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School Policy for the Safe Use of Children's Photographs

Introduction

Schools need and welcome publicity. Children's photographs add colour, life and interest to articles promoting school activities and initiatives. Making use of photographs for publicity materials and to promote the school in the press can increase pupil motivation and staff morale, and help parents and the local community identify and celebrate the school's achievements.

However, photographs must be used in a responsible way. Schools need to respect children's and parents' rights of privacy and be aware of potential child protection issues.

At St Columba's School every reasonable effort will be made to minimise risk by following the guidelines detailed in this document and by securing parental consent for the use of photographs.

This policy applies to the use of photographs in school publicity materials, on its website and in the press.

This policy reflects the consensus of opinion of the staff and governing body of St Columba's Catholic Primary School. Its implementation is the responsibility of all staff. Parents and visitors will be made aware of this policy.

Child Protection

There may be a risk when individual pupils can be identified in photographs. For that reason the governing body of St Columba's School have developed this policy to make every effort to minimise risk.

In the event of the inappropriate use of children's photographs the Headteacher will inform the local Child Protection Officer and Social Services and / or the Police.

Data Protection Act 1998

Photographs and video images of pupils and staff are classed as personal data under the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998. Therefore, using such images for school publicity purposes requires the consent of either the individual concerned or in the case of pupils, their legal guardians.

St Columba's School will not display images of pupils or staff on websites, in publications or in a public place without such consent. The definition of a public place includes areas where visitors to the school have access.

Where photographs are taken at an event attended by large crowds, this is regarded as a public area so it is not necessary to get permission of everyone in a crowd shot. The Data Protection Act does not apply to photographs or films taken for personal use by family and friends.

Appropriate Use of Images in School Publicity Materials

The staff and governors of St Columba's School will:

Ensure that images are stored securely and used only by those authorised to do so; ensure that electronic images are stored on a secure network to which members of the public have no access;

not use an image of any child who is subject to a court order;

secure parental consent for the use of children's photographs;

not use photographs of children or staff who have left the school without their consent; and

Ensure that children are appropriately dressed - a minimum of a vest/shirt and shorts.

School Website

The advice for using photographs on a website is no different from their use in any other kind of publication or publicity material. However, the staff and governors of St Columba's School are aware of the potential risk of inappropriate use of images because of the lack of control over who might see the image and the wide extent of the misuse of the Internet by certain people. The governors will seek the consent of parents regarding the use of images on the Internet. Children's names will not be included in photographs of children published on the school website.

The Press

The use of photographs in newspapers and magazines is already subject to strict guidelines. The Press Complaints Commission's Code of Practice states that:

Journalists must not interview or photograph a child under the age of 16 on subjects involving the welfare of the child in the absence of or without the consent of a parent or other adult who is responsible for the children.

Pupils must not be approached or photographed while at school without the permission of the school authorities.

There is no breach of the Data Protection Act 1998 in passing on a child's name to a journalist as long as parental consent has been secured.

St Columba's School will provide names of children to accompany photographs published in newspapers and magazines only where the parent or guardian have provided their consent.

Filming Events

It is usual for parents to take photographs and videos of children at school events such as the annual Nativity Play and Sports Day. Any objections to this policy should be addressed to the Headteacher.

On occasions, commercial video films may be made of children on educational visits and performing in school productions. The school will inform parents where arrangements have been made for a commercial photographer to film such an event. Where a commercial photographer is used, the school will follow the NSPCC guidelines which are as follows:

Schools should provide a clear brief about what is considered appropriate in terms of content and behaviour;

Schools should issue the photographer with identification which must be worn at all times;

Schools should let parents and children know that a photographer will be in attendance at an event and ensure they consent to both the taking and publication of films and photographs;

Schools should not allow unsupervised access to children or one-to-one photo sessions at home;

Schools should not approve / allow photo sessions outside the event or at a child's home.

If children or parents have any concerns about inappropriate or intrusive photography, they should report them to the Headteacher who would report them in the same manner as any other child protection concern.

If schools or parents have concerns regarding the use of filmed images by television companies they should contact the Office of Communication (Ofcom). Any objections to this policy should be addressed to the Headteacher.

Camera Phones in Schools

Concerns have been expressed about the risks posed directly and indirectly to children through the use of camera phones on school premises.

In order to minimise risk at St Columba's School:

Staff will only use mobile phones in office areas, the staff room or areas away from the children while school is in session;

Visitors will be advised of the ban on the use of camera phones in school and, wherever possible, will be accompanied by a member of staff during the duration of the visit;

Children who bring a mobile phone on to the school premises hand their phone in at the school office at the beginning of the school day and collect it at the end of the school day.

Parental Consent

The governors of St Columba's School will seek the consent of parents / guardians regarding the use of photographs of children. The consent will include agreement on:

How and where the photographs will be used and the period of consent.

Monitoring and Review

Our policy and practice are regularly reviewed by staff and Governors via the Governors' Inclusion and Safeguarding Committee.

18.10.2017