

## Introduction:

Technology plays a significant part in all of our lives providing opportunities for us all to communicate and share information quickly and widely. The internet, social media, live streaming and virtual meetings allow us all to communicate instantly at all times. Used safely this is a useful tool for our clubs, leagues, coaches, members, staff and anyone involved with table tennis to communicate, hold meetings, deliver training and promote our sport. However, with this increased accessibility comes the responsibility to use these channels safely and in a way that doesn't expose any of our members, staff or people involved in our sport to an increased risk of harm especially to our young players or anyone with a vulnerability.

## Social Media:

In recent years, the use of social media networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, YouTube, Instagram, Tik Tok and WhatsApp have become immensely popular with everyone. Used safely they provide an incredible tool to enable us all to promote our sport, publicise events and make contact with our members whether that be at club, league, county, or national level. In addition, sites like YouTube allow us to be able to upload clips and videos to share moments from our sport which can reach tens of thousands of people at the click of a button.

Unfortunately, whilst the use of these, and other types of social media, for example text messaging and WhatsApp, offer exciting opportunities they bring with them dangers and the ability for abuse if not used safely.

### Types of social media:

- **Facebook**  
A popular free social networking website that allows registered users to create profiles, upload photos and videos, send messages and keep in touch with friends, family and colleagues.
- **Twitter**  
An online social networking site that enables users to send and read short 140 character messages called 'tweets'. Registered users can read and post tweets but those who are unregistered can only read them.
- **YouTube**  
A video sharing website which provides a forum for people to connect, inform and inspire others across the globe and acts as a platform for original content creators.
- **Snapchat**  
A mobile messaging application used to share photos, videos, text, and drawings. It's free to download the app and free to send messages using it. It has become hugely popular in a very short space of time, especially with young people.
- **Instagram**  
A fun and quirky way to share your life with friends through a series of pictures. Snap a photo with your mobile phone, then choose a filter to transform the image into a memory to keep around forever.

- **Tik Tok**  
A popular short term video hosting service which is widely used by young people.
- **WhatsApp**  
WhatsApp is a free messaging service owned by Facebook which allows you to connect with your contacts reliably and securely, via text messages, audio messages, voice and video calls

### **Using Social Media:**

This applies to anyone who is in a position of responsibility and trust in respect of young people in table tennis.

- Do not accept any personal friend requests from any young person involved in table tennis.
- Do not send out any personal friend requests to any young people involved in table tennis.
- Your personal social networking sites should never be used to contact young people within the sport.
- Be aware of your own personal responsibility and do not use social media sites to criticise Table Tennis England (TTE) or any other individual involved in the sport whether as an employee or a volunteer.

Social media is a very effective way to communicate, promote or contact people and members if used in an appropriate manner. We would recommend that clubs and leagues etc set up their own social media sites controlled and monitored by the club or league to ensure that all posts are checked and that photos have parental consent to be posted as per the TTE's Photographic Policy.

There are some instances that parents are also coaches or hold a position of responsibility and trust in respect of young people in our sport. We acknowledge that in their role as parents/carers they may feel it necessary to monitor their child's activities in respect of social media which would give them access to their child's lists of friends and contacts. Under these circumstances we would encourage the parent/carer to:

- Never have direct contact on their home site with a young person involved in table tennis.
- Not accept friend requests from young people in table tennis on their home sites including those from young officials, sports leaders, or officers.
- Ensure that the Club/League Welfare Officer is aware of the situation.

### **Using Virtual Platforms:**

Online meetings and training sessions are useful and cost effective tools for committees, coaches, staff and trainers to use. The following should be taken into account especially if the sessions involve under 18s:

- Check that your club or organisation has an online safety policy - use the guidelines on the TTE website as a template.

- The same process for reporting any concerns should be followed even if they are recognised as a result of using a virtual platform.
- Just the same as in a normal club session parental consent should be accessed by the person leading the session in writing (email) for any under 18s taking part.
- No sharing of private information between participants and/or the leader.
- A register/list of attendees should be kept by the person leading the session.

### **E-Safety:**

Underpinning all activity using social media and virtual sessions is E-Safety to ensure that everyone involved in table tennis has a safe and positive experience and is not subject to harm or abuse as a result. The following checklist includes suggestions which are helpful but not exhaustive for everyone:

1. Ensure that all members, staff, and volunteers understand the safety aspects including what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour when using digital technology such as social networking sites e.g. WhatsApp and Facebook, mobile phones and the internet.
2. Adopt the SafeTT Guidelines so it is clear how to report online concerns about possible abuse.
3. For clubs/leagues/counties decide how your webpage will be managed and by whom to ensure that appropriate measures are in place to:
  - Vet and manage the webpage/s
  - Whoever is managing the webpage receives the appropriate training
  - Ensure that the Club/League Welfare Officer is involved in checking the content
  - Ensure that any interactive content is moderated e.g. club social network page/discussion forums
4. Registration or 'signing up' to your club's social media pages:
  - Choose an appropriate email address to register/set up a profile or account
  - Ensure the appropriate security settings are set up
5. Ensure that adequate privacy settings are in place either restricting or allowing access to photos, personal information, comments, friends, and followers.
6. Ensure that members, volunteers, parents, and players are aware of the need to protect their privacy online and should be encouraged to carefully consider who they give access to their personal information online. Everyone should ensure that there is a clear differentiation between their personal and professional profiles.
7. Address safety when adding content to the club webpage or profile:
  - Promote safe and responsible use
  - Avoid taking personal details of young people

- When uploading content – ‘think before you post’
  - Report fake or imposter webpages or profiles
8. Address safeguarding when promoting your club/league/county and table tennis
  9. Promote your club/league webpage using the club/league’s own email rather than personal accounts
  10. Encourage club members, parents, volunteers, and players to ‘think’ before posting comments or entering discussions being aware of the impact of any comments they may make on other people.

If anyone has any queries or would like any further information please contact TTE’s Safeguarding Team on:

Email: [safeguarding@tabletennisengland.co.uk](mailto:safeguarding@tabletennisengland.co.uk)

Tel: 01908 208860 option 3

Additional Information:

[www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

[www.ceop.police.uk](http://www.ceop.police.uk)

SafeTT Policy

SafeTT Guidelines