



KENSINGTON PALACE

From: Jason Knauf,
Communications Secretary to TRH The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and HRH Prince Henry of Wales

14th August, 2015

I am writing to provide an overview of the current challenges facing Kensington Palace as we seek to protect Prince George and Princess Charlotte from harassment and surveillance by paparazzi photographers. I hope our experience will inform the ongoing effort to uphold standards on the protection of children in a rapidly changing media landscape.

The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge have expressed their gratitude to British media organisations for their policy of not publishing unauthorised photos of their children. This stance, guided not just by their wishes as parents, but by the standards and codes of the industry as it relates to all children, is to be applauded. They are pleased also that almost all reputable publications throughout the Commonwealth – in particular Australia, Canada, and New Zealand – and in other major media markets like the United States have adopted a similar position.

The Duke and Duchess are glad that leaders in the media industry share the view that every child, regardless of their future public role, deserves a safe, happy, and private childhood. They have been delighted to share official photographs of Prince George and Princess Charlotte in recent months to thank the public for the thousands of kind messages of support they have received. News photographers have had several recent opportunities to take photos of the family and these will be a regular occurrence as both children get older.

Despite this, paparazzi photographers are going to increasingly extreme lengths to observe and monitor Prince George's movements and covertly capture images of him to sell to the handful of international media titles still willing to pay for them. One recent incident – just last week – was disturbing, but not at all uncommon. A photographer rented a car and parked in a discreet location outside a children's play area. Already concealed by darkened windows, he took the added step of hanging sheets inside the vehicle and created a hide stocked with food and drinks to get him through a full day of surveillance, waiting in hope to capture images of Prince George. Police discovered him lying down in the boot of the vehicle attempting to shoot photos with a long lens through a small gap in his hide.



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It is of course upsetting that such tactics – reminiscent as they are of past surveillance by groups intent on doing more than capturing images – are being deployed to profit from the image of a two-year old boy. In a heightened security environment such tactics are a risk to all involved. The worry is that it will not always be possible to quickly distinguish between someone taking photos and someone intending to do more immediate harm.

This incident was not an isolated one. In recent months photographers have:

- on multiple occasions used long range lenses to capture images of The Duchess playing with Prince George in a number of private parks;
- monitored the movements of Prince George and his nanny around London parks and monitored the movements of other household staff;
- photographed the children of private individuals visiting The Duke and Duchess's home;
- pursued cars leaving family homes;
- used other children to draw Prince George into view around playgrounds;
- been found hiding on private property in fields and woodland locations around The Duke and Duchess's home in Norfolk;
- obscured themselves in sand dunes on a rural beach to take photos of Prince George playing with his grandmother;
- placed locations near the Middleton family home in Berkshire under steady surveillance

It is clear that while paparazzi are always keen to capture images of any senior member of The Royal Family, Prince George is currently their number one target. We have made the decision to discuss these issues now as the incidents are becoming more frequent and the tactics more alarming. A line has been crossed and any further escalation in tactics would represent a very real security risk.

All of this has left The Duke and Duchess concerned about their ability to provide a childhood for Prince George and Princess Charlotte that is free from harassment and surveillance. They know that almost all parents love to share photos of their children and they themselves enjoy doing so. But they know every parent would object to anyone – particularly strangers – taking photos of their children without their permission. Every parent would understand their deep unease at only learning they had been followed and watched days later when photographs emerged.

The Duke and Duchess are of course very fortunate to have private homes where photographers cannot capture images of their children. But they feel strongly that both Prince George and Princess Charlotte should not grow up exclusively behind



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palace gates and in walled gardens. They want both children to be free to play in public and semi-public spaces with other children without being photographed. In addition, the privacy of those other children and their families must also be preserved.

Rest assured that we continue to take legal steps to manage these incidents as they occur. But we are aware that many people who read and enjoy the publications that fuel the market for unauthorised photos of children do not know about the unacceptable circumstances behind what are often lovely images. The use of these photos is usually dressed up with fun, positive language about the 'cute', 'adorable' photos and happy write ups about the family. We feel readers deserve to understand the tactics deployed to obtain these pictures.

We hope a public discussion of these issues will help all publishers of unauthorised photos of children to understand the power they hold to starve this disturbing activity of funding. I would welcome constructive conversations with any publisher or editor on these topics. And I would ask for your help as we work to encourage the highest standards on the protection of children in every corner of the media. The Duke and Duchess are determined to keep the issues around a small number of paparazzi photographers distinct and separate from the positive work of most newspapers, magazines, broadcasters, and web publishers around the world.

The text from this letter, which has been sent to a number of people in leadership positions, will be placed in the public domain to raise awareness of the issues discussed.

Jason Knauf,
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