

Press and Publicity in Schools / Use of Recording Equipment

Guidance for Head teachers

1. Background

There is increasing concern over the use of photography and video in schools where this is not carried out by the school. E.g. the press, parents etc. Some schools have banned parents from videoing school events for fear of the recordings being used by paedophiles or by estranged family members when there are child protection concerns. Similarly the printing of pupil's names in press reports or photographs has led to concern over child protection issues and confidentiality.

The purpose of this guidance is to offer headteachers and the governing body advice on this matter, although it is ultimately a local decision which should be made by headteachers in consultation with governing bodies and parents.

2. Recommended Good Practice

The Data Protection Act / GDPR is unlikely to apply in many cases where photographs are taken in schools and other educational institutions. Fear of breaching the provisions of the Act should not be wrongly used to stop people taking photographs or videos which provide many with pleasure.

Where the Act does apply, a common sense approach suggests that if the photographer asks for permission to take a photograph, this will usually be enough to ensure compliance.

- Photos taken for official school use may be covered by the Act and pupils and students should be advised why they are being taken.
- Photos taken purely for personal use are exempt from the act.

3. Printing of Pupil Names by the Press

Many schools encourage and welcome the press in school to report on special events and particular successes. This is an important vehicle for raising the profile of the school in the local community and celebrating achievement both for the school and individual pupils.

Sometimes the press arrives uninvited if they sense a 'good story' for whatever reason.

In the past if a photograph is printed it has been accepted practice for the caption to include full names and ages of the pupils. In some cases the newspaper is reluctant to print unless this information is provided.

In order to protect the identity of the minority of children where this could be a problem or a concern to parents the following advice is offered.

- a) Provide only first names and ages.
If it is appropriate or reasonable obtain prior permission from parents/carers to use full names. (eg of individual or small number of children when the press visit is known well in advance). Only allow full names to be printed if all parents/carers of the subjects agree to this.
- b) Only allow interviews if parent/carer permission has been obtained in advance and they are aware of the reason for and content of the interview.

4. Television and Radio

Always seek parent/carer permission in advance before pupils are interviewed for radio and television. Ensure they are fully aware of the purpose and content of the interview.

5. Photography and Videoing in School

5.1 By Parents/carers

Parents/carers are understandably keen to record their children's special moments in school such as appearances in school productions, sports days etc. It is up to the school to decide whether the use of video equipment is appropriate on a case by case basis as this can be quite intrusive and spoil others enjoyment of the event.

If it is decided that parents / carers are to be allowed to photograph or video, schools may wish to ask parents to sign an undertaking that any resulting photographs or video is for personal use only and will not be sold or used for any other purpose.

5.2 By the School

Photographs and/or videos are regularly taken in school to provide a record of special events or simply for teaching purposes. Sometimes videos or photographs are sold to parents who wish to have their own copies. E.g. of music or drama productions, photographs of schools trips.

When this is done it is good practice to obtain parental permission in advance particularly if copies are to be on sale afterwards.

If photographs of pupils or students are taken for building passes, these images are likely to be stored electronically with other personal data and the terms of the Act will apply.

6. General Advice

- Agree the guidance within your local cluster group or area so that there is consistency for:
 - a) Parents; and
 - b) Any local paper which covers your area, who will know what to expect.
- Initiate a discussion at your annual parents meeting to sample the views of parents;



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- Obtain approval from your governing body for the school's policy;
- Publish a short statement in the school prospectus or brochure reflecting the school's policy;
- Make it clear that it is the parent /carer responsibility to inform the school if the identity of any child at the school should not be disclosed at all. Ask for legal confirmation of this for file; (eg copy of an injunction)
- If appropriate, design a simple disclaimer / permission slip for parents to sign giving permission for:
 - a) full names to be provided to the press, and
 - b) photography or videoing to be carried out.
- Send your local paper a copy of the policy agreed by your local cluster or area.

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