

WEST MIDLAND YOUNG ATHLETES CROSS COUNTRY LEAGUE

Use of Photographic and Video Images

Policy Statement

Version 1.0

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Last edited: WMYACCL Committee 21-June-2021

Date approved:



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1. Introduction and UKA/WMYACCL Values

The West Midland Young Athletes Cross Country League (WMYACCL) is committed to providing a safe environment for children/young people under the age of 18 to participate in athletics. Essential to this commitment, is to ensure that all necessary steps are taken to protect children/young people from the inappropriate use of photographic images.

The WMYACCL agrees with and adheres to the UK Athletics' (UKA) approach to Photographic Policy Guidance for Athletics Clubs and Stadiums. It is characterised by an ethos of vigilance and of respect for UKA's integrity and control processes. The values of UKA are:

- We operate with integrity.
- Communication is timely and relevant to our specific stakeholders.
- We deliver quality performance through innovation and continual improvement.
- Respect is shown to everyone we deal with.
- We all have accountability.

By creating this policy, The WMYACCL aim to help maintain the following standards:

- To maintain respect for athlete image rights
- To provide an environment free from harassment

It would be appropriate to mention here that although many issues are associated with the use of photography and video, The WMYACCL appreciates that the vast majority of images and videos are largely harmless, and we therefore encourage athletes, parents and coaches to take photographs at our fixtures as long as they adhere to the rules and guidance described in this policy statement. UKA, the relevant regulator (the Information Commissioner) and The WMYACCL recognises the value and pleasure to many of recording these occasions. Breaches of this policy may require action to be taken by the officials or the committee (as outlined in section 6) and potentially legal action.

2. Key Concerns

There have been concerns about the risks posed directly and indirectly to children and young people through the use of photographs on athletic web sites and other publications. The WMYACCL has a website and a Facebook group where photographs and video footage can be uploaded by both the league and the general public.

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. This information can make a child vulnerable to an individual who may wish to start to "groom" that child for abuse, or could jeopardise the safety of the child/family if the child/family is under protection.

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 finding its way onto child pornography sites.

The guidelines in this policy outline the best possible practice to protect children/young people wherever and whenever photographs and recorded images are taken and stored, with the aim of minimising the potential occurrence of these key concerns described.

3. Safeguarding Guidelines

Neither data protection nor privacy law prevents the taking of photographs or videos in a public place by general spectators, or indeed the general public, for personal or private use.

Only if the image is unusually intrusive can restrictions on publishing come into play. This is particularly appropriate when the subject of the photograph is under the age of 18, where restrictions apply when the publishing of the image is unwelcome, especially if the child or the parent/carer is unaware of the photograph being taken. In any of these cases, it is vital to be aware that the legal responsibility would likely fall on the publisher of the photograph.

Harassment (in legal terms) is behaviour which causes harm or distress, and is potentially a criminal matter. Situations can vary based on circumstance or the sensitivity of the individual, but the safety of our young athletes must come first.

To maintain a positive, exciting and safe environment for all, we ask everyone attending our fixtures to adhere to the following guidelines.

3.1 Guidance for Parents/Carers, Coaches and Spectators

Spectators should not take photos of children other than their own. Exceptions to this include as part of an activity shot (during the race), within a large group (e.g. The start line), or when permission from both the athlete and a parent/carer is given.

The publishing of photographs on any media or social media remains the responsibility of the publisher, the publisher being the person uploading content to the sites. The WMYACCL Facebook Page, though a closed group with admins monitoring members and moderating posts, is still a public social media platform, and the responsibility for any photographs uploaded to this page will remain with the publisher. Members of the WMYACCL committee or semi-pro photographers may be taking photographs at events for the WMYACCL to use in promotion and advertising. All team managers, parents/carers, coaches and athletes will be made aware of this in advance, and an option to opt out of these photographs will be available in advance of the photographs being published (see section 3.2).

It is the responsibility of everyone attending our fixtures to ensure everyone remains safe, and to report any inappropriate behaviour immediately to the nearest race official.

Whether this be visible abuse or reasonably suggested, we all have a duty of care to our young people and an official should be alerted immediately so the appropriate actions can follow (see section 4).

3.2 Guidance for Team Managers

We ask Team Managers to ensure that all athletes entered to compete in the league have previously signed their club's photographic policy.

We ask Team Managers to remind all athletes and parents/carers, prior to the beginning of the season, of the guidelines in this photography policy, and that they will be expected to adhere to these guidelines or face intervention from a race official.

We ask that Team Managers make all athletes and parents/carers aware of these guidelines on the day of the event also.

We ask that any athlete who does not wish to have their photograph taken for use by the league be made known to the league committee, ideally prior to the event, and prior to the photographs being published.

3.3 Guidance for Fixture Managers and Marshals

We ask that all Marshals are briefed on these guidelines before the start of any event.

All marshals should be alert for any inappropriate behaviour, particularly people approaching athletes. Any behaviour such as this should be reported to an official immediately.

Marshals should not allow athletes to leave the course with an adult unless the athlete confirms that they know the adult. If the athlete does not know the adult, the marshal should immediately alert an official or the fixture manager for further instructions. If a marshal finds themselves alone with a child that is not under their care, they should take the child to the nearest open public place (so as not to be alone with them) and alert the fixture manager or a race official for further instructions.

4. Commitments of Officials and Committee Members

The safety and wellbeing of the young athletes attending our events is and will be the number one priority of committee members and race officials.

The WMYACCL has no enforceable power over spectators or members of the general public taking photographs for personal or private use. Legal restrictions, however, will apply for certain circumstances (as described in section 3), and race officials will be able to intervene and make courteous yet forceful requests on behalf of athletes if it is suspected that these restrictions, and indeed this policy, are being breached.

Team Managers will have the opportunity in advance to declare names of any athlete who does not wish to be photographed by the committee or semi-professional photographers at WMYACCL events. Photographs of these athletes will then not be published on our website, Facebook group or any other social media platform by the WMYACCL.

If harassment is reported (visible or reasonably suggested) to a race official, the officials first priority is their duty of care to the young athlete. Every incident reported or noticed by an official will be investigated and only when it is clear that no harm has or will come to any young athlete, will the official leave the scene. Officials can intervene and make courteous yet forceful requests on behalf of athletes if required.