



ONLINE SAFETY AND COMMUNICATION POLICY

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Bridge of Allan Sports 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 Bridge of Allan Sports Club 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 Bridge of Allan Sports Club.

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 Bridge of Allan Sports Club'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

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 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 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 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 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 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 WE EXPECT 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 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

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:

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 Bridge of Allan Sports Club's policies and procedures, including:

Anti-Bullying

Code of conduct

Diversity and inclusion

Photography and filming

Use of changing rooms

Safeguarding policy

Safeguarding at events, activities and competitions

Safe recruitment

Further information for parents about keeping children safe online

Keeping children safe online | NSPCC

CEOP Education (thinkuknow.co.uk)

Parents and Carers - UK Safer Internet Centre

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

Chairperson [insert name]:

Date:

Welfare Officer / County Safeguarding Officer [insert name]:

Date: