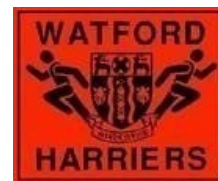


# Watford Harriers Photographic Policy

(Based on the standard EA model 14.12.09)



## Introduction

Watford Harriers is committed to providing a safe environment for children and young people under the age of 18. Essential to this commitment, is the need to ensure that all necessary steps are taken to protect children and young people from the inappropriate use of their images in resources, internet and media publications. We also recognise the growing threat of generative AI (artificial Intelligence), image manipulation and the growing risks to children of the misuse of AI in photography.

There have been concerns about the risks posed directly and indirectly to children and young people through the use of photographs on athletics web sites and other publications. The two main concerns are that photographs can be used as a means of identifying children and young people when they are accompanied with personal information, for example, - *this is X who is a member of Hometown Athletic Club who likes Westlife and supports Manchester United*. There are concerns that this information may be used inappropriately which could then make a child more 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. While this is rare in athletics, there is evidence of adapted material, not necessarily from athletics, finding its way onto child pornography sites. 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.

By adopting this Photographic Policy, Watford Harriers aims to put into place the best possible practice to protect children and young people wherever and whenever photographs and recorded images are taken and stored.

These guidelines adopt the following key principles:

- The interests and welfare of children taking part in athletics are paramount
- Parents/carers and children have a right to decide whether children's images are to be taken, and how those images may be used
- Parents/carers and children must provide written consent for children's images to be taken and used, wherever practicable. It should be accepted that children may appear in the background of general pictures taken at events and that it may not be practical or reasonable to seek consent in all circumstances

- Images should convey the best principles and aspects of athletics fairness and fun
- Care should be taken to ensure that images are not sexual or exploitative in nature, nor open to obvious misinterpretation and misuse
- Images should only be taken by authorised persons, as agreed in the protocol for a particular event
- All images of children should be securely stored and then deleted as soon as reasonably possible
- In the case of images used on web-sites, particular care must be taken to ensure that no identifying details facilitate contact with a child by a potential abuser such as details beyond the child's club and coach without the consent of the parents or carers.

### **Publication of Images**

Wherever possible, Watford Harriers will aim to follow these key guidelines:

- When joining the Club, athletes (or the parents/carers of under 16s) are asked to tick a box declaring whether they are **not** happy for their image to be used. **If the box is ticked, it should be accepted that children may appear in the background of general pictures taken at events and that it may not be practical or reasonable to seek consent for images in all circumstances**
- If athletes are named, we will seek parental consent for under 16s and verbal consent for 16+
- If a photograph is used, we will **never** publish personal details (email addresses, telephone numbers, addresses etc) of a child or young person
- Within reason, we will only use images of young athletes in suitable dress (eg club wear) to reduce the risk of inappropriate use
- We will try to focus on the activity rather than a particular child where appropriate and where possible use photographs that represent the broad range of children and young people taking part in athletics. This might include both boys and girls, children from ethnic minority communities and children and young people with disabilities.
- Ensure that images reflect positive aspects of children's involvement in athletics (enjoyment/competition etc)

### **Use of Photographic Filming Equipment at Athletic Events**

Watford Harriers does not want to prevent parents, carers or other spectators being able to take legitimate photographs or video footage of competitors. However, there is evidence that certain individuals will attempt to visit sporting events to take inappropriate photographs or video footage of children and young people. Any concerns during an event should be reported to the Match Referee, Competition Organiser, Club Welfare Officer or England Athletics Head of Welfare.

Where possible, Watford Harriers will endeavour to make participants and spectators aware at the point of entry to the event (such as on the entry form, at the point of entry to the venue or in the event programme) that photographs may be taken by spectators (and event photographers if applicable) and enable them to choose whether to participate or attend the event in these circumstances.

Watford Harriers will endeavour to:

- Inform athletes and carers if a photographer will be in attendance at an event and ensure they consent to both the taking and publication of films or photographs (there is permanent signage in the Club House)
- Make official photographers aware of those children and young people without consent for images to be taken
- Provide a clear brief to official photographers about what is considered appropriate in terms of content and behaviour
- Issue the photographer with identification which must be worn at all times
- Do not allow unsupervised access to young athletes or one to one photo sessions at events without an appropriate chaperone
- Do not approve or allow photo sessions outside the events or at an athletes home

Parents, carers or other spectators who intend to photograph or video at an event should be aware of the following expectations:

- The interests and welfare of children taking part in athletics are paramount
- Images should convey the best principles and aspects of athletics fairness and fun
- Care should be taken to ensure that images are not sexual or exploitative in nature, nor open to obvious misinterpretation and misuse
- In the case of images used on web-sites, particular care must be taken to ensure that no identifying details facilitate contact with a child by a potential abuser such as details beyond the child's club and coach without the consent of the parents or carers.
- If a photograph is used on line, avoid captioning the name of the athlete directly. **NEVER** publish personal details (email addresses, telephone numbers, addresses etc) of a child or young person on line.
- Within reason, only use images of young athletes in suitable dress (Tracksuit, or competition clothing) to reduce the risk of inappropriate use
- Do not take individual photos of children under 16 without consent from the parent.

If competitors and spectators have any concerns regarding any photography or video recording at any athletics event they can report these to the event organiser. Concerns regarding inappropriate or intrusive photography should be reported to the event organiser, through

Watford Harriers welfare team at [welfare@watfordharriers.org.uk](mailto:welfare@watfordharriers.org.uk) or the Match Referee, and recorded in the same manner as any other child protection concern.