

Woodthorpe Tennis Club

Online Safety and Communications Policy

Approved by Club Committee: August 2024

Next review date: August 2026

Woodthorpe Tennis Club 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 we use the internet and social media, and the procedures for doing so. It also outlines how we expect members, coaches, and parents/carers to behave online and communicate with others at the club.

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 with the club and who make use of technology (such as mobile phones, tablets, games consoles and the internet).
- Provide members, coaches and others associated with the club with policy and procedure information regarding online safety and 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 and we have a responsibility to help keep children safe online, whether or not they are using Woodthorpe Tennis Club'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. We will work in partnership with children, their parents, carers and other organisations to help everyone to be responsible in their approach to online safety.

We will seek to keep children safe by:

- understanding the safety issues, including what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour for members, coaches, volunteers and children when using websites, 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, ensuring that we adhere to relevant legislation and good practice
- ensuring the person managing our organisation's online presence is suitably knowledgeable about the issues

Managing our online presence:

Woodthorpe Tennis Club uses a number of online systems to maintain data, or to give general information to members, potential members and others.

- our website (ClubSpark) is our major administrative system, containing the membership list, courts bookings and club information, news and events
- listings on other sites e.g. Nottshelpyourself.org.uk
- Facebook page
- the club's email

We will adhere to the following guidelines:

- our club accounts will be linked to the club or an organisation, never personal
- our club accounts will be password-protected, and at least two members will have access to each account and password
- our accounts will be managed and monitored by a designated person or people 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)
- identifying details such as a child's home address, school details, telephone number or email will not be posted publicly
- any content posted will be linked to the purposes of the club, as well as accurate and appropriate
- we will make sure children are aware of who manages our accounts and who to contact if they have any concerns about the running of the account
- parents will need to give consent for photographs or videos of their child to be posted
- all of our accounts and email addresses will be appropriate, fit for purpose and only used for club specific activities

Other communications with members:

Other communication is usually via WhatsApp where the club uses a number of groups:

- WTC Team & Club news: used to give information to members of upcoming events, team results, other news relating to the club
- Monday Night Ladies: used to inform and discuss matters specifically impacting female players
- WTC Men's Night: used to inform and discuss matters specifically impacting male players

Guidelines for group messaging:

- each group will be managed and monitored by at least two designated people who are appointed by the committee
- each adult member will be given the opportunity to be included in these as applicable
- children under 18 may be included with their parent's permission as long as a parent is also in the group
- ex members will be removed from the groups

We recognise that there are many other informal WhatsApp groups used throughout the club e.g. Team Captains set up groups for specific matches, and ask that members follow similar guidelines where possible

Using mobile phones or other devices to communicate to children

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

- members 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 the parents into the message, we will seek parental consent to do this
- messages will be used only for tennis related communication, such as reminders about meeting points etc.
- if a child tries to engage a member in a conversation which is not tennis related (for example, their personal life), s/he will end the conversation or not reply and inform the child's parents. If necessary, s/he will also inform the Welfare Officer if any safeguarding concerns are raised or suggested.

What we expect of adult members, coaches, and volunteers

- they should be aware of this policy and behave in accordance with it
- they should seek advice from our Welfare Officer / County Safeguarding Officer or the LTA if they have any concerns about the use of the internet or social media
- they must not 'friend' or 'follow' children from personal accounts on social media
- they must not communicate with children via personal accounts or private messages
- they must copy in parents or at least one other coach or volunteer to any communications sent to children
- they must avoid communication with children beyond dedicated event or activity timings, unless it is necessary for tennis related 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 parents/carers

- they should be aware of this policy and behave in accordance with it
- they should seek advice from our Welfare Officer / County Safeguarding Officer or the LTA if they have any concerns about the use of the internet or social media
- they should communicate with 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

What we expect of children

- they should be aware of this policy and behave in accordance with it
- they should seek advice from our Welfare Officer / County Safeguarding Officer or the LTA if they have any concerns about how other members communicate with them

Related policies and procedures

- Safeguarding policy
- Club Codes of conduct
- Photography and filming policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- Diversity and Inclusion policy