Using photographs and digital recordings to document children’s learning

During professional experience you are required to observe children and build understandings of their learning and development. In recent years the use of digital cameras and videos has grown to provide a means of making learning visible. The inclusion of carefully considered images of children in context can be used as a tool to assist teachers to reflect on children’s learning as well as their own pedagogy. The use of visual images in the documentation of children’s learning may also assist teachers to review and communicate learning processes with children and families. Thus, formative and summative assessment techniques may incorporate photographs, digital audio or video recordings. Preservice teachers should discuss the use of visual images in the documentation of children’s learning with the supervising teacher.

Privacy and Personal Information

A photographic image (including a video recording) which is sufficiently clear to enable a child to be identified, is personal information. QUT (as a Queensland Government Agency) is bound by the provisions of the Information Privacy Act 2009 (IP Act) which contains a number of privacy principles which set out the rules for how personal information is to be handled. In undertaking a QUT professional experience you are expected to have a full knowledge and understanding of the requirements by which QUT is bound under the IP Act and to adhere to relevant policies and procedures surrounding the protection of privacy of the children in your images and photographs.

It is strongly encouraged that particular care is given to handling images and other personal information of children. It is important that the images only be used for the purpose for which they are taken or for a directly related purpose and must not be disclosed to other third parties, unless you have been given express permission.

Parent/Guardian Consent

Before photographing children, you must obtain informed and voluntary consent of the parent or guardian of the child. Digital images and recordings created during professional experience should only be used for the express purpose of assessing and reporting, for which consent has been obtained. The images cannot be shared or displayed in environments which are external to teaching contexts, unless parental or guardian consent has been obtained.

Extra care should be taken to ensure that the material is appropriate, managed professionally and ethically, and is respectful of the rights of children and compliant with the laws governing the photographing and use of material involving children.

A consent form should be used to obtain permission from a parent or guardian of a child to photograph them for the required purposes is attached. This is a legal document prepared by QUT and must not be altered in any form other than the inclusion of your name, dates and site name in the spaces provided. It must be signed and returned by the parent or guardian prior to commencement of your professional experience or before taking photographs. Photographs or other material must not be used for additional purposes outside the purposes outlined in the letter (including social media - see below). Consent is current while you are undertaking the course and up to one year (twelve months) after completion of the course.

Safe Storage and Security

The IP Act also requires that personal information collected must be protected from loss, unauthorised use, modification or disclosure, or any other misuse. Given the images are of children, it is expected that you take a common sense approach to exercising care and diligence when it comes to the safe and secure storage of the images, including on your camera or other photo-taking devices or storage instruments, for example on your laptop or home computer. It is expected that storage devices should be accessible by you personally via a password or some other appropriate security mechanism or access authorisation necessary to prevent unauthorised access or use. If you become aware of a situation where any images or documentation relating to children becomes compromised or if security has been breached, you must immediately advise your supervising teacher.

No social media

With the above in mind, it is inappropriate for digital materials containing images of children, schools and teachers to be uploaded to public or social media sites such as Facebook, YouTube, iCloud, Dropbox, Flickr, Twitter, Blogs or other forums. As well as impacting on the child’s privacy, improper use of materials breaches the QUT Student Code of Conduct - http://www.mopp.qut.edu.au/E/E_02_01.jsp.
Please remember, at all times to act ethically, to respect children and to comply with specific school, site and context policies and guidelines.

**QUT Policies and Further Material**

In addition to the requirements of the *Information Privacy Act 2009* (Qld), there is a range of policy and material governing the photographing of children. It is important that you familiarise yourself with the following material:

- **QUT Privacy Policy** [http://www.mopp.qut.edu.au/F/F_06_02.jsp](http://www.mopp.qut.edu.au/F/F_06_02.jsp)