



## Online Safety and Communication Policy - Guidance

### Introduction

This guidance has been produced in response to enquiries from clubs seeking advice about the safe use of online communication and social media for clubs and their members. It can be used to assist in writing a policy bespoke to your context.

### Purpose

A policy should aim to ensure the safety and well-being of all members of the club when communicating online. It sets out guidelines for appropriate conduct, privacy protection, and the responsible use of digital platforms.

A robust policy will:

- Protect everyone involved with a club who make use of technology (such as mobile phones, tablets, games consoles and any device on which the internet is accessible).
- Provide members, staff, coaches and volunteers with information regarding online safety and inform them how to respond to incidents
- Ensure a club operates within the law regarding how it behaves online

### Scope

The policy will apply to all members, coaches, volunteers, and staff associated with the club, as well as any other stakeholders involved in club activities.

### Key Principles

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 squash are protected from potential harm online. Everyone, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, has the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.

- **Respect:** All members must respect others' opinions and maintain a positive and supportive online environment.
- **Privacy:** Protect personal information and respect the privacy of others.
- **Safety:** Report any inappropriate or suspicious activity immediately.
- **Responsibility:** Use digital platforms responsibly and in accordance with club rules and guidelines. Ensure the person with responsibility for the club's online presence is suitably trained and experienced.

### 4. Guidelines for Online Communication

- **Email and Messaging:**

- Use official club email addresses for all club-related communications.
  - Avoid sharing personal contact details publicly.
  - Obtain consent before sharing personal information.
  - Keep communication clear, professional, and respectful.
  - Communicate with Under 18's via group messages (where at least two DBS checked adults are present) or parents or carers, not via private messages
  - All communication must be 'safe' i.e. not include pictures or messages that are abusive, obscene, inappropriate, indecent or menacing.
- **Social Media:**
    - Use social media responsibly and in line with the club's image.
    - Account, page and event settings should be set to 'private' so that only those invited can see their content.
    - Social media accounts should be password-protected, and at least two members of staff and/or volunteers should have access to each account and password.
    - Social media accounts should be monitored by a designated person, who should seek advice from a Welfare Officer to advise on safeguarding requirements.
    - Avoid posting inappropriate content or engaging in negative discussions.
    - The designated person should remove inappropriate posts and follow up with those involved.
    - Obtain consent before posting images or videos of members.
    - Never include any personal information linked to any photographs of U18s.
    - Report any harmful content or cyberbullying to club officials.
    - Ensure members are aware of who manages social media accounts and who to contact if they have any concerns about the running of the account.
    - Staff, coaches and volunteers must not 'friend' or 'follow' U18s from personal accounts on social-media and maintain the same professional boundaries online as they would in person when using organisation accounts.

- **Virtual Meetings and Training:**

- Ensure the use of secure platforms for virtual meetings and training sessions.
- Only share meeting links with authorised participants.
- Maintain professionalism during virtual interactions.
- Adhere to the club's code of conduct during online sessions.

### **Parental Involvement**

For junior members, parents/guardians should:

- Ensure the child or young person is aware of the policy and has signed any required statements.
- Monitor their child's online activities related to the club.
- Encourage safe and respectful online behaviour.
- Report any concerns to club officials.
- Ensure the child or young person is aware of the policy.
- Communicate with other parents, staff, coaches and volunteers in a professional and appropriate manner.

### **Reporting and Response**

- **Reporting:** Members should report any incidents of inappropriate behaviour or breaches of this policy to a designated person at the club.
- **Response:** The club will investigate reports promptly and take appropriate action, which may include disciplinary measures.