

ONLINE SAFETY AND COMMUNICATION POLICY

Dore and Totley 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 the club 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 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

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 facilities
- 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 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
- ensuring the person managing our organisation's online presence is suitably trained and experienced

Managing our online presence

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

- **the club does not and will not allow the use of social media platforms for any club purposes.**
- the designated person managing our online presence/website will seek advice from our Welfare Officer / County Safeguarding Officer and the LTA to advise on safeguarding requirements as required
- identifying details such as a child's or adult's home address, telephone number or email will be kept confidential by the Club Secretary
- any correspondence will be via email to adult members only and of a professional purpose
- all communications with children will be via their parents
- the club will not post photographs or videos of any member adult or child on social media
- all of our email addresses will be appropriate, fit for purpose and only used for club specific activities

What we expect of 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 and to the child's parents
- 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 website rather than via personal social media accounts
- they must copy in parents
- 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 phones 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
- 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 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 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
- 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 policies and procedures, including:

- Safeguarding policy
- Photography and filming policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- Diversity and inclusion policy

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

Chair & Welfare Officer Peter Alcock

Date: 27/3/2023

Club Secretary Maurice Patterson

Date: 27/3/2023