



## **ONLINE SAFETY AND COMMUNICATION POLICY**

**Last reviewed 5<sup>th</sup> December 2023**

### **PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

The Avenue Tennis Club (ATC) 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 ATC uses the internet and social media, and the procedures for doing so. It also outlines expectations for online behaviour and communication with children. 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 club 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 ATC.

### **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 club are protected from potential harm online
- We have a responsibility to help keep children safe online, whether or not they are using ATC network
  - 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
- When using social media platforms ensure that we adhere to relevant legislation and good practice
  - Ensuring the person managing our online presence is suitably trained and experienced
  - Providing members with policy and procedure information regarding online safety and inform them of how to respond to incidents

#### MANAGING OUR ONLINE PRESENCE

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

- Any social media accounts will be password-protected, and at least two committee members will have access to each account and password
  - No 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
  - 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 venue/county 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
- they must not 'friend' or 'follow' children from personal accounts on social-media and maintain the same professional boundaries online as they would in person
  - 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 coach or volunteer should they need 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 will respond to any concerns reported through social media in the same way as a face-to-face disclosure, in accordance with our 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 will adhere to the acceptable use statement for internet and social media use
- they will behave responsibly online and refrain from any bullying or abusive behaviour

## 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 – Diane Ryan 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
- they will ensure their children understand the acceptable use for internet and social media use on all devices

## 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
- 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
- In some circumstances it may be necessary for coaches 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
- messages will be used for professional communication, such as reminders about lesson times, etc
- Coaches only have personal mobile phones, and, 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 / 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 venue who will be reachable should there be an emergency
- 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

Further information for parents about keeping children safe online

This policy is reviewed every year (or earlier if there is a change in national legislation).  
Chairperson: PATRICIA MOORE Date: 05/12/2023

Welfare Officer: DIANE Ryan Date: 05/12/2023