

Using photographs of children for publication

An NSPCC factsheet

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The use of photos on websites and in other publications poses direct and indirect risks to children and young people. Organisations wishing to use images of the children they work with or are otherwise in contact with must therefore have a policy in place to safeguard the children involved.

What are the risks?

Even if the child's personal identity (full name, address) is kept confidential, any other details accompanying the photo, such as an organisation or club they belong to, or a band they like, can make them identifiable and therefore vulnerable to individuals looking to 'groom' children for abuse.

There is also a risk that the photo itself is 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 can the risks be minimised?

Establish the type of images that appropriately represent the organisation and the activity, and think carefully about any images showing children and young people on your website or in your 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. There are many activities organisations can be involved in but clearly, activities such as swimming, gymnastics and athletics present a higher risk for potential misuse than others. Photos of these activities should:

- focus on the activity rather than a particular child
- avoid showing the full face and body of a child. Show children either in the water, or from the waist or shoulders up.

Consider using models or illustrations if you are promoting an activity, rather than the children who are actually involved in it.

What to do when using photographers

- Provide a clear brief about what is considered appropriate in terms of content and behaviour.
- Issue the photographer with identification, which 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 away from the event, for instance at a young person's home.

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

Do I need parental permission?

You should ask for parental permission to use an image of a young person. Parents should be aware of and support your policy on using children's images, and of the way these represent the organisation or activity. This can be recorded on a parental consent form for use of images of children.

You should also ask for the child's permission to use their image. This ensures that they are aware of the way the image is to be used to represent the activity. A children's permission form is one way of recording their consent. Examples of permission forms are available on both the [Safe Network](#) and the [Child Protection in Sport Unit](#) websites.

When using a photographer, inform parents and children that a photographer will be in attendance and ensure they consent to both the taking and publication of films or photos.

How should I respond to concerns?

Children and parents should be informed that if they have any concerns regarding inappropriate or intrusive photography, these should be reported to the event organiser or official.

You must have an appropriate safeguarding policy in place to ensure that any reported concerns are dealt with in the same way as any other child protection issue, ensuring that your child protection or safeguarding officer is informed.



Contact the NSPCC Information Service with any questions about child protection or related topics:

Tel: 0808 800 5000 | Email: help@nspcc.org.uk | Twitter: [@NSPCCpro](https://twitter.com/NSPCCpro)

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