

Photographing of children in sports centres/swimming pools

Introduction

Advice and procedures to be followed in permitting photography to take place or videos cameras to be used in sport and recreation settings, particularly where young children may be the subjects. Historically some photography and video use has always taken place in sports centres and swimming pools to record events such as children's birthday parties or sporting competitions.

The problem

However the use of today's modern digital cameras, often with video, and now the new generation of mobile phones presents the opportunity for misuse.

The magnification and manipulation that is possible with today's digital pictures and the fact there is no need for a third party to develop and print images is causing concern. Images taken with a mobile phone can, in seconds, be transmitted on to the World Wide Web. There are reports of unauthorised children's images taken whilst using sports facilities being posted on the web and allegations of persons suspected of taking such images prompting some operators to have already taken action in banning all unauthorised photography and the use of mobile phones on their premises.

Complete ban on use

There are a number of public buildings which may include swimming pools, sports centres and the like that have a clearly defined policy of not allowing the taking of photographs under any circumstances (see also ISRM advice on CCTV and its operation). Buildings and operations with such an exclusion policy in operation will need to review their procedures in light of the potential problem posed by mobile phones. Some operators may take the view that mobile phones should, like cameras, not be allowed under any circumstances. Whilst this may be difficult to enforce for some facilities, it is in line with restrictions imposed in other public areas such as restaurants and cinemas where the use of mobile phones is considered an intrusion to the activities taking place and likely to offend other users.

Allowed only with permission

Those Centres which allow photography should have a written procedure in place. This would entail the prospective photographer having to obtain permission prior to using their camera or other device to take pictures.

There should be a notice in the reception area clearly stating that photography and the recording of images of any kind is only allowed with the written authorisation of the centre management.

The procedure for obtaining permission should be written down on a form and recorded. The form devised should contain the following details:

- The name, address and phone number of the person using the camera
- The name/s of the subject
- The relationship of the photographer and subject
- The reason or use the images are being or intended to be put to (family record)
- A signed declaration that the information provided is valid and that the images will only be used for the reasons given
- A sequential number to enable a date order log to be kept.

Incorporated within these procedures should be a list of those areas where photographic and recording equipment including mobile phones is forbidden under all circumstances e.g.

- All changing areas including
- Swimming pool
- Sports facilities
- Team changing facilities
- Health suite
- Sauna areas
- Sunbed areas
- Fitness suite and gyms
- Toilet areas
- Aerobic/fitness classes
- Crèche
- Play scheme facilities

Once permission has been granted it may be helpful if the person concerned is given a dated signed card or form of approval that they can show to supervising staff when challenged.

Respect the rights of others

Finally there should be a general requirement on the person given approval that if any customer complains or expresses concern they must respect the rights of other people and stop taking photographs.

This procedure should be contained in that Centre's Normal Operating Procedure and what to do in the case of non-compliance may go into the Emergency Action Plan.

Most genuine persons presented with a permit to complete quickly come round to the fact that this is a sensible precaution on the basis and if they have nothing to hide they won't mind leaving their details.

Vigilance by the general public

No matter what arrangements are put in place to prevent the use of cameras, videos or mobile phones with digital image recording the very

nature of "peeping tom type photography" make it difficult to police. In recognition of this fact managers of facilities should ask their users to be alert to any suspicious activity, particularly where children may be involved and encourage them to report any such incidents at the earliest opportunity to a member of staff. Managers should encourage this form of vigilance from users by the use of appropriate signage.

Child protection procedures and training

A fundamental requirement particularly significant where you ask that members of the public be vigilant and report their suspicions is to ensure that you have child protection procedures in place appropriate to the situation and that all staff are trained in these procedures and know how to respond. (see ISRM guidance "Child Protection Policy and Implementation Procedures" and ask ISRM Education and Training about "Fit and Safe" Child Protection in a Sport and Leisure Environment).

Child protection in sport unit

The Child Protection in Sport Unit has issued the following advice to the organisers of sporting events and presentations.

Photographs and images of children used for promoting and advertising

There have been concerns about the risks posed directly and indirectly to children and young people through the use of photographs on sports websites and other publications. Photographs can be used as a means of identifying children when they are accompanied with personal information – this is X who lives at X is a member of the X gymnastics club and who likes Westlife. This information can make a child vulnerable to an individual who may wish to start to "groom" that child for abuse. Secondly the content of the photo can be used or adapted for inappropriate use. There is evidence of this adapted material finding its way onto child pornography sites.

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

- Consider using models or illustrations if you are promoting an activity.
- Avoid the use of the first name and surname of individuals in a photograph. This reduces the risk of inappropriate, unsolicited attention from people within and outside the sport.

Easy rules to remember are:

- If the athlete is named, avoid using their photograph.
- If a photograph is used, avoid naming the athlete.
- Ask for the athlete'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. An athlete's permission form is one way of achieving this.
- Ask for parental 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 parental permission form is one way of achieving this.
- Only use images of athletes in suitable dress to reduce the risk of inappropriate use. With regard to the actual content it is difficult to specify exactly what is appropriate given the wide diversity of sports. However, there are clearly some sports activities – swimming, gymnastics and athletics for example when 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 not 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 on poolside from the waist or shoulder up.
- Create recognised procedure for reporting the use of inappropriate images to reduce the risks to athletes. Follow your child protection procedures, ensuring both your sports child protection officer and the social service and/or police are informed.

First steps and things to think about...

Establish the type of images that appropriately represent the sport for the web and other media.

Think about the level of consideration you give to the use of the images of athletes in

other publications, for example, the processes involved in choosing appropriate images for the newsletter or magazine. Apply an increased level of consideration to images of children and young people used in the website.

Guidelines for Use of Photographic Filming Equipment at Sporting Events

There is evidence that some people have used sporting events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young and disabled sportspeople.

If you are commissioning professional photographers or inviting the press to an activity or event it is important to ensure they are clear about your expectations of them in relation to child protection.

- 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 athletes 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
- Do not allow unsupervised access to athletes or one to one photo sessions at events
- Do not approve/allow photo sessions outside the events or at an athlete's home.

If parents or other spectators are intending to photograph or video at an event they should also be made aware of your expectations.

- Spectators should be asked to register at an event if they wish to use photographic equipment
- Athletes and parents 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.

References

Child Protection in Sport Unit -www.sportprotects.org
Child Protection Policy & Implementation Procedures – ISRM. Full document available from ISRM - call 01509 226474
“Fit and Safe” Child Protection in a Sport and Leisure Environment – ISRM. Courses available from ISRM - call 01509 226474