

S7.D Guidance on Use of Photography

The use of photos on websites and in other online/hard copy publications can pose direct and indirect risks to children and young people. The Church authority wishing to use images of the children they work with, or are otherwise in contact with, should consider these guidelines.

The Church only has responsibility for safeguarding and the use of photography if it plans to use the photographs for Church purposes. Photographs taken at events organised by family and schools such as Communion, weddings or Confirmations (including when the photographer is employed by the school or family for these occasions) do not fall under the responsibility of the Church, unless they are being taken for Church purposes.

Risks to children

Even if the child's personal identity (full name, address) is kept confidential, other details accompanying the photo can make them identifiable and therefore vulnerable to individuals looking to groom children for abuse. ***There is also a risk that the photo itself will be used inappropriately by others. Photos can easily be copied and adapted, perhaps to create images of child abuse, which can then find their way on to other websites.***

How to minimise risks

- Establish the type of images that appropriately represent the activity and think carefully about any images showing children and young people on the Church website or publication;
- Never supply the full name(s) of the child or children along with the image(s);
- Only use images of children in suitable dress and focused on the activity, rather than one particular child;
- Obtain permission: the permission of parents/guardians and children should always be sought when using an image of a young person. Parents/guardians should be aware of the Church's policy on using children's images and of the way these represent the Church or activity. This must be recorded on a joint consent form for use of images of children. The child's permission to use their image must also be recorded if they are less than eighteen years of age. This ensures that they are aware of the way the image is to be used to represent the activity (S7.A Template 1).

Using photographers to take photographs for Church purposes

The Church often employs photographers, or Church personnel may be asked as part of their role (e.g. Sacramental preparation team or pastoral assistant) to take photographs for certain sacramental or Church activities.

When using a photographer, it is important to do the following:

- Provide a clear brief about what is considered appropriate in terms of content and behaviour;

- Ascertain if the photographer requires vetting and, if they do, put them through the process;
- Provide the photographer with a form of identification that must be worn at all times;
- Do not allow unsupervised access to children or one-to-one photo sessions at events;
- Do not allow photo sessions to take place away from the event, for instance, at a young person's home;
- Inform parents/guardians and children that a photographer will be in attendance, and ensure that they consent to both the taking and publication of photos or films;
- Seek confirmation from the photographer that they will only reproduce the photographs, in publications where he has consent to do so from the parents/guardians of the child;
- Clarify in writing who owns the images taken by the photographer and how they will be edited, used, stored and destroyed.

If parents/guardians and parishioners are intending to photograph or video at an organised event, they should also be made aware of what is permitted and what is not.

Responding to concerns

Children and parents/guardians should be informed that if they have any concerns regarding inappropriate or intrusive photography, these should be reported to the Church authority to ensure that any reported concerns are dealt with in the same way as any other child protection or child safeguarding issue.

Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation

The taking of photographs during First Communion Masses, Baptisms or Confirmation liturgies is to be discouraged, both as a child safeguarding measure and to enhance the dignity and beauty of the ceremony. There is always ample time for taking photographs before and after these ceremonies. If parents/guardians wish to hire an external photographer for these celebrations, it is the responsibility of those hiring the photographer to ensure that all necessary measures are in place (contracts, insurance, appropriate behaviour).