



*Guidelines for Staff*  
**TAKING PHOTOS AND VIDEOS  
FOR LIBRARY USE**  
*Administrative Procedure: #5.01.04*

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**POLICY AUTHORITY:** Policy on Confidentiality of Patron Records

**DATE:** Revised: 2/12/13; Implemented: 7/18/11

**REVISION #:** 1

**RELATED POLICIES:** Safe Child/Children's Program Policy

**SCOPE:** This procedure applies to all patrons and staff in every facility of the Whatcom County Library System.

Whatcom County Library System (WCLS) staff sometimes take photos and videos of patrons at WCLS and branch library locations and during library programs or events. The photos or video are used for promotion and publicity of WCLS and its services in printed and online library publications.

With permission from their supervisor, library staff may take photos or videos for use by WCLS. A camera is available at each branch library for this purpose (if not, contact Community Relations at Central Services).

Photos or video taken by library staff during their work hours are the property of WCLS.

Public notices concerning WCLS procedures on use of patron photos or video are posted at branch libraries, and in library meeting rooms. Library staff will alert patrons when taking photos and respect patrons' expressed wishes to be excluded from photos.

**Procedures for Staff taking Photos or Video of Library Patrons:**

1. Inform patrons before taking photos. Use the Tips for Taking Good Photos (see below).
2. No permission form is required for patrons 13 years and over. However, staff will alert patrons when taking photos or video in the library or at library events. If a patron does not want their photo taken, staff will not take photos or video of that person.
3. Permission forms are required for children 12 years and under. There are 2 permission forms – Permission to Use Image Only, and Permission to Use Image and Name (forms attached).
  - a. Photos of children will generally be used without identifying the subjects by name. Use the Permission to Use Image Only form for most photos or video.
  - b. If the child will be identified by name when using the photo, use the Permission to Use Image and Name form. Examples: contest winners, honored volunteers, etc.
4. Upload photos and video to the branch library's photo file on the library's network drive.

5. Send signed permission forms to Children's Services.
6. If a parent or guardian has questions about permissions, refer them to your supervisor or Community Relations at Central Services.

**Tips for taking good photos:**

1. Signed permission forms are required for photos of children 12 years and under. If you did not get permission to use the photo, do not send it to Central Services - not ever, not even if you think we'll enjoy it. It only confuses us (and breaks our hearts when we can't use it).
2. Take photos of individuals and no more than three in a group. Less is more.
3. Take close ups, but with enough background to make the library setting clear.
4. Watch your composition. Heads should be near the top of the frame.
5. Shoot against plain backgrounds or books. Cluttered backgrounds fight for attention with the subject (the child). Avoid dirty, cluttered, confusing, or ugly backgrounds. Check before you shoot!
6. Make sure the lighting and the exposure are good so that subjects can be clearly seen.
7. Take half your photos in portrait orientation, half in landscape. Landscape works well for the web.
8. When children hold books in a photo, let them choose their own and ask them to show off the cover. Tell them to choose attractive books they actually like. Never hand a child -- or let a child grab -- a shabby book or a book that is clearly wrong for them.
9. Think about making the photo come alive - have the children hold books, raise them over their heads, read the books, or say "show me your favorite part." Action is better than a stiff pose.
10. For quick and easy tips, take a look at library books about photographing children. They give simple instructions with good illustrations you can understand at a glance.