



Muswell Hill Methodist Lawn Tennis Club

Online Safety & Communication Policy

1. Policy statement

Our aim at Muswell Hill Methodist LTC is to ensure that everyone enjoys their tennis.

To do so, it is important that everyone feels that the tennis club is a safe environment where they will be free from harm. This includes any harm caused by using people's images without their consent, or inappropriate use of social media.

To achieve this, the Club has the following safety measures in place.

2. Photography

Club events, such as the Club tournament finals or special events, will usually be photographed on behalf of the club.

We will ensure that any photographer engaged by the Club:

- understands the sensitivities around images and only takes images which are appropriate and show participants in a positive light
- asks permission beforehand of everyone being photographed and respects the wishes of those who don't want to be included as main subjects
- in the case of people who appear in the background (eg people watching a match) we would not explicitly ask their permission, but would try to avoid photographing any people we know do not want to appear.

There may be circumstances where parents/carers want to take photographs of their children in a group setting. In this situation, we ask parents/carers:

- to seek the permission of parents/carers whose children may appear
- refrain from publishing these images on Facebook or other social media sites without the express permission of the relevant parents/guardians.

We will make all parents/carers aware of this policy when they sign up for club membership and for children's coaching sessions.

3. 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, appointed by the committee
- 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)
- we will not use public sites (eg Facebook, Instagram) to communicate with children
- generally, we will never publish identifying details of children. In the case of young athletes who want the publicity, we will include names, but never publish any contact details
- we will make sure that 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-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 Welfare Officers 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
- all communications to children must be copied to parents or to at least one other member of staff, coach or volunteer
- 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 conduct all 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 Club’s Safeguarding policy.

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 Officers 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.

4. 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 Club Welfare Officers 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.

5. 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.

6. Related policies and procedures

This policy should be read alongside the other Club policies and procedures, including:

- safeguarding policy
- code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- photography and filming policy
- anti-bullying policy
- diversity and inclusion policy.