speaking and refrain from interrupting them;
- Maintain a non-judgmental approach;
- Be sensitive to diversity. No members will be discriminated against on the grounds of cultural background, marital status, disability, religion, race, age, country of origin, sexual orientation, and/or gender identity or gender expression. All members will be careful about making insensitive or careless remarks;
- Have a good time - It is okay to have a good time! Creating a safe space is about coming together as a community, being mutually supportive, and enjoying each other's qualities.

Confidentiality

At **W.A.N.D.S** we are committed to confidentiality.

Members are particularly asked to respect confidentiality and not to repeat anything which they may hear at a meeting.

The support group organisers will do likewise, the only exception being when there is a disclosure of serious harm to any person.