



Internet and Social Media Policy

Ross Tennis Centre (RTC) 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 RTC uses the internet and social media, and the procedures for doing so. It also outlines how we expect 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 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.

This policy applies to all coaches, volunteers, players, parents/carers and any other individuals associated with RTC.

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 with our organisation are protected from potential harm 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.

We have a responsibility to help keep children safe online, whether or not they are using RTC's network and devices.

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 AND VULNERABLE ADULTS SAFE BY

Understanding the safety aspects, including what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour for 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 or video conferencing platforms (including live streaming), ensure that we adhere to relevant legislation and good practice.

MANAGING OUR ONLINE PRESENCE

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

- all RTC social media accounts will be password-protected, and only those who have administration access to RTC's website and social media accounts will have the passwords
- social media accounts will be monitored by the committee.
- our online presence will respect LTA safeguarding requirements as required.
- any posts or correspondence will be of a professional purpose.
- the committee will arrange for the removal of any inappropriate posts, explaining why, and informing anyone who may be affected if applicable (as well as the parents of any children involved)
- in the event that RTC uses social media accounts for specific groups, e.g.U14's to communicate information relevant to that group, the account, page and event settings will be set to 'private' so that only those invited can see their content.
- parents will be asked to give their consent for us to communicate with their children through social media, via video conferencing platforms or by any other means of communication.
- social media pages/groups used to communicate with children must be that of an organisation, community or sports group and not personal.
- parents will need to give consent for photographs or videos of their child to be posted on social media.
- identifying details such as a child's home address, school details, telephone number or email will not be posted on social media platforms.
- our social media accounts and email addresses will be appropriate, fit for purpose and only used for RTC's or approved partners specific activities.
- video conferencing sessions will be password protected to maintain children's privacy and prevent exposure to inappropriate or harmful content by third parties.

WHAT WE EXPECT OF COACHES AND VOLUNTEERS

- to be aware of this policy and behave in accordance with it.
- to seek the advice from our Welfare Officer and the LTA if they have any concerns about the use of the internet or social media.
- to make sure any content posted is accurate and appropriate.
- to copy in parents to any communications sent to children.
- to communicate with parents through email or in writing or use an organisational account profile or website rather than personal social media accounts.
- to respond to any concerns reported through social media in the same way as a face-to-face disclosure, in accordance with the safeguarding policy.
- to avoid communication with children beyond dedicated event or activity timings, unless it is necessary for professional purposes (i.e., emergencies) and contacting the parents is not possible.
- to sign off any communication in a professional manner, avoiding the use of emojis or symbols such as kisses ("X's")
- not to 'friend' or 'follow' children or vulnerable adults on social media.
- not to communicate with children via personal accounts or private messages
- not to engage in sexting, or send pictures or messages that are abusive, obscene, inappropriate, indecent, or menacing to anyone.

- to try to ensure that any 1-2-1 sessions with children involve the parents /carers . Parents of children u12 will be required to attend and parents of those over 12 will be encouraged to attend to be able to supervise their child or alternatively another coach/member of staff will be present.

WHAT WE EXPECT OF CHILDREN

- to be aware of this policy
- to follow the guidelines set out in our U18's Social Media and Internet use policy on all devices.
- to be aware of and accept as terms of their membership the Acceptable Use Statement for U18's social media and Internet use
- to behave responsibly online and refrain from bullying or abusive behaviour

WHAT WE EXPECT OF PARENTS/CARERS

- to be aware of this policy and behave in accordance with it.
- to seek the advice from our Welfare Officer and the LTA if they have any concerns about the use of the internet or social media.
- to communicate with coaches and volunteers in a professional and appropriate manner
- not to engage in sexting, or send pictures or messages that are abusive, obscene, inappropriate, indecent, or menacing to anyone.
- to ensure they and their children, as terms of their membership accept and understand the Acceptable Use Statement for U18's social media and Internet use

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:

- coaches and volunteers will communicate through parents directly or copy them into all messages to children.
- messages will be used for professional communication, such as reminders about lesson times, meeting points etc.
- 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 or include a second practitioner.
- In some circumstances it may be necessary for coaches and volunteers to message children directly for logistical reasons and it is impractical to text the parents, for example cancelling or rescheduling the lesson. Where this type of one-to-one communication by text message is needed, the message will not be deleted from the device to ensure an audit trail exists.
- If coaches and volunteers only have one mobile phone, and it is not possible to have a second business phone, they will ensure the parents and child understand this and agree and adhere to clear boundaries.
- if a child tries to engage a 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 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.
- 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.
- inform parents of appropriate times they can contact children who are away on trips.
- explain to children how using mobile phones during activities has an impact on their safe awareness of their environment, and their level of participation and achievement.

RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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

- Safeguarding policy
- Code of conduct
- Diversity and inclusion policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Acceptable Use Statement for U18's social media & Internet Use
- Privacy Policy

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

Chairperson:

John Pelly:

Welfare Officers:

Valerie Davies:

Patricia Walker: