Livestreaming and Images

A simple guide on copyright and consent, 2026

1. Livestreaming

• Tell people clearly. Display the Bishops' Conference Live Streaming Advice Notice at the church entrance. Parishioners must be informed that livestreaming is taking place.
• Inform people and obtain permission. Tell readers, servers, cantors, choirs, musicians, preachers and other contributors that the service will be streamed or recorded. Obtain any permission required to distribute their contribution, and make suitable arrangements for anyone who does not wish to appear on camera.
• Frame the camera carefully. Use a discreet, preferably fixed camera focused on the sanctuary. Do not show people entering or leaving the church or processing to Communion. People should be able to attend Mass and receive Communion without appearing on camera.
• Protect children and adults at risk. Do not film children, vulnerable adults or adults at risk without the required prior consent. If someone enters the camera view without consent, switch off the camera until they have left it. Livestreaming must also be capable of being stopped immediately if an unexpected or sensitive situation arises.
• Obtain the correct music licence*. Livestreaming is not exempt from copyright law. If live or parish-recorded music is included, the parish needs an appropriate streaming licence in addition to any licence used to reproduce hymn words or music. Submit the required music-use reports so composers receive royalties.
• Check before using recorded tracks. A basic streaming licence may not cover artist recordings, backing tracks, CDs, downloads or music from streaming services. A further licence, such as CCLI Streaming Plus, or direct permission may be required. Check the precise scope of the licence and follow the rules of the platform carrying the stream.

NB: Livestreaming is at the discretion of the parish priest. *The decision to introduce or continue livestreaming rests with the parish priest or parish administrator, taking account of his willingness to be livestreamed, pastoral needs and the relevant Archdiocesan guidance. Where livestreaming is introduced, parishioners should be informed that the arrangement applies during the current parish priest's appointment and may be reviewed, changed or discontinued by his successor.*

2. Images

• Do not copy images simply because they are online. Google and other search engines do not own the images they display. Most online images are protected by copyright, and unauthorised use in newsletters, posters, websites or social media can lead to takedown demands or financial claims.
• Use your own or properly licensed images. The safest options are photographs created by the parish, images supplied with explicit permission, or images from reputable sources such as Unsplash, Pexels or Canva. Always check the terms for the particular image and intended use; keep a note or screenshot of the source, licence and date accessed.
• Treat Google filters as a starting point only. Google's Usage Rights filter can help locate potentially reusable images, but the parish must open the original source and verify the licence before use. If the permission is unclear, do not use the image.
• Get permission before sharing personal information. Before posting or reposting a photograph, video, name, online tag or other material that identifies a person, obtain their informed permission. Do not publish anyone's address or contact details without a clear and necessary reason and their express permission. Take particular care with children: follow parish safeguarding procedures and obtain the appropriate permission, but do not publish a child's name, address, contact details, online tags or other identifying information.
• Remove disputed material promptly. If a credible copyright or privacy complaint is received, acknowledge it and temporarily remove the material while the matter is assessed and resolved.

If in doubt, seek advice before publishing. Contact matthew.meade@staned.org.uk

Based on: Bishops' Conference of Scotland, Protocol for Live Streaming in Catholic Churches (December 2020) and Guidance on the Safe Use of Social Media, v2.2 (September 2025); Catholic Insurance Service, Copyright and Music Licensing: A Good Practice Guide for Parishes (November 2023).

*You can read more about and purchase streaming licences at https://www.onelicense.net/how-it-works and at http://www.uk.ccli.com/streaming/