

Trust-wide Image Review Checklist

A practical review tool for multi-academy trusts looking to strengthen pupil image use, social media practice and public-facing communications.

Purpose of this checklist

This checklist helps trust leaders, communications teams and school leaders review how pupil images are used across websites, social media, public documents and campaign materials. It supports safer, more consistent school communication while helping every school continue to celebrate learning, staff, pupils and community life.

Safeguarding-first

Review imagery through the lens of pupil safety, privacy, dignity and public trust.

Consistent across schools

Identify where schools are using different approaches, language, image types or approval standards.

Practical and proportionate

Focus on clear improvements without making school communications cold or impersonal.

How to use it

Work through the checklist at trust level, then repeat the relevant sections for each school. Record red, amber and green issues, agree who owns each action, and set a review date. The aim is not to remove warmth from school communications. The aim is to make public-facing content safer, clearer and more consistent.

Important note

This resource provides practical communications guidance only. It is not legal, safeguarding or data protection advice. Schools and trusts remain responsible for safeguarding decisions, consent, data protection compliance and local policies relating to pupil imagery.

Risk rating guide

Risk	Typical indicators	Recommended action
Red	Clearly identifiable pupils, names linked to faces, sensitive context, unclear consent or unnecessary public-facing risk.	Remove, hide, archive or replace. Escalate if linked to safeguarding, complaint or evidence concerns.
Amber	Partially identifiable pupils, side profiles, large groups, historic event images or context that needs checking.	Review carefully. Crop, rewrite, replace or seek school/trust direction.
Green	Low-identification imagery, environments, work, displays, graphics, staff-led content or wider scenes.	Likely suitable, subject to school/trust policy and normal professional judgement.

1. Governance, ownership and trust-wide consistency

Start by checking whether each school is working from the same expectations. Inconsistent practice across schools is one of the biggest risks for trusts.

- A named trust lead owns public-facing image use and communications consistency.
- Each school has a named contact responsible for social media and pupil imagery decisions.
- The trust has a clear position on public-facing pupil imagery and AI-related image risk.
- School leaders, DSLs, office teams and communications staff understand the agreed approach.
- There is a clear escalation route if an image or post feels uncertain or sensitive.
- External partners are briefed on the trust approach before photography, video or design work begins.

2. Platform and content inventory

- List every school social media account, including Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube and any others used.
- List trust-level social media accounts and central campaign pages.
- Review each school website, including homepage, news pages, admissions pages and class pages.
- Check public newsletters, prospectus PDFs, campaign materials and downloadable documents.
- Check video hosting platforms, embedded videos and public playlists.
- Record who has access to each platform and who can publish or delete content.

3. Pupil imagery risk indicators

Use this section to identify content that may need to be removed, replaced, cropped, rewritten or reviewed further. Context matters, so use judgement rather than a rigid tick-box approach.

- Close-up, face-forward images of individual pupils appear in public content.
- Pupil names are used alongside clearly identifiable images.
- Certificates, badges, trophies or captions reveal a pupil identity unnecessarily.
- Sports team photographs show clearly identifiable pupils and named teams.
- Event or trip photos identify pupils in detailed location or activity contexts.
- Images show vulnerable pupils, sensitive provision, safeguarding context or medical/pastoral information.
- Old images no longer reflect current consent, policy, school uniform or safeguarding expectations.
- Video content contains close-up pupil footage that can be paused, clipped or screenshots.

4. Safer image alternatives

Where higher-risk images are removed or avoided, schools still need warm and engaging content. Use this list to help schools maintain quality without relying heavily on identifiable pupil imagery.

- Over-the-shoulder learning shots.
- Hands-on learning, practical work, tools, resources, books and equipment.
- Wider scenes where pupils are not the clear identifiable focus.
- School buildings, facilities, outdoor spaces and specialist rooms.
- Text-based celebrations that recognise achievement without unnecessary identification.
- Photos from behind showing activity or participation.
- Displays, finished work and classroom environments.
- Staff-led content, staff voice and teacher demonstrations.
- Graphics for achievements, sports results, open events and reminders.

Key question

Could we tell the same story without clearly identifying a child? If the answer is yes, choose the lower-risk image or format.

5. Captions, names and context

Risk is not only in the image. Captions, tags, locations, dates, school names, pupil names and context can all increase identifiability.

- Pupil first names or full names are not linked to identifiable pupil images unless there is a clear, approved reason.
- Captions avoid adding unnecessary personal detail about pupils.
- Locations, event names and year groups are used carefully where they increase identifiability.
- Achievement posts celebrate pupils without needing a face-name combination.
- Comments are monitored where posts could attract attention or identify pupils further.
- School staff understand that sending an image does not automatically make it suitable for public publication.

6. Approval and escalation process

- Each school has a clear content approval process for public-facing posts.
- Staff know who to ask when an image is uncertain.
- There is a written rule that uncertain content is paused rather than published.
- The DSL or senior leader is involved where safeguarding context exists.
- Decisions about removal, hiding or archiving historic content are logged.
- Content linked to a complaint, incident, police matter or safeguarding concern is not deleted without appropriate instruction.

7. AI, authenticity and image handling

- The trust has a clear position on whether AI tools may be used with images of children.
- Staff are advised not to upload pupil images into third-party AI image tools unless explicitly approved.
- External partners are instructed not to generate, manipulate or process pupil images using AI tools without written approval.
- The trust prioritises authentic, carefully captured content over AI-generated images of children.
- Any image editing process is proportionate, controlled and aligned with school/trust policy.
- Staff understand that AI risk should not be answered by unnecessary AI processing of pupil images.

8. Trust action plan

Use this page to summarise findings and agree next steps. For larger trusts, complete one action plan per school and one trust-wide summary.

Area	R/A/G	Action	Owner	Date

9. Recommended review rhythm

- Initial trust-wide review completed and logged.
- Immediate red issues removed, hidden, archived or escalated.
- Amber issues reviewed by school/trust leads and resolved where appropriate.
- Staff guidance shared with schools and departments.
- New content capture guidance shared with staff and external partners.
- Metrics caveat added where historic social media content has been removed or archived.
- Termly review date agreed.
- Annual trust-wide image review added to the communications or safeguarding calendar.

Suggested trust statement

We will continue to celebrate school life and pupil achievement, but we will do so in a way that reflects the changing digital world and puts children's safety, privacy and dignity first.

MDM support available

MDM can support schools and trusts with image safety reviews, social media management, photography and video, graphic design, prospectus design, training, recruitment and admissions campaigns, and trust-wide communications support.

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