

Photography Policy

As a church we recognise that stepping into a church service or space can be intimidating or unfamiliar for many people. We therefore aim to use photography and sharing photographs and video on social media and in other spaces in order to help people know what to expect as well as to communicate the culture and atmosphere of our events. However we recognise that when it comes to photographs, digital images and film/video there are some important issues to note. The issues are the same for still photographs, digital images or films. For convenience they are all referred to as images.

Images count as sensitive personal data under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). As with all such data, they should only be used with the consent of the person in the image.

Issues relating to the use of images, and the potential for misuse, are continually evolving as social norms and technology change. As a result, specific questions or situations arising related to particular events will be considered and decided on a case-by-case basis by the leadership team.

In all discussions and decisions regarding image use, our priority is to safeguard the dignity, wellbeing, and privacy of the young people and adults within our community, as well as members of the wider community who attend our services and events. We are committed to encouraging and supporting parents and carers to reflect on their family values regarding the use of photography and images on social media, and to make informed decisions on behalf of their children. We also encourage families to regularly review these decisions as children grow older, and to actively involve children and young people in age-appropriate decision-making about the use of their images.

Gaining consent for the use of an image:

The list below provides a simple point of reference for gaining consent regarding the use of images of children

- Children under the age of 13: consent should be gained from their parents;
- Children aged between 13 and 16: consent should be gained from parents and the children themselves;
- Children aged 17: consent should be gained from the children themselves.

However, the above list shows 'all you need to do', rather than 'all you might want to do'. It would be good practice, for example to ask a child younger than 13 before you use their photograph, and to inform the parents of a 17 year that their child has agreed to the use of their image.

Parents (and children over 13: see above) will be informed how, where and in what context an image may be used – for example, on a public website, through social media, on the screen during a church service or in a printed resource.

Consent is not needed if children or adults appear in a wide-angle group photograph in a public space (for instance, a photograph of an outdoor event).

It should be noted that consent can also be implied; if an activity leader invites people to be part of a group photograph, then those who gather for the photograph have given their consent by virtue of having done so.

In the case of church events and services, event organisers should make clear to all participants and parents that these kinds of images will be taken, and for what purposes. This may be in a verbal notice, signage and/or email information sent before the event.

If media images are being taken during an event, an area will be clearly designated for those who do not wish to be in these images.

Defining internal and external use

In all conversations and particularly when gaining consent for the use of images a clear distinction will be made between internal and external use.

Internal use describes the display of images solely within the church setting: eg in a service or event. They are only visible in the moment of sharing to the people in that setting, or are only available to people in the church/at the event (for example via a link shared by email).

External use describes the sharing of images more widely, for example on a website or social media.

When consent is collected and recorded this distinction will be made clear, and individuals enabled to consent for one or other or both (or neither).

Recording consent or requests not to be in images shared publicly.

Consent will be collected and recorded on churchsuite, and reviewed annually.

Parents will be invited to indicate their consent or otherwise when they register children for the church groups. They will be invited to review this consent annually via email.

Adults will be offered the opportunity to refuse consent for being in images regularly via email. Those who wish to decline consent will be recorded on churchsuite.

Best Practice with Photography:

All those taking photographs in church settings should be made aware of, and comply with the following guidance.

- Think carefully before taking any images, in particular those showing children and young people, that will be used on a website, social media or other publications. Consider what the images will be used for and whether consent will be required.
- Do not supply full names of those in images, unless it is considered necessary e.g. celebrating a performance or achievement; the child and parent(s) or carer(s)/individual have consented.
- Only use images of children in suitable dress or kit, being particularly mindful of some activities (e.g. swimming) which involve partial states of dress. Additionally, avoid pictures of children in school uniform where the name of the school is visible.
- Keep images of children securely: Hard copies of images should be kept in a locked drawer; Electronic images should be in a protected folder with restricted access; Images should not be stored on unencrypted portable equipment such as laptops, memory sticks or mobile phones. If such storage is unavoidable, the images should be kept in a password protected folder or on a device protected with a code or some other secure method of access such as fingerprint identification.
- Avoid, if possible, using any personal equipment to take photos and recordings of children on behalf of the church – where possible, use cameras or devices belonging to your organisation. This may not always be achievable but it is best practice. If personal equipment has to be used for church purposes, delete the photographs of individual children once they have been used for the purpose for which they were taken.

Photography/filming by parents and others at activities/events.

There will be circumstances in which parents and other attendees at activities want to take photographs. For youth events in particular, many young people will have a camera on their mobile phone and will regularly post images of themselves and their friends on social media.

The planning of events/celebration services (eg Christmas, Easter) will be careful to:

- Decide on the approach to photographs/filming for 'attendees'; This does not apply when, for instance, parents are taking photographs of children's events for their own use.
- Clarify and promote the photography rules for the event/service to all participants.
- Warn parents, attendees and young people that there can be negative consequences to sharing images linked to information about their own or other people's children on social media – and care should be taken about 'tagging';
- Children who are in care should not be photographed as this could put them at risk.
- Make sure that there are procedures to respond to and manage any concerns arising, including a named person to report any concerns to.
- Consider whether a conversation is necessary with young people who will attend the event regarding how they wish the images they take of each other to be used, and what restrictions they feel should be observed.