ONLINE SAFETY AND COMMUNICATION POLICY

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Tennis West of Scotland (TWoS) 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 TWoS 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 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**

This policy applies to all staff, coaches, volunteers, players, parents/carers and any other individuals associated with Tennis West of Scotland

TWOS RECOGNISES 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 TWoS'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**

TWOS 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 or video conferencing platforms (including live streaming), ensure that we adhere to relevant legislation and good practice**
- **ensuring the person managing our organisation's online presence is suitably trained and experienced**

- providing staff with policy and procedure information regarding online safety and inform them of how to respond to incidents

MANAGING THE ONLINE PRESENCE OF TWOS

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, via video conferencing platforms 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 venue/county 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 TWOS EXPECTS 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 and maintain the same professional boundaries online as they would in person when using organisation accounts
- 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 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
- they must ensure any 1-2-1 sessions with children involve the parents/carers being able to supervise their child, or alternatively, that another coach/member of staff is present. This supervision would not necessarily require the parents to be in the same room, as long as they are able to check in on the session

WHAT TWOS EXPECTS OF CHILDREN

- they should be aware of this policy
- they will sign and 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 TWOS EXPECTS OF PARENTS/CARERS

- they should be aware of this policy and behave in accordance with it
- they should seek the advice from the TwoS 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
- they will ensure their children understand and sign the acceptable use statement 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:

- 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 or include a second practitioner
- In some circumstances it may be necessary for staff, 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.
- messages will be used for professional communication, such as reminders about lesson times, meeting points etc.

- If staff, 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 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:
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    - 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 or organisation 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

SITUATIONS REQUIRING ONE-TO-ONE COMMUNICATION

Some roles are directly positioned to support a child's well-being and are therefore delivered in one-to-one environments (upon receiving written parental consent). These roles are usually members of the well-being group (Performance Lifestyle Advisors, Sport Psychologists, Clinical Psychologist, Medical Doctor) and collectively have the expertise to support any concerns raised to player or staff well-being.

Practitioners in this group may at times be required to maintain confidentiality in regards to well-being support. This confidentiality may also extend to certain follow up communication, e.g. emails which relate to what was discussed in the session. This means that it may not necessarily be appropriate to include parents or other practitioners in the sessions or related communications.

In some circumstances, practitioners who are not in the well-being group may need to communicate with a child directly. These situations should be limited to logistical or pastoral reasons. For example, to let the child know they are running late, to cancel or reschedule a session, or whilst on a trip it is necessary to call the player directly.

For all practitioners, where one-to-one communication takes place, an audit trail should be retained. For example, ensuring written communication (e.g. email, text messages, etc) are not deleted and that logs are kept of any telephone/video call.

RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

This policy should be read alongside Tennis West of Scotland's policies and procedures, including:

- **Anti-Bullying**
- **Code of conduct**
- **Diversity and inclusion**
- **Photography and filming**
- **Safeguarding policy**
- **Safeguarding at events, activities and competitions**
- **Safe recruitment**

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

Policy approved on 08/05/2026