

Photographs – some guidelines

Photographs are a great way to share information about events and activities. However, there are a few guiding principles that should be observed when taking and storing photographs of people during church activities. Those using their own cameras in order to take pictures for the church must be clear that the resulting pictures are not to be duplicated or stored for personal use.

1. Make sure you have everyone's permission. Where children or adults who may be at risk are involved, get the permission of the parent or carer as well. There may be good reasons why an individual does not want a photo displayed or published: for example, if the person has fled a violent partner, or has foster - or adopted children whose parents are not allowed to know their whereabouts.
2. Make sure people know in advance how the photo(s) will be used e.g. will they be only on the notice board in the church hall, or will they be sent to the local paper or posted on an Internet site? Be careful to stick to what you say you are going to do; don't widen your audience without going back for further permission.
3. If you are planning to take 'roving', informal pictures during a church event, then a written information note can be included along with the advance publicity, giving people the opportunity to let you know that they do not wish to be included in those photographs. Photographs of individuals should always be taken with permission, even if there has been a general or implied agreement to informal photographs during an event.
4. Particularly with children, do not give detailed identity indicators by labelling pictures with full names, ages etc. Ideally, take photographs of children in small or mixed age groups, with a general heading.
5. Give careful thought to storage of photographs. Use locked filing cabinets, especially if photographs accompany names, addresses and other personal identifiers. If photographs are stored on line, use password protection.
6. Do not store images/photographs of those for whom you hold a professional duty of care on your personal phone, computer or any Internet device. Use a church-owned device that is password protected and is exclusively used for church activities.

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