

# **Online safety and communication policy**

The [club/county] strives to ensure that all children (anyone under 18) and adults at risk are safeguarded from abuse and have an enjoyable tennis experience.

This document sets out how the [club/county] uses the internet and social media, and the procedures for doing so. It also outlines how we expect staff, coaches, volunteers, players and parents/carers, to behave online and communicate with players.

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

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Protect children involved in with our organisation and who make use of technology (such as mobile phones, tablets, games consoles and the internet).
- Provide staff, coaches and volunteers with policy and procedure information regarding online safety and inform them how to respond to incidents
- Ensure our organisation operates within the law regarding how we behave online

## **We recognise that**

- the online world provides everyone with many opportunities; however it can also present risks and challenges
- we have a duty to ensure that all children and adults involved in our organisation are protected from potential harm online
- we have a responsibility to help keep children safe online, whether or not they are using [club/county]'s network and devices
- 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 in partnership with children, their parents, carers and other organisations 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 interaction, but that the same safety aspects apply whether it is a computer, mobile phone or game console
- when using social media platforms, ensure that we adhere to relevant legislation and good practice
- ensuring the person managing our organisation's online presence is suitably trained and experienced

## **Managing our online presence**

Our online presence through our website or social media platforms will adhere to the following guidelines:

- all social media accounts will be password-protected, and at least two members of staff and/or volunteers will have access to each account and password

- social media accounts will be monitored by a designated person, who will have been appointed by the committee
- the designated person managing our online presence will seek advice from our Welfare Officer / County Safeguarding Officer and the LTA to advise on safeguarding requirements as required
- the designated person will remove any inappropriate posts, explaining why, and informing anyone who may be affected (as well as the parents of any children involved)
- account, page and event settings will be set to 'private' so that only those invited can see their content
- social media pages/groups (e.g. Facebook pages/groups) used to communicate with children must be an organization, community or sports group and not personal
- identifying details such as a child's home address, school details, telephone number or email will not be posted on social media platforms
- any posts or correspondence will be of a professional purpose
- we'll make sure children are aware of who manages our social media accounts and who to contact if they have any concerns about the running of the account
- parents will be asked to give their consent for us to communicate with their children through social media, or by any other means of communication
- parents will need to give consent for photographs or videos of their child to be posted on social media
- all of our accounts and email addresses will be appropriate, fit for purpose and only used for club/county specific activities

### **What we expect of staff, coaches and volunteers**

- they should be aware of this policy and behave in accordance with it
- they should seek the advice from our Welfare Officer / County Safeguarding Officer and the LTA if they have any concerns about the use of the internet or social media
- any messages they wish to send out to children must be sent through the designated person responsible for the organisation's online presence
- they must not 'friend' or 'follow' children from personal accounts on social media
- they must make sure any content posted is accurate and appropriate
- they must not communicate with children via personal accounts or private messages
- they must communicate with parents through email or in writing, or use an organisational account, profile or website rather than via personal social media accounts
- they must copy in parents or at least one other member of staff, coach or volunteer should to any communications sent to children
- they must avoid communication with children beyond dedicated event or activity timings, unless it is necessary for professional purposes (i.e. emergencies, whilst on a trip, etc.) and contacting the parents is not possible
- they must sign off any communication in a professional manner, avoiding the use of emojis or symbols such as kisses ("X's")
- they must respond to any disclosure of abuse in line with the safeguarding policy
- they must not engage in sexting, or send pictures or messages that are abusive, obscene, inappropriate, indecent or menacing to anyone

### **What we expect of children**

- they should be aware of this policy
- they should follow the guidelines set out in our acceptable use statement on all devices

### **What we expect of parents/carers**

- they should be aware of this policy and behave in accordance with it
- they should seek the advice from our Welfare Officer / County Safeguarding Officer and the LTA if they have any concerns about the use of the internet or social media
- they should communicate with staff, coaches and volunteers in a professional and appropriate manner
- they must not engage in sexting, or send pictures or messages that are abusive, obscene, inappropriate, indecent or menacing to anyone

### **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 directly or copy them into all messages to children
- where it is necessary to contact children directly, and it is not possible to copy for the parents into the message, we will seek parental consent to do this
- messages will be used for professional communication, such as reminders about lesson times, meeting points etc.
- if a child tries to engage a member of staff, coach or volunteer in a conversation which is not of a professional manner (for example, their personal life), the member of staff, coach or volunteer will:
  - end the conversation or not reply
  - inform the Welfare Officer / County Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible and arrange to address the matter with the child and their parents appropriately
- if the conversation raises safeguarding concerns, notify the LTA as soon as possible

### **Using mobile phones/devices during activities**

So that all children can enjoy and actively take part in tennis activities, we discourage the use of mobile phones/devices. As part of this policy we will:

- make children aware of how and who to contact if there is an emergency or a change to previously agreed arrangements
- inform parents of appropriate times they can contact children who are away on trips
- advise parents that it may not be possible to contact children during activities and provide a contact within the club or organisation who will be reachable should there be an emergency

### **Related policies and procedures**

This policy should be read alongside our [club/county] policies and procedures, including:

- safeguarding policy
- code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- photography and filming policy
- anti-bullying policy
- diversity and inclusion policy

This policy is reviewed every two years (or earlier if there is a change in national legislation).

Chairperson Cathy Alexander:  
1/11/22

Date:

Welfare Officer / County Safeguarding Officer Jo Dafforn:

Date: 1/11/22