

Statment by Lord Wakeham on Leo Blair

Downing Street has contacted me about the issues arising from the publication of photographs of Leo Blair's christening last weekend. They have asked for guidance for the longer term about the Code of Practice might best be applied to the Blairs' own family situation and their children's legitimate right to privacy. I will be consulting widely on this and hope to produce some guidance for them in due course.

In the meantime, the Prime Minister and his family are leaving for a holiday at the end of the week and Downing Street has asked me for guidance in relation to this. They have made clear that whilst they continue to have serious reservations about putting their children in the public eye, the Prime Minister and Mrs Blair are willing to organise a one off photocall before they continue the rest of their holiday in private.

It seems to me that the most constructive way to strike the balance between legitimate privacy and legitimate public interest in photos of the family is for them to undertake this photocall during the first few days of their holiday. Number Ten agrees with me on this – and we hope that after the photocall has taken place the family will be able to complete its holiday in private. I know that editors will be happy to respect that wish in line with the terms of the Code of Practice, including its stipulations on the use of freelance photographs.

Operational details relating to the photocall will be issued by Number Ten in due course.

ENDS

1 August 2000