



## ONLINE SAFETY AND COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

*Previously: Social Media Policy (February 2020)*

**May 2022**

**Due for review at least every two years unless legislation changes**

Includes the following:

- Appendix 1 – Social Media and Wiltshire Tennis: application.
- Appendix 2 – Social Media Acceptable Use Statement (example).
- Appendix 3 – Photography and Filming Consent form (example).
- Appendix 4 – WhatsApp Guidance.

**Wiltshire Tennis** 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 Wiltshire Tennis uses the internet and social media, and the procedures for doing so. It also outlines how we expect staff, 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 in 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.

### **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 Wiltshire Tennis' 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.

### **We 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 platforms, ensure that we adhere to relevant legislation and good practice;
- ensuring the person managing our organisation's online presence is 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 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 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, 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 club/county specific activities;

## **What we expect 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 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;
- 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 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 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;
- 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 member of staff, coach or volunteer will:
  - end the conversation or not reply;
  - inform the 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 club or organisation who will be reachable should there be an emergency.

### **Related policies and procedures**

This policy should be read alongside other Wiltshire Tennis policies and procedures, including:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Code of Conduct for staff and volunteers
- Photography and Filming policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- Diversity and inclusion policy.

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

Chairperson: Philip Evans

Date: May 2022

County Safeguarding Officer: Liz Lewis

Date: May 2022

## **Appendix 1. Social Media and Wiltshire Tennis: application**

Wiltshire Tennis understands the importance of new technology for the development of children and young people, and we encourage safe use whilst on-line or using social media.

This is especially important during any Wiltshire Tennis event, activity or competition. We ask commitment from all our players, parents, employees and volunteers to ensure that appropriate safeguards are in place.

### **Authors**

Where social media, such as WhatsApp, are used to communicate with teams and groups any person under the age of 18 will not be included unless their parent/guardian is also a member of the group.

Communication will be clear and concise, in plain English, and will not employ emoticons/emojis.

### **Player Participation in Wiltshire Tennis activities**

Before participating in training camps and competitions all parents and carers will be asked to complete with their child, and return to the Wiltshire Tennis Office, a Social Media Acceptable Use Statement, similar to the example in Appendix 2, below.

### **Written permission from Parents/Carers**

*Unless we have written permission from parents/carers Wiltshire Tennis will not refer to juniors on the Wiltshire Tennis website, or in social media, by their full name.*

We will also ask parents/carers for written permission before publicising other identifying details and contact information. See Appendix 3, below.

**WhatsApp Guidance** issued guidance for coaches, venues, volunteers and associates. See Appendix 4, below.

## Appendix 2. WILTSHIRE TENNIS SOCIAL MEDIA ACCEPTABLE USE STATEMENT (example)

Wiltshire Tennis understands the importance of new technology for children and young people’s development. However, we recognise that relevant safeguards need to be put in place at our training camps and on our trips to ensure children and young people remain safe whilst online or using social media. *These standards will also apply to our other events and activities.*

We ask that all parents / carers spend a few minutes to read through and discuss this statement with their child/children and then sign and return this form to their captain or event organiser.

- I will be responsible for my behaviour when using the internet and social media, including the content I access and how I conduct myself.
- I will not deliberately create, browse or access material that could be considered offensive or illegal. If I accidentally come across any such material, I will report this to Wiltshire Tennis or the County Cup Captain.
- I will not use social media or the internet to send anyone material that could be considered threatening, offensive, upsetting, bullying or illegal.
- I understand that all my use of internet and social media is potentially visible to everyone in the online world and that any issues involving my behaviour may be addressed by the Wiltshire Tennis or the County Cup Captain.
- I will not give out any of my personal information such as name, age, address or telephone number online.
- I will not share my passwords with anyone else.
- I will not arrange to meet someone that I have met online.
- I understand that these rules are designed to keep me safe and if they are not followed my parents/carers may be contacted.
- I will avoid using my mobile or smartphone during activities as I understand that it will have an impact on my safety and my opportunity to learn and achieve.
- I am aware that if I am experiencing bullying behaviour or abuse online, I can contact the Team Captain, Head Coach, Head of Tennis or County Safeguarding Officer: [safeguarding@wiltshiretennis.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@wiltshiretennis.org.uk)
- I know I can also contact Childline on 0800 11 11 if I have any worries about something I’ve seen or experienced online.

We have discussed this statement and ..... (*Insert child’s name*)  
agrees to support the safe use of the internet and social media at .....  
(*Insert name of venue / organisation*).

Parent’s / carer’s name:	
Parents / carer’s signature: Date:	
Child’s U18 name:	
Child’s U18 signature Date:	

### Appendix 3. Photography and Filming Consent Form.

(example)

#### Photography and filming consent form

This consent form is intended to capture consent for imagery and video of children.

In accordance with our photography and filming policy Wiltshire Tennis will not permit photographs, video or other images of children (anyone under 18) to be taken without the consent of the child and their parent or carer.

Wiltshire Tennis will take all steps to ensure these images or video are used solely for the purposes they are intended which are as follows:

- within the county for display purposes
- within other printed county publications
- on the county website
- on the county social media pages

*If you become aware that these images are being used inappropriately you should inform Wiltshire Tennis immediately.*

*To be completed by parent and child:*

I/we give permission for (tick to confirm consent)

- my child's photograph to be used within the county for display purposes
- my child's photograph to be used within other county printed publications
- my child's photograph to be used on the county website
- my child to be videoed for use on the county website
- my child's photograph to be used on the county social media pages
- my child to be videoed for use on the county social media pages.

For the duration of the (state period) County Training Programme and County Cup Events.

*To be completed by parent and child:*

I/we understand (tick to confirm consent):

- and will comply with the county photography and filming policy
- the potential risks associated with the use and distribution of these images
- how these images or videos will be stored within the organisation and how long for
- that if I withdraw consent for my child's image to be used or shared in the future, it may not be possible to remove images that have already been published or distributed
- that at many events, county and others will reasonably wish to take wide angle, general photos during or at specific points in the event
- that I must gain permission before sharing photographs/videos of other people's children on social media.

**Print names of parent and child, then both sign, and date.**



#### **Appendix 4. WhatsApp Guidance for coaches, venues, volunteers and associates.**

There has been some concern regarding the use of WhatsApp, especially where under age 18 (Junior) players are involved.

Bearing in mind that WhatsApp is considered unsuitable for anybody under the age of 16, please ensure the following:

- make clear who is responsible for operating each group (designated coach, Wiltshire Tennis etc.);
- make clear the purpose of the group and do not overstep that boundary;
- as an operator, have the express permission of all contacts included in the group;
- where U18s are included in the group at least one relevant parent, guardian or carer for each must also be included;
- where the relevant parent, guardian or carer does not wish to be included the U18 must be removed from that group;
- avoid using emojis;
- avoid 'banter';
- avoid emotive comments.

**In short, your WhatsApp communication must be simple, concise, and relevant.**

If you have any questions regarding the above, please contact:

County Safeguarding Officer, Wiltshire Tennis: [safeguarding@wiltshiretennis.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@wiltshiretennis.org.uk)

To email the LTA direct: [safeguarding@lta.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@lta.org.uk)