

# Blairgowrie Tennis Club



## Online Safety & Communication Policy

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### Contents

Purpose and Scope.....	1
We recognise that: .....	2
We will seek to keep children safe by: .....	2
Managing Our Online Presence .....	2
What We Expect.....	3
Staff, Coaches and Volunteers: .....	3
Children: .....	3
Parents/Carers: .....	3
Using Mobile Phones or Other Devices to Communicate .....	4
Using Mobile Phones or Other Devices During Activities/Camps.....	4
Related Policies .....	4
Further Reading.....	5
Revision Control/Change History .....	5
APPENDIX Statement of Acceptable Use of Internet and Social Media.....	6

### Purpose and Scope

Blairgowrie Tennis Club strives to ensure that all children (anyone under 18) are safeguarded from abuse and have an enjoyable tennis experience.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- protect children involved with our Club and who use technology (eg. mobile phones, tablets, games consoles and the internet)
- provide staff, coaches, volunteers, players, parents/carers and any other individuals associated with the Club with policy and procedure information regarding online safety and inform them how to respond to incidents
- ensure our Club operates within the law regarding online behaviours.

The scope of this policy comprises:

1. how the Club uses the internet and social media
2. the processes of managing the Club's use of internet and social media
3. expectations for online behaviour and communication with children.

The principles in this policy apply no matter which current or future technology is used.

### **We recognise that:**

- the online world can present risks and challenges
- we have a duty to ensure that all children involved in our Club are protected from potential harm online
- we all have a responsibility to help keep children safe online
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- working cooperatively with children, their parents, carers, and other clubs is essential in helping them to be responsible in their approach to online safety.

### **We will seek to keep children safe by:**

- understanding the safety aspects, including what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour for staff, coaches, volunteers, and children, when using website, social media, apps and other forms of digital communication
- being aware that it doesn't matter what device is being used for digital communication, but that the same safety aspects apply whether it is a computer, mobile phone, or game console
- ensuring that we adhere to relevant legislation and good practice when using social media or video conferencing platforms (including live streaming)
- ensuring those managing the Club's online presence are suitably trained and experienced.
- providing staff with policies about online safety and how to respond to incidents.

### **Managing Our Online Presence**

Our online presence will adhere to the following guidelines:

- social media accounts will be password-protected, and at least two administrators will have access to each account
- the administrators will be supported by our Club Welfare Officer/County Safeguarding Officer and the LTA to advise on safeguarding requirements as required
- the administrators will remove any inappropriate posts, explain why, and inform anyone who may be affected (as well as the parents/carers of any children involved).
- social media pages/groups must be the Club's official and not personal accounts
- no personal data will be posted on social media platforms
- any communication will be of a professional purpose
- we'll make sure children are aware of who administers our social media accounts and who to contact if they have any concerns about the management of the account
- the consent of parents/carers will be requested for us to communicate one-to-one with their children through social media, WhatsApp, video conferencing platforms or by any other means of digital communication
- parents can opt out of photographs or videos of their child being taken and shared on line
- all our accounts will be appropriate, fit for purpose and only used for Club activities.

## What We Expect

### Staff, Coaches and Volunteers:

- must be aware of this policy
- must seek the advice from our Club Welfare Officer/County Safeguarding Officer and the LTA if they have any concerns about the use of the internet or social media
- must not 'friend' or 'follow' children from personal accounts on social-media
- must maintain the same professional boundaries online as they would in person when using Club accounts
- must ensure that any content posted is accurate and appropriate
- must ensure that all communications in your Club role are professional and applicable
- must avoid communication with children beyond dedicated event or activity timings, unless it is necessary for a professional purpose, emergencies, (eg. whilst on a trip) and contacting the parents/carers is not possible
- must not communicate with children via personal accounts or private messages
- must communicate with parents through the Club's account, profile, or website rather than via personal social media accounts
- must include parents or at least one other member of staff, coach or volunteer on any communications sent to children
- must sign off any communication in a professional manner, avoiding the use of emojis or symbols such as kisses (Xs)
- must respond to any concerns reported through social media in the same way as a face-to-face disclosure, in accordance with the Club's safeguarding policy
- must not engage in sexting, or send pictures or messages that are abusive, obscene, inappropriate, indecent, or menacing to anyone.

### Children:

- must be aware of this policy
- must sign and adhere to the Statement of Acceptable Use of Internet and Social Media (see appendix)
- must behave responsibly online and refrain from any bullying or abusive behaviour
- must not engage in sexting, or send pictures or messages that are abusive, obscene, inappropriate, indecent, or menacing to anyone
- must never take photographs/videos without consent or knowledge of the subject, even without malicious intent.

### Parents/Carers:

- must be aware of this policy
- must seek the advice from our Club Welfare Officer/County Safeguarding Officer and the LTA if they have any concerns about the use of the internet or social media
- must communicate with staff, coaches, and volunteers in a polite and respectful manner
- must ensure their children understand and sign the *Statement for Acceptable Use of Internet and Social Media* (see appendix).

## Using Mobile Phones or Other Devices to Communicate

When using mobile phone or other devices to communicate, we will take the following precautions to help keep children safe:

- staff, coaches, and volunteers will communicate through parents/carers directly or copy them into all messages to children
- children can only be contacted 1:1 with prior parental consent
- an audit trail will be maintained by all staff, coaches and volunteers
- messages will be used for professional communication only, eg. reminders about competition and lesson times, meeting points etc
- if staff, coaches and volunteers have only one mobile phone, they will try to ensure the parents and children understand this and agree to adhere to clear boundaries
- if a child tries to engage a member of staff, coach or volunteer in an inappropriate or unprofessional conversation (eg. their personal life), the member of staff, coach or volunteer will:
  1. end the conversation or not reply
  2. inform the Club Welfare Officer/County Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible and arrange to address the matter with the child and their parents/carers appropriately
  3. if the conversation raises safeguarding concerns, notify the LTA as soon as possible.

## Using Mobile Phones or Other Devices During Activities/Camps

So that all children can safely enjoy and actively participate in tennis activities, the use of mobile phones or other internet-based devices is not appropriate during Club activities, protecting younger children from internet content they are not deemed the appropriate age for.

As part of this policy, we will:

- explain to children that using mobile phones during activities negatively impacts:
  - their awareness of the environment and those around them
  - their health and safety
  - their level of participation and achievement.
- advise parents/carers that it may not be possible to contact children during activities
- provide a contact for use in emergencies
- make children aware of how and who to contact if there is an emergency or a change to previously agreed arrangements
- inform parents/carers of appropriate times they can contact children who are away on trips.

## Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside our Club policies and procedures, including:

- Safeguarding including Codes of Conduct
- Anti-Bullying
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Photography Film and Publicity
- Safe Recruitment

## Further Reading

<https://www.childprotection.scot/>

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/>

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/><https://www.ceop.police.uk/Safety-Centre/>

[The Children's Code - What is it?](#)

<https://www.childline.org.uk/>

The most up-to-date policy version is available on ClubSpark.

Approved by	President: Shirley Davidson	Club Welfare Officer: Áine Fitzgerald
Date	14/4/24	14/4/24

Next review date: 3 yearly or as required

## Revision Control/Change History

Revision Date	Changes/Reason for change
Mar 2024	Original release

## APPENDIX

### Statement of Acceptable Use of Internet and Social Media

**The Club** understands the importance of online communication for children's and young people's development. However, we recognise that relevant safeguards need to be put in place to ensure children and young people remain safe while online or using social media. We ask that all parents / carers spend a few minutes to read through and discuss this statement with their child and then sign and return this form to the Membership Secretary.

#### \*Agreement of child

1. I will be responsible for my behaviour when using my phone at the Club, including the content I access and how I conduct myself.
2. I will not deliberately create, browse or access material that could be considered offensive or illegal. If I accidentally come across any such material, I will report this to a member of staff.
3. I will not use social media or the internet to send anyone material that could be considered threatening, offensive, upsetting, bullying or that is illegal.
4. I understand that I should only use the Club's official social media or website communication channels to contact them and should not seek out individual members of staff or coaches.
5. I understand that all my use of internet and social media is potentially visible to everyone and that any issues involving my behaviour online may be addressed by my coach or other staff members at the club.
6. I will not give out my personal information (such as name, age, address or telephone number) online, or that of anyone else.
7. I will not share my passwords with anyone else.
8. I will not arrange to meet someone that I have met online unless accompanied by a member of staff or parent.
9. I understand that these rules are designed to keep me safe, and if they are not followed my parents may be contacted.
10. I will avoid using my mobile phone during activities as I understand that it will have an impact on my safety and my opportunity to learn and achieve.
11. I am aware that if I am experiencing bullying behaviour or abuse online, I can contact the Club Welfare Officer.
12. I know I can contact Childline on 0800 11 11 or at [childline.org.uk](http://childline.org.uk) if I have any worries about something I've seen or experienced online.

\* It is good practice to continuously review social media policies due to the rate at which technology advances. Gain feedback from young people to ensure the language and tone used in these policies is appropriate.

#### Declaration – parent / carer

We have discussed this statement and .....(print child's name)  
agrees to support the safe use of the internet and social media at Blairgowrie Tennis Club.

Signature

Print name

Today's date

#### Declaration – child

Signature

Print name

Today's date