



Photography and Digital Imagery of Pupils

Claregalway Educate Together
National School

Photography and Digital Imagery of Pupils

1. Purpose

This policy outlines how the school manages the taking, storage, and use of photographs and digital images of pupils. It ensures that all practices comply with data protection legislation and that parents/guardians are fully informed about how images may be used.

2. Consent Framework and Rationale

The school operates an “**all-in or all-out**” **consent system** for photography and digital imagery. This approach ensures clarity, fairness, and a consistent standard of practice across the school.

- **Consent Provided:**
When parents/guardians give consent, the school may take, store, and use digital images of the pupil for educational purposes, classroom activities, school displays, the school website, school-managed social media, and future school-related promotional materials. Images will always be used respectfully—capturing the everyday moments of school life without any unnecessary fuss.
- **Consent Withheld:**
Where consent is not provided, no digital images of the pupil will be taken, stored, or used by the school under any circumstances. Staff will take reasonable steps to ensure the child is not included in photographs during school activities.

Rationale for the All-In / All-Out Model

The all-in/all-out system is designed to protect both pupils and staff by reducing the risk of accidental misuse of images. When different pupils have different levels of consent—some allowed for internal use only, others for website use but not promotional use, and so on—it quickly becomes complicated for teachers to manage in real time.

A typical classroom moment might involve a group project, an exciting experiment, or a whole-class activity. Tracking multiple permutations of permissions in such moments increases:



- the likelihood that a child who has not consented may accidentally appear in a photograph, or
- the risk that an image with restricted consent could be used in the wrong context.

Even with the best organisational systems, this creates unnecessary pressure for staff and can undermine families' expectations around privacy.

By using an all-in/all-out model:

- Teachers can focus on teaching rather than memorising consent grids.
- Pupils' privacy rights are maintained with greater certainty.
- The risk of accidental data breaches is substantially reduced.
- Families receive a simple, transparent consent process.

This framework strikes a practical balance between celebrating pupil learning and ensuring strong data protection.

Parents/guardians who choose not to provide consent should be aware that this decision means the school will not capture or use any digital images of their child for any purpose, including end-of-year presentations, sixth-class graduation slideshows, commemorative videos, or documentation of significant school activities and milestones. While the school always strives to include every child meaningfully in the life of the school, we must also respect and uphold the family's decision regarding photography. As a result, children without consent will not appear in any images used for class celebrations, project records, or memory-based collections traditionally created at various points in the school year.

This ensures that the school maintains full compliance with the family's wishes and avoids the risk of accidental inclusion in materials that may be shared within the school community or published online.

For families who choose not to provide consent, the school kindly recommends discussing this decision with their child at home. From time to time, the pupil may be asked to step out of a group photograph or stand slightly aside during an activity where images are being taken. A simple, reassuring conversation at home can help the child understand that this is not a punishment or exclusion, but simply part of the school's responsibility to respect their family's wishes regarding privacy. This preparation helps ensure that the child feels comfortable and supported, and it allows these moments to pass smoothly and without worry.



3. Principles Governing the Use of Images

The school adheres to the following principles:

- **Respect and Dignity:** Pupils will be presented in a positive and appropriate manner.
- **Safety First:** Images will never be accompanied by personal identifiers such as full names or contact details.
- **Minimal Data:** Only images necessary for the stated educational or promotional purpose will be used.
- **Secure Storage:** Images will be stored safely and accessed only by authorised personnel on the school's Google Workspace for Education platform.
- **Limited Retention:** Images will be kept only for as long as required for the purpose for which they were collected.

4. Changing Consent

Parents/guardians may update or withdraw their consent at any time by contacting the school office in writing. Changes apply from the date of receipt and cannot be applied retrospectively (as charming as our pupils are, we cannot un-take photos taken in the past).

5. External Photography

Where external photographers (e.g., school portrait companies or event photographers) are engaged, they will operate under a written agreement with the school that complies with data protection requirements.

6. School Events

At school events where parents/guardians may wish to take personal photos or recordings (e.g., plays, sports days), the school will remind attendees that such images are for **personal use only**. Posting images of other children online should be avoided unless the consent of those children's families has been obtained.

7. Data Protection and Legal Compliance

This policy section is informed by the Data Protection Act 2018, GDPR, and relevant Department of Education guidance. The school aims to uphold privacy rights while still celebrating the vibrant learning experiences of its pupils.

