



Information Commissioner's Office
Promoting public access to official information
and protecting your personal information



For immediate release

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Red tape myth dispelled: parents can take photographs at the school nativity play

In the run up to Christmas the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) is dispelling the myth that data protection prevents parents from taking photographs of their child and friends at the annual school nativity play. Photographs taken purely for personal use are exempt from the Data Protection Act.

Assistant Commissioner, Jonathan Bamford, said: "I am pleased to say that parents, friends and family members can take photographs of their child and friends participating in school activities for the family album. They can also film events at school. Fear of breaching the provisions of the Data Protection Act should not be wrongly used to stop people taking photographs or filming videos."

In the very small number of circumstances where the Data Protection Act does apply, if permission is sought by the photographer, this will usually be enough to ensure compliance. Photographs taken by the media are usually exempt from the Act.

The Data Protection Act does apply where photographs are taken for official use by schools and colleges, such as identity passes, and where these images are stored with personal details such as names.

If you need more information, please contact the Information Commissioner's press office on 020 7282 2960 or visit the website at: www.ico.gov.uk

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Notes to Editors

1. The good practice note on photography in schools can be downloaded at <http://www.ico.gov.uk/eventual.aspx?id=7485>
2. This good practice note is one of a series aimed at making data protection simpler. All are available at <http://www.ico.gov.uk/eventual.aspx?id=7485>
3. The Information Commissioner promotes public access to official information and protects personal information. The ICO is an independent body with specific responsibilities set out in the Data Protection Act 1998, the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and other legislation.
4. To see other data protection myths , please go to <http://www.ico.gov.uk/eventual.aspx?id=295>
5. An 'email alert' system was installed on the ICO website in Autumn 2005. This service notifies a subscriber by email every time a significant new item is added to the pages within the subject category that they have selected. Subscribers can tailor their subscription to their individual interests/requirements.
6. If you need more information, please contact the Information Commissioner's Press Office on 020 7 282 2960, or visit the website at: www.ico.gov.uk.