

Photographs of children and young people under 18

Photography and video recording are important ways of recording Methodist activity and providing an historic record – illustrating and validating important moments in people’s lives and the life of our Church. It is, however, a powerful and personal process, and we must therefore respect the rights of everyone to make the choice whether or not to be photographed.

Use the consent form (at the end of this section) as a matter of course for all groups and events at the same time as you collect contact details, permission slips or registration forms.

At large events make arrangements to provide video or photographic stills of the participants in action or set up photo opportunities at the end. This allows the performance to go ahead with limited interruption, and allows any child who is not to be photographed to take part. If there are children or young people at the event for whom you do not have a completed consent form, put the notice about photographs in prominent places or in the event programme and make sure official photographers are aware of the guidelines for photographers.

Safeguarding and the Internet

Methodist churches and organisations creating their own websites are encouraged to observe these safeguarding guidelines and to regularly review the pages of their sites so that they remain up to date, effective and safe.

Anyone designing a website for a Methodist church, circuit or district will want to ensure that it promotes opportunities for all ages – including children and young people - to get involved in the life of the church. While it is important to reflect the full mix of participation in church worship and other activities, care should be taken to ensure the safety of children and young people. Website builders are encouraged to follow these guidelines:

- Photographs are ‘personal data’ as far as data protection legislation is concerned and must be used responsibly.
- Obtain written and specific consent from parents or carers before using photographs of anyone under 18 on a website.
- Children and young people under the age of 18 should not be identified by name or other personal details. These details include email or postal addresses and telephone numbers.

- When using photographs of children and young people, it is preferable to use group pictures. When a photograph of an individual child or young person is used, names or other personal details should not be used in any caption.
- Care must be taken when advertising special events for children and young people.
- Ensure that the image files are appropriately named – do not use names in image filenames or alt tags.
- Only use images of children in suitable dress to reduce the risk of inappropriate use.
- Create a recognised procedure for reporting the use of inappropriate images to reduce the risks to children.
- Consider advertising events simply by giving contact details of the adults responsible.
- When posting activity ideas for children or young people ensure they comply with good safeguarding practice.

Using the Internet with children and young people

There may be occasions when church officers, youth or children's workers wish to demonstrate the internet to children or young people, or encourage them to access information online as part of an activity. When this happens, workers are encouraged to follow these guidelines:

- Ensure that parents or carers are aware of what their children or young people are doing and have given their permission.
- When demonstrations are being given, plan beforehand to ensure that all websites visited have material that is appropriate for the age group taking part.
- Where children and young people are given access to undertake their own searches on the internet, the following search engines have been recommended by the Department for Education and Skills (www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education)
 - KidsClick web search for kids by librarians (www.kidsclick.org)
 - Superkid (www.super-kids.com)
 - Yahoo!igans! Web guide for kids (www.squirrelnet.com/search/yk/yahooligans.asp)

Your local authority may also operate a local search engine facility appropriate for children and young people.

- Where children and young people are being encouraged to undertake subsequent searches on the Internet at home, they must only do so with the knowledge/supervision of their parent or carer.
- Warn children and young people about the dangers of giving out personal details on the Internet.
- Ensure children and young people obtain parental consent if they wish to develop internet friends into face-to-face friendships. Even then, they should always be accompanied on any first meeting.

As technology progresses, so must our vigilance in protecting against its abuse. Mobile phones and the Internet provide new and imaginative ways of gaining information and communicating, but while offering a wealth of possibilities, the darker side offers those with intent on harming children new ways in which to abuse them.

Most importantly, communication and common sense are the two key elements to these guidelines and the primary aim is to protect the individual and work to ensure they are aware of their rights and empowered to exercise them, while still offering the freedom to families and friends to record important events in their lives and the lives of those close to them.

Guidelines for photographers at church events

1. Do not photograph any child who has asked not to be photographed or who is under a court order (where this is known).
2. Photography or recording should focus on the activity, not on a particular young person.
3. Images should focus on small groups rather than individuals.
4. If a young person is named, avoid using their photograph.
5. All children must be appropriately dressed when photographed.
6. All people taking photographs or recording footage for official use at the event should register with the event organiser.
7. All concerns regarding inappropriate behaviour or intrusive photography should be reported to the event organiser.

CONSENT FORM

At [church name],
we take the issue of child safety very seriously – and this includes the use of images of children. We occasionally include images of children in publications and on our website, but we have a duty of care which means that children must remain unidentifiable, reducing the risk of inappropriate contact, if images are used in this way.

We ask that parents consent to the church taking and using photographs and images of their children. Any use of images at [church name] is underpinned by our Safeguarding policy. We will never include the full name of a child alongside an image.

Please complete, sign and return this form to

.....
[named person]
.....
[church name]

I consent to photographs and digital images of the child named below, appearing in Methodist Church printed publications or websites. I understand that the images will be used only for church purposes and that the identity of my child will be protected. I also acknowledge that the images may also be used in and distributed using other media, such as CD-ROM.

Name of child:

Name of parent or guardian:

Address:
.....
.....
.....

Signature:

Date:

Queries regarding this form should be addressed to

.....
.....
[contact name and address]

