

## 7 Guidelines on the use of photographic images and maintaining web sites in GAA clubs



Taking photographs of players, using web sites to publicise GAA activities and the videoing of events, games, training and coaching sessions are normal daily activities within most GAA clubs. The GAA Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport does not seek in any way to eliminate or curtail these activities but proposes certain safeguards so as to ensure that we minimise the risk or threats that inappropriate use of photographs or the recording of images may pose, particularly for young people.

These safeguards should still permit and facilitate the recording of relevant and suitable materials, should allow us to photograph the enjoyment gained by participating in our games, should enable coaches to use the latest technology in the delivery of training skills and should also enable clubs to promote their activities in a safe and non threatening manner. This we can do whether it be through the printing of photographs or displaying suitable materials on club or other GAA web sites.

The key concerns regarding the use of images and photographs of children/young people relate to:

- The possible identification of children when a photograph is accompanied by personal information and its inappropriate use thereafter.
- The inappropriate use, adaptation or copying of images for use in child pornography or illegal website.
- The taking of inappropriate photographs or recorded images of children.

A common sense approach is required when deciding on what may or may not be appropriate as we do not wish to prohibit the recording of games, coaching or celebrations at club level through the use of photography or by recording on video equipment.

Outlining the Club's photography and recording policy at the outset will clarify matters for all concerned. It may also be useful to request players and their parents to give the club signed permission for the recording of photographic and recorded images etc as part of the player's registration process.

It should be noted that we have little or no influence on what photographs may be taken and published in local or national newspapers as such photography is covered by a different set of guidelines. Should we ever be unhappy with the publication of such photographs or images we can address this matter with the individual newspaper or the Press Council of Ireland and the Office of the Press Ombudsman.

Photography and the recording of images in a public place do not generally require explicit or prior consent. However if an event e.g. a game or training session is taking place, involving under age players, in a public, private or local authority park, and if you are in charge of such an event you are entitled to request a person to resist from taking photos if you feel that such action or photography may be inappropriate.

#### Guidelines for Photographic/Recorded Images

- First and foremost ensure parents/guardians and the young people themselves have granted their consent for the taking and publication of photographic images. This permission may be sought by the club when the player registers on an annual basis.
- All children/young people featured in recordings must be appropriately dressed.
- The photograph or recording should focus on the activity rather than a particular young person.
- No personal details relating to the young person should be revealed as accompanying materials to the photograph or recorded image.
- Clubs, coaches and volunteers should be permitted to use video equipment as a legitimate coaching aid and as a means of recording special occasions; however, care should be taken in the dissemination, storage and use of such material.
- Parents and spectators taking photographs/recordings should seek permission in advance from the Club and should also be prepared to identify themselves if requested and state the purpose for their photography/filming. If Club personnel are unhappy about any matter relating to such photography the permission granted should be withdrawn immediately.
- Group and team photographs may be taken but it is not necessary to match a player's name with the position in which they may be standing or seated in the team photograph. i.e. The photograph may appear with the player's name recorded underneath but need not be in the order in which they appear in the photograph.

This is a precautionary recommendation based on previous examples of misuse of photographs by those who sought to exploit the gathering of young people together in an enjoyable and fun environment.

- It is recognised that on certain occasions individual young people may receive recognition and may be presented with an award. When this happens in the case of an under age player certain levels of sensitivity and indeed of common sense are required and a balance should be drawn between the publication of a photograph of an individual, who may or may not be named, and the safety aspects of publication. Any such photography or recording of events that involves individual presentations should be discussed in advance of the event and agreement reached with all parties, including the club, parents and the young person themselves, as to what is and what is not permitted.
- Create recognised procedures for reporting the use of inappropriate images to reduce the risks to under age players. Any instances of the use of inappropriate images should be reported to the Club's Children's Officer and/or Designated Person and also to the relevant statutory authorities as deemed appropriate.

#### Web site usage

Many if not most of our GAA clubs have well established web sites that enable them publicise their club activities, improve their means of communication with members and the general public and are also used as a general publicity forum for local, national and possible international use.

The Internet is an exciting and user friendly communication outlet for young people and it is therefore important that we attempt to engage with our young players in an equally user friendly manner and publicise GAA activities as being modern, presentable, popular and relevant to their needs and interests.

The most successful and newsworthy of GAA web sites are regularly used by our under age or younger members. It is important that while not wishing in any way to restrict the use of and accessibility to such sites that we recognise our responsibility in maintaining web sites that are purposeful, educational, newsworthy, attractive in design and use and above all else are safe.

The Guidelines for use of photography and filming, as previously outlined elsewhere in Section 7, also apply to those that maintain a Club web site. These guidelines are particularly applicable when photographs and images of under age players, teams and individuals are uploaded to the club web site.

#### Web site guidance

- Agree a club web site policy also known as an Acceptable Use Policy (UAP) following discussions at your Club Management or Executive Committee and with members, including the under age members of the Club. This UAP will promote your strategy on the safe use of the Internet and also outlines the parameters of behaviour and specifies the consequences of breaching those parameters.
  - Decide at the outset what purpose your web site serves.
  - Appoint a web master to manage your web site on behalf of the club.
  - Ensure that the web master is answerable to a member of the Club's Management Committee e.g. Chairperson, Secretary, PRO, etc.
  - The Club Management Committee should agree at the outset the style, design and content policy of the web site with the appointed web master, prior to going on-line.
  - Agree if you will have a specific youth section and if so also agree the extent and the limitations on its content etc.
  - Decisions on the appropriate use of photographic images and other similar content should be in accordance with the Guidelines for Photographic/Recorded Images as outlined elsewhere in this section.
- Consider the age of children and young people when deciding on the web site policy.
  - Consult with the Club's Children's Officer when designing the web site and agreeing the usage policy and content material.
  - Agree to review the overall maintenance and upkeep of the web site at regular intervals.
  - Agree a procedure in the club for dealing with any complaints or concerns that may be raised about the content of your web site.

