

Information from BECTA – Jan 2007

Using images and video safely on school websites

Including images of pupils on the school's website can be motivating for the pupils involved and provide a good opportunity to promote the work of the school. Schools therefore need to develop a policy in relation to the use of images of pupils on the school's website. The head and governors will need to make decisions about the type of images they consider suitable and that appropriately represent the school. They will want to ensure that parents support their policy. Further guidance may also be available from the LEA.

Schools should also give consideration to the way in which digital images and video are captured and stored within the school, and develop guidelines for the protection of both pupils and staff. Consider, for the protection of staff, whether it is appropriate for staff members to use personal digital cameras or camera phones on field trips, and how such images should be transferred back to the school.

You may wish to develop a centralised area on the school's network for storing digital images of pupils, with suitable security for accessing the images, along with a deletion policy for when images are no longer required, or the pupil has left the school.

When assessing the potential risks in the use of images of pupils, the most important factor is the threat of inappropriate use of images of children.

Considerations include:

- Does the school ask for parental permission before using images of pupils, whether on the school's website or elsewhere? This ensures that parents are aware of the way an image of their child is representing the school. A parental consent form is one way of achieving this.
- Avoid using the first name and last name of individuals in a photograph. This reduces the risk of inappropriate, unsolicited attention from people outside school. An easy rule to remember is if the pupil is named, avoid using their photograph; if a photograph is used, avoid naming the pupil.
- Consider using group photos rather than photos of individual children.
- Ensure that the image file is appropriately named – do not use pupils' names in image file names or ALT tags if published on the web.
- Ensure that images are appropriately stored and secured on the school's network.

- Only use images of pupils in suitable dress to reduce the risk of inappropriate use.
- Create a recognised procedure for checking the website, reporting the use of inappropriate images to reduce the risks to pupils, and responding to any such report.

Data protection and photographs in schools

The Information Commissioner has issued [good practice guidance](#) on taking photographs and videos in educational institutions. Aimed at LEAs and those working in schools, colleges and universities, the document gives guidance on whether doing so must comply with the Data Protection Act 1998.

In brief, the guidance states that in many cases the Data Protection Act is unlikely to apply. Examples given are photographs taken for personal use, such as those taken by parents or grandparents at a school play or sports day, and those taken by the media. However, photographs taken for official school use, which are likely to be stored electronically alongside other personal data may be covered by the Act. As such, pupils and students should be advised why they are being taken.

Although no reference is made to the storing of photographs and videos on school websites, schools may wish to consider the issues.

For more information see the documents [The key features of a safe school website](#) and [Images of pupils on school websites - Grove Road Primary School](#) on the Becta site.

(This information is made available by Becta -
<http://schools.becta.org.uk/index.php?section=is&rid=9960&PHPSESSID=0202f83324b27bb870cb7632dd10fca2&pagenum=2&NextStart=1&pagenum=1&NextStart=1&pagenum=2&NextStart=1&pagenum=3&NextStart=1&pagenum=1&NextStart=1>)