Pupil Image Safety

Method Assessment Guide

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Pupil Image Safety - Method Assessment

Schools are increasingly reviewing how pupil photography is managed online. No single measure can completely prevent an image from being copied or reused The strongest approach combines good photography practices, sensible policies, and appropriate technical controls.

Method	Risk	Effectiveness	Limitations
Abstract School Photography	Standard face-on photography produces identifiable images of pupils that can be scraped, processed by facial recognition tools, or misused online.	A professionally directed session that captures the school's environment, atmosphere, and pupil activity without exposing the pupils identity.	Requires an experienced photographer who understands the creative brief and can undertake this task effectively.
AI Pupil Replacement (Replace real pupils with AI-Generated Figures)	Real pupil images can be misused for AI training, facial recognition, or identity manipulation.	Existing school photography is retained. Identifiable pupils are replaced with AI-generated figures, keeping the authentic environment without real children's faces online.	Parental consent is needed before using a pupil's likeness in the processing pipeline. Results can look less natural. A disclosure notice is required on the website stating images have been digitally altered using Ai augmentation methods.
Photograph Empty Classrooms & Superimpose AI-Augmented Figures	Schools need an engaging, people-filled website without real pupil identities on public pages.	Real school environments are photographed and AI-generated figures are composited in, creating a human feel with no identifiable pupil data.	Requires a post-production workflow. AI figures need careful curation to reflect the school's demographic.
Illustrated Pupil Imagery	Realistic pupil photographs can be harvested by AI scrapers and processed by facial recognition systems.	Students are artistically rendered within real school photography. AI scrapers cannot extract usable biometric data from illustrated imagery as the style disrupts the pixel patterns facial recognition relies on. Visually distinctive and completely safe to publish.	The photos of students are not shown in a realistic manner, and some people might find them overly artistic. Parental consent is needed before using a pupil's image.
Use Stock Photography Only	Any real pupil image online is a potential target for scraping or identity misuse.	Eliminates all risk from real pupil photographs. No identifiable children appear on the website.	Feels less authentic. Stock imagery rarely reflects the school's actual community and can weaken trust with prospective families.

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Dynamic Drone Film	Standard photography creates permanent, downloadable records of identifiable pupils.	Carefully orchestrated drone film enables the school to be showcased through dynamic, cinematic footage with student voiceover narration.	Requires a specialist operator and indoor flight risk assessment. CAA regulations apply. Footage must be reviewed before publishing. Higher production cost than standard photography.
Remove EXIF and Metadata	Embedded EXIF data can expose pupil names, GPS locations, timestamps, and device identifiers.	Strips hidden data from images before publishing. Prevents location and device information from being extracted alongside the photograph.	Only addresses the metadata layer. Does not prevent the image itself from being downloaded or misused.
Reduce Image Resolution	High-resolution images are more useful for AI training, facial recognition, and digital manipulation.	Reduces the quality available to scrapers. Facial recognition is less reliable on lower-resolution images.	Images can still be identified visually and may look unprofessional at larger sizes. Reduces quality of misuse but does not prevent it.
Disable Right-Click on Images	Casual visitors can save pupil images from school websites with a single right-click.	Prevents non-technical visitors from saving images via the browser context menu. Simple and low-cost to implement.	Ineffective on mobile. Bypassed instantly on desktop via developer tools. Gives a false sense of security.
Screenshot Blur Protection	Screenshots capture pupil images quickly without triggering standard download protections.	Deters casual capture and makes automated screenshot tools less reliable in some environments.	Not supported across all devices or browsers. Can be bypassed using developer tools.
Avoid Publishing Pupil Names with Images	Naming pupils alongside photographs significantly increases the risk of targeted misuse or grooming.	Removes the link between face and identity on public pages, making targeted exploitation considerably harder.	Pupils may still be recognisable to those who know them. Does not prevent the image being copied.
Review and Audit Historic Photography	Old images may include pupils whose consent has lapsed, creating an ongoing liability.	Removes images that are no longer appropriate or consented. Reduces the total volume of pupil images online.	Time-consuming for schools with large or long-established archives. Requires a clear review and sign-off process.
Reduce the Overall Number of Pupil Images Published Online	Every pupil image online is an additional point of exposure. Reducing volume directly reduces risk.	Fewer images means fewer opportunities for scraping, manipulation, or identification.	Can limit the school's ability to showcase its community. Requires consistent editorial discipline.

NOTICE

Some of the deterrent measures outlined above, such as disabling right-click and blurring images, are intended to reduce the risk of images being copied and downloaded from your website. Whilst they can make image harvesting and misuse more difficult, no technical solution can completely prevent content published on the internet from being captured or shared.

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