

ONLINE SAFETY & COMMUNICATION POLICY

To help create an enjoyable tennis environment for everyone, Durham & Cleveland LTA endeavours to ensure that use of the internet and social media is undertaken in a safe and fair manner.

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 Durham & Cleveland LTA operates within the law regarding how we behave online;

Principles underpinning this policy:

It is recognised that the online world provides everyone with many opportunities. However it can also present risks and challenges.

Durham & Cleveland LTA has 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 when they are engaged in activities organised by the County.

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 believe it is essential to work in partnership with children, their parents, carers and other organisations in order to succeed in helping the young and vulnerable.

We will seek to keep children safe by:

- understanding the potential risks, including what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour for staff and children, when using website, social media, apps and other forms of digital communication;
- being aware that no matter what device is being used for digital interaction, the same safety aspects apply whether it is a computer, mobile phone or game console.
- ensure that, when using social media platforms, we adhere to relevant legislation and good practice as shared by, for example the NSPCC.
- ensuring persons managing Durham & Cleveland LTA online presence are suitably trained and experienced.

Managing our online presence:

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 Durham & Cleveland LTA will have access to each account and password;
- social media presence and content will be open to scrutiny by Durham & Cleveland LTA Executive Committee;
- if advice is required then there should be immediate contact with the County Safeguarding Lead or the LTA Safeguarding team;
- any inappropriate posts will be removed, 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;
- 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/guardians will need to give consent for images or videos of their child to be posted on social media;
- all of our accounts and email addresses will be appropriate and fit for purpose

What we expect of Durham & Cleveland staff, coaches and volunteers:

- to be aware of this policy and behave in accordance with the content;
- to seek advice from the County Safeguarding Lead 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 and young people must be sent through the designated person responsible for the organisation's online presence;
- they must not 'friend' or 'follow' children or young people from personal or their business accounts on social media;
- they must ensure any content posted is accurate and appropriate;
- they must not communicate with young people 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 they send any communication to children;
- they should avoid communication with children outside of normal office hours, unless it is necessary for professional purposes (i.e. emergencies, whilst on a trip, etc.);
- 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 either directly or via their parents/carers;
- they should follow the guidelines set out in the LTA's acceptable use statement on all devices

What we expect of parents/carers:

- they should be aware of this policy and behave in accordance with its content;
- they should seek the advice from our County Safeguarding Lead 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 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 not possible to contact children directly, and it is not possible to copy the parents or guardians into the message, we will seek parental consent to do this;
- messages will be used for professional communication, such as reminders about coaching sessions/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 member of staff, coach or volunteer will:
 - end the conversation or not reply;
 - inform the County Safeguarding Lead 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 on court or during County coaching sessions. 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 and guardians of appropriate times that they can contact children who are away on trips as they will often be involved with activities without immediate access to their mobile/smart phones;
- 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.

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