

## Photographing and Filming Children in Sport

Parents/carers often want to be able to celebrate the achievements of their children when taking part in sporting activities through taking photographs or films. Sports organisations may also want to promote their activities to encourage increased participation. The Child Protection in Sport Unit does not advocate the banning of photography and the use of images and videos of children, but recommends that appropriate and proportionate safeguards should be in place to ensure a safe sporting environment for children and young people. This briefing will help to ensure that all necessary steps are taken to protect children and young people from the inappropriate use of their images in resources and media publications, on the internet and elsewhere. The guidance applies whether images are taken using cameras, mobile phones or any other equipment.

### What are the potential concerns?

There have been concerns about the risks posed directly and indirectly to children and young people through the use of images (photographs and videos) on sports websites, social networks and other publications. Images can be used as a means of identifying children when associated with personal information e.g. this is X who lives at y; X is a member of the z sports club and likes a certain music group. This information can make a child vulnerable to an individual who may wish to contact and start to “groom” that child for abuse – online (e.g. through websites or social networking) or through direct contact in the off-line, „real” world. Information placed on the internet has also been used by estranged parents (e.g. in adoption or domestic violence circumstances) to identify, trace and cause significant difficulties for children. Secondly the content of photographs can itself be inappropriate, or be used or adapted for inappropriate use. There is evidence of inappropriate or adapted material finding its way onto sites showing child abuse images, and of inappropriate images being shared between groups of offenders.

Sporting organisations and clubs need to develop a policy in relation to the use of images of young athletes on their websites and in other publications. The organisation will need to make decisions about the type of images they consider suitable and that appropriately represent the club or sport, without putting children at increased risk. They will want to ensure that parents, young people and others understand and support their policy. When assessing the potential risks in the use of images of athletes, the most important factor is the potential for inappropriate use of images of children.

If sporting organisations are aware of the potential risks and take appropriate steps the potential for misuse of images can be reduced.

### The CPSU advises sporting bodies to adopt the following principles:

- the interests and welfare of children taking part in sporting activities is paramount
- children and their parents/carers have a right to decide whether their images are taken, and how these may be used
- children and their parents/carers must provide written consent for their images to be taken and used
- consent is only meaningful when the club or organisation ensures that children and their parents/carers understand the nature of potential risks associated with the intended type, use and distribution of the images.

### Easy rules to remember are:

- Where possible do not include the name of a child whose image is being used.



- If naming a child or group of children in an image, only use their first names, as this will reduce the risk of inappropriate, unsolicited attention from people within and outside the sport.
- Avoid the inclusion of other detailed information about individual children
- 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 sport. A Child's Permission Form is one way of achieving this.
- Ask for parental permission to use an image of a young person. This ensures that parents are aware of where and how the image of their child will be used to represent the club, event or sport (e.g. in a sports magazine, on a website, or on Facebook). Developing or adopting a Parental Permission Form is one way of achieving this. Ensure parents understand the nature of the potential risks associated with the intended use of the image/s.
- Be clear about how and for how long images will be securely stored (including how access to the images, associated consents and other information will be controlled)
- Only use images of children in suitable dress/kit (including required or recommended safety wear such as shin pads, gum shields and so on) to reduce the risk of inappropriate use.
- Images should positively reflect young people's involvement in the activity (e.g. showing smiling participants rather than anxious or unhappy ones) and promote the best aspects of the sport.
- With regard to the actual content it is difficult to specify exactly what is appropriate given the wide diversity of sports. However there may be some sports activities (e.g. gymnastics or swimming) where the risk of potential misuse is much greater than for other sports. With these sports the content of the photograph should focus on the activity rather than on a particular child and should avoid full face and body shots. So for example shots of children in a pool would be appropriate or, if poolside, waist or shoulder up.
- Create and publicise a procedure for reporting the abuse of images or the use of inappropriate images, to reduce the risks to children. Follow your organisation's safeguarding procedures, ensuring both your sports safeguarding officer and Children's Social Care and/or Police are informed.

## Guidelines for Use of Photographic Filming Equipment for Official Use at Sporting Events

- 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.
- Inform children and parents that a photographer will be in attendance at an event and ensure they consent to both the taking and publication of films or photographs which feature and clearly identify their child (e.g. close ups, small group and team photos).
- At many events, organisers and others will reasonably wish to take wide angle, more general photos of the event sites, opening and closing ceremonies, and so on. Separate to the issue of consents for „identifying“ photographs/footage of individual participants (as above) parents and children should at least understand that these types of images will be taken during, or at specific points in, the event e.g. information could be included on the parental consent form. It is not reasonable, practical or proportionate to require parental consents for taking these general types of images, or to preclude it on the basis of the concerns of a small number of parents.
- Do not allow unsupervised access to children or one to one photo sessions at events.
- Do not approve/allow photo sessions outside the event or at a child's home.
- Children, parents and others should be informed that if they have concerns they can report these to the organiser.
- Concerns regarding inappropriate or intrusive photography should be reported to the event organiser or official and recorded in the same manner as any other child protection concern.



- Clarify issues of ownership, retention and access (by event staff and participants/parents) to the images.

**Other professional photographers/filming/video operators** wishing to record the event should seek accreditation with the event organiser by producing their professional identification for the details to be recorded. Ideally, they should request this at least (*set number of days*) working days before the event.

**Students or amateur photographers/film/video operators** wishing to record the event should seek accreditation with the event organiser by producing their student or club registration card and a letter from the club/educational establishment outlining their motive for attending the event and planned use of the material.

**Accreditation procedure:** a system should be established. Professionals should register prior to the event and their identification details be recorded. Ideally they should be:

- name and address of the person using the camera
- names of subjects (if specific)
- the reason or use the images are being or intended to be put to
- signed declaration that the information provided is valid and that the images will only be used for the reasons given.

Ideally, identification details should be checked with the issuing authority prior to the event. On registering, promoters of events could consider issuing a coloured identification label on the day which can serve to highlight those who have accreditation but they must ensure that where events occur regularly, the colour and or type of identifying label is changed to prevent unofficial replication.

A clear brief about what is considered appropriate in terms of content and behaviour should be issued. It may include a list of any areas where photographic and recording equipment, including mobile phones, is forbidden under all circumstances (e.g. changing rooms, toilet areas). Unsupervised access to athletes or one to one photo sessions at event or photo sessions outside the events or at an athlete's home should not be approved/allowed.

## **Guidelines for Use of Photographic Filming Equipment by Parents / Guardians / Spectators at Sporting Events**

- If parents/guardians or other spectators are intending to photograph or video at an event they should also be made aware of your organisation's expectations.
- Spectators should be asked to register at an event if they wish to use photographic equipment.
- It is helpful for the event organisers to provide some indication e.g. a sticker for each registered camera, or badge to be displayed by the spectator to help others recognise those who have registered, and respond to those who do not appear to have registered.

**Public information:** the specific details concerning photographic/video and filming equipment registration should, wherever possible, be published prominently in event programmes and must be announced over the public address system, prior to the start of the event.

**The recommended wording is:**



In line with the recommendation in the *Name of Governing Body* Policy, the promoters of this event request that any person wishing to engage in any video, zoom or close range photography should register their details with staff at the spectator desk before carrying out any such photography. If parents have any particular concern about their young person being photographed or filmed they should notify the organisers. The promoter reserves the right to decline entry to any person unable to meet or abide by the promoter's conditions.

If you are concerned about any photography taking place at this event, please contact the promoter or event organiser who will be pleased to discuss this matter with you.\*

## At club sessions

There is no intention to prevent club coaches and teachers using videoing as a legitimate coaching aid. However, children/young people and their parents should be aware that this is part of the coaching programme and consent to it. Care should be taken in the secure storage of such materials and films. If clubs are concerned that someone they do not know is using their sessions for photography or filming purposes, they should ask them to leave and contact their Governing Body or (depending on the nature of the concerns) the police for further advice.

Clubs should include wording on their consent forms similar to the following;

**Name of club** will follow the **name of governing body** guidance for the use of photographs and videoing for training/coaching purposes, a copy of which is available from **name of club web site or club official**

**Name of club** will take all steps to ensure these images are used solely for the purposes they are intended. If you become aware that these images are being used inappropriately you should inform **name of club welfare officer** (telephone number) and the **name of governing body** immediately. I consent to **name of club** photographing or videoing my child.

\* Adapted with permission from the Amateur Swimming Association (1999) Child Protection in Swimming

## Images of elite young athletes

As young athletes progress higher up the competitive ladder within their sport, elite level events are increasingly likely to take place in a public arena. Event organisers and sports governing bodies will quite reasonably seek publicity to positively promote their sport, and elite young athletes receiving endorsements or sponsorship may well welcome positive media coverage on a local, regional or national level. Organisers retain their duty of care to these athletes and a responsibility to safeguard them. In respect of some elite young athletes aspects of the more general guidance around the use of images detailed above (for example avoiding the inclusion of names and some other personal details alongside photographs) are neither practical nor desirable.

It is important that other aspects of this guidance (for example about the nature, content and use of images; and about ensuring that photography sessions are supervised) are considered and applied. It is important for the athletes, their parents and media representatives to be clear about appropriate arrangements and ground rules for interviews, filming and photo sessions. Young elite athletes and their parents should be supported by the sports organisation and prepared to manage these and a range of other issues (including safeguarding concerns) that may arise as a result of their sporting success and increased public profile.

Many sports governing bodies already provide information, guidance and support to help athletes manage the media, for example in planning for media interviews.



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