

13 Children of public figures

Children of public figures have the same right to privacy as other children.

14 Missing children

Journalists report on missing children only with explicit consent of their legal guardians. In exceptional circumstances if the child's life, health or safety is threatened, they may report without such consent.

15 Unsatisfactory performance of institutions

Reports on unsatisfactory performance of institutions and systemic flaws are in the public interest and their publication benefits children. Journalists must be particularly careful that they do not cause additional damage to a child who is involved in alleged misconduct of these institutions as a victim or witness.

16 Proportionality test

When assessing whether the right of the public to information should prevail over the child's right to privacy, journalists should consider the following proportionality test:

- 1) Must the child's right to privacy necessarily be infringed so that the public is informed about the event?

- 2) Is the violation of the child's privacy the only way to inform the public about the event?

- 3) Will the benefit of the public resulting from the publication be greater than the damage caused to the child by violation of its privacy?

All three conditions must be satisfied.

17 Persons with limited or with no contractual capacity

When publishing stories, journalists and editors should also pay special attention to vulnerable groups of adults with limited or no contractual capacity whose mental ability is at the level of persons younger than 18 years of age.

18 Training

Media owners and management should provide training for journalists and editors who report on children to understand the comprehensive development of children, childhood and adolescence (e.g. developmental psychology, family and adolescent dynamics, social service issues).

Guidelines for media coverage of children

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The following documents should be taken into account when applying these guidelines:

- Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia
- Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms
- Audiovisual Media Services Act
- Media Act
- Personal Data Protection Act
- Code of Ethics of Slovenian Journalists

1 Child

A person under 18 years of age is a child.

2 Child's personal data

All characteristics, specific circumstances and family or other relationships that make it possible to ascertain someone's identity are considered a child's personal data.

3 Child's best interest

When drafting and publishing stories involving children, their best interest must always be taken into consideration. Journalists and editors must respect this principle.

4 Child's dignity

When drafting and publishing stories involving children, journalists and editors must protect their dignity.

5 Protection of child's personal data

Journalists must safeguard children's personal data with the utmost care.

They must be particularly careful that the publication of personal data does not cause additional damage to and stigmatisation of a child or its family.

6 Child's and legal guardian's consent

A child's, parent's or other legal guardian's consent does not absolve the journalist of the responsibility to compile the story in accordance with the child's best interest.

Journalists must thoroughly scrutinise all information if there are grounds for suspecting that the parents or legal guardians are attempting to use media coverage to serve their own interests.

7 Interviewing a child

Journalists must be aware of the specific nature of interviews with children and consider their age, physical and mental maturity,

personal circumstances and psychophysical condition at the time of the interview. They must also assess the circumstances, intensity and impact of the event on the children.

Journalists must treat children as equals. They should avoid questions that could harm a child's development. They must select questions carefully, and take care not to mislead or unnecessarily upset the child. Questions should not imply expected answers.

Generally, interviews with children must be conducted in the presence of their legal guardians or other adults whom the children trust.

8 Everyday life situations

In the case of everyday life situations when the publication of the story would not harm a child's interest, journalists may reveal the child's identity.

Such situations include the participation of children and their results in sports, culture, research and other activities.

9 Delicate life situations

When reporting on violence, sexual abuse, suicide, tragic accidents, family tragedies and other circumstances where disclosure could permanently mark children's lives and affect their development, journalists must not:

- publish the child's personal or other data (name of school, pre-school or similar institution) enabling the disclosure of the child's identity;

- publish information about parents, legal guardians or other persons involved that would enable the child to be identified;
- disclose the child's identity by publishing photographs or audio or video materials.

In delicate life situations journalists, as a rule, must not upset the child with requests for a statement.

10 Children involved in proceedings

When reporting on children involved in judicial or other proceedings (involving child's contacts with parents, divorce, counselling, therapeutic, health, social security, preliminary and other procedures), journalists must consider the children's best interest.

11 Humanitarian campaigns

Regarding humanitarian campaigns (aimed at collecting financial or other aid) journalists must avoid sensationalism. In evoking empathy in the public they must preserve respect, dignity and consideration toward the child and other family members.

12 Educational and health-care institutions

Journalists must not obtain statements, or film or photograph children in schools, pre-school institutions, hospitals or other similar institutions without the permission of these institutions or legal guardians.

