

## Social Media Guidance

### What is social media?

Social media is a dynamic, constantly-evolving form of communication that allows people to take part in online communities, generate content and share information with others. Users can now access interactive services across a multitude of services and devices, such as mobile phones, Ipods/Ipads, game consoles and personal computers.

### What are the benefits of social media?

When used correctly, social media has a number of benefits for children, young people, parents coaches, officials and tennis venues and organisations such as the LTA.

#### **Benefits to the tennis people:**

- Enter competitions online;
- Look at tennis results, ratings, rankings and footage online;
- Create personal webpages and profiles which can be designed to display the person's identity;
- Interact with friends online and make new friends;
- Follow and support tennis players and organisations as well as other interests;
- Play online games;
- Upload images and videos online and comment on them;
- Keep online blogs, journals or diaries;
- Gain sponsorship;
- And many others.

#### **Benefits to tennis venues:**

- Increase membership and revenue;
- Get more people playing tennis;
- Promote tennis venues as being safe and inclusive;
- Promote tournaments and tennis role models;
- Attract and retain staff;
- Attract children and young people into the sport;
- Attract and retain families and members;
- And many more.

### Good Practice with Social Media:

#### **Children, Young People and Adults at Risk:**

- Encourage them to ensure their privacy settings are set as high as possible, Facebook regularly reverses the settings so they are set to basic privacy;
- Encourage them to have private profiles on Social Networking Sites including Twitter and Instagram;
- Encourage them not to send 'Sexts' as it is against the law (this applies to under 18's only). Ensure young people are aware that Apps like Snap Chat do not always destroy the image as other users can capture the images.
- Encourage them to report any inappropriate images or things that concern them to the Welfare Officer;
- Encourage them to report any bullying, harassment or images and content that cause offence;
- Encourage them to behave in a safe and appropriate way online and not put themselves or others at risk.
- Promote resilience using particular websites (see the Promoting Resilience Guidance).

### **Tennis Venues:**

- Ensure you embed your social media policy into your Safeguarding Policy, Equality and anti-bullying policies
- Ensure coaches, staff and venues have business social media accounts and do not use their personal accounts for professional purposes;
- Use an official work email address to register the business account and not a personal one;
- Keep your login details secure – ensure more than one person has access to the account and at least two people check it regularly just in case one of the staff members is posting inappropriately. Ensure those who regulate your social media have received the LTA's Safeguarding & Protection in Tennis Training and are aware of equality, diversity and inclusion;
- Set appropriate privacy levels – remember if children, young people and adults at risk are liking your page or following you, others may be able to see who they are;
- Set the 'Review posts before they are placed on my wall' setting on Facebook so you can moderate messages. For other social networking sites moderate them at least bi-weekly;
- Place your work email address, website, tennis centre address and phone number on the account so you can be contacted;
- Give details of the Welfare Officer on your page and information on how to contact them;
- Set our terms of use or rules for all who comment or upload images to your business page or site;
- Educate children and young people on how to use the internet safely by using the resources in the resources section;
- Challenge inappropriate or offensive language, behaviour and use of social media by children, young people and others;
- Do not accept children under the age of 13 on Facebook, as the rules to join Facebook state that the person must be 13 or over;
- Ensure you follow the Recording and Publishing Images guidance and have obtained parental consent when uploading pictures or videos of children and young people to your sites;
- Provide links to the LTA's and Tennis Foundation's Safeguarding Team and Equality and Diversity Team for further support.

### **What are the risks?**

When social media is not used correctly, it can pose a risk to all of those involved and in some cases cause harm to individuals and others.

### **Risks to children, young people, adults at risk and others:**

Online risks can be classified into the 3C's (Byron, 2010):

1. **Content** – where children are the receivers of harmful content, for example receiving a spam email which links them to pornography or racist, homophobic or other abusive or offensive content
2. **Contact** – where children come into contact with people who may want to harm them, for example an adult talking to a child on a chat site and trying to arrange a meeting for sexual purposes or people who are trying to identify individuals to bully or troll;
3. **Conduct** – this is when children behave inappropriately online and may cause harm, for example a young person uploading an image of one of their friends naked which leads to their friend being bullied or uploading a video or image which incites hatred or violence towards an individual or group

Furthermore, the main online risks can be categorised into four areas:

**1. Inappropriate Images, language or behaviour**

Children and young people may come across images online which may be harmful and distressing. Social media houses images such as pornography, violence, crime and other still and moving images which may impact on the child. Children and young people may be sent such images, search for them or create images thus making all 3C's mentioned above part of this category. Children state that seeing inappropriate images has the most profound effect on them and unfortunately such images are easily accessible.

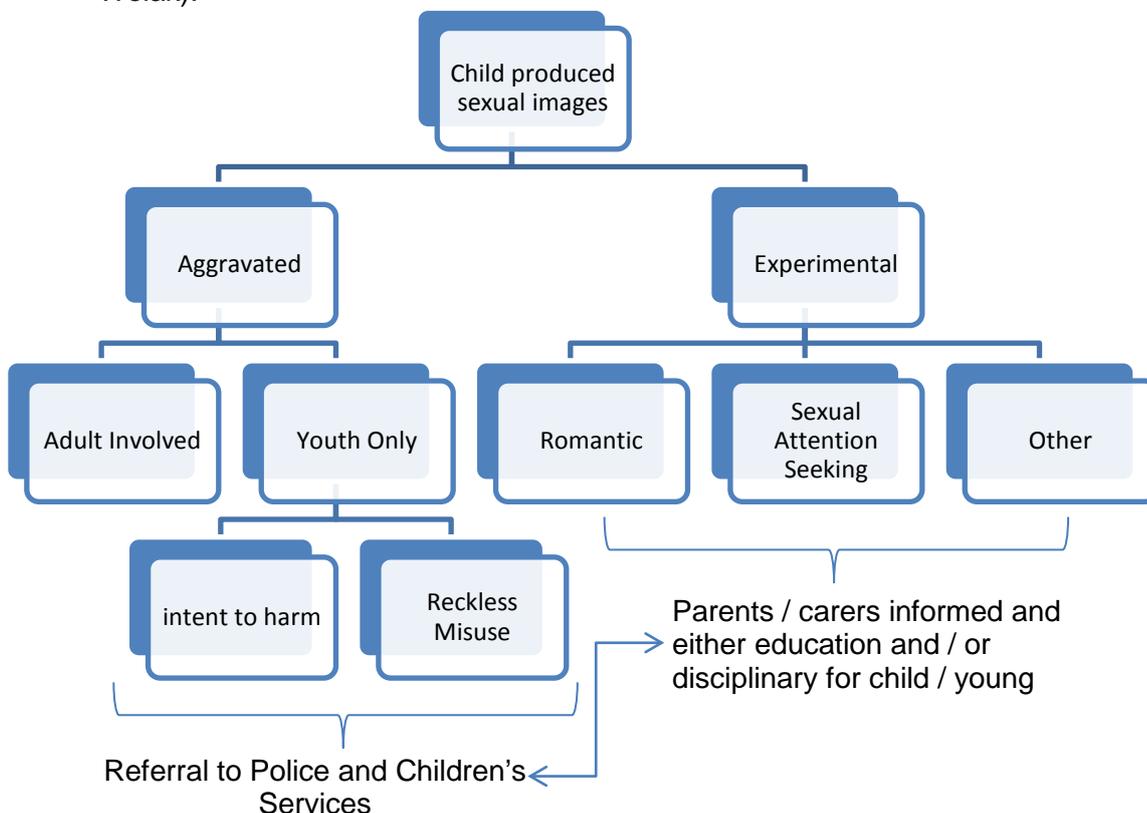
*Case Study:*

A 16 year old player sends her tennis friend a racist 'joke' on Twitter which she retweets. One of her followers forward the tweet to the LTA due to the nature of the 'joke'. The LTA investigates the tweets and the young person is disciplined for promoting racist views and also required to undertake equality training. Such tweets may have an impact on the career opportunities of that young person including her future sponsorship deals or access to Colleges or Universities.

**2. Sexting**

This is when a child or young person sends a sexual message or image of themselves or others to one or more people. Research suggests 1 in 4 young people have send a 'sext' and the impact of such images can be very damaging for the child or young people and lead to serious bullying and other emotional and physical impacts. Anyone under the age of 18 may be prosecuted for 'sexting' under the offence of either creating, distributing or having possession on an indecent image of a child. If the child or young person is found guilty they may also be placed on the Sex Offenders Register and this may affect their future career.

When analysing such cases the LTA's Safeguarding Team and Equality and Diversity Team use the following model to analyse sexting cases (adapted from Finkelhor and Wolak):



If tennis people or venues are aware of any sexting incident they should inform the LTA's Safeguarding Team and Equality and Diversity Team as soon as possible.

*Case Study:*

A 17 year old tennis player asks his girlfriend to send him a sexual image of her naked. A few months later his girlfriend ends the relationship and he decides to upload the image to Facebook. The male tennis player is arrested and charged with distribution and possession of an indecent image of a child. He is also placed on the Sex Offenders Register and thus bars him from working with children. He will not be able to coach children in tennis as he had once hoped.

### 3. Online Grooming

This is where an adult (someone over the age of 18) uses the internet and social media to befriend and entrust a child or young person for future sexual abuse, image production or exposure. Children or young people may befriend someone online and that person may use sexual language with the child and also send gifts or pretend they are in a relationship with the child.

As with other abuse, the signs and indicators are similar, however with online grooming there are some specific indicators including:

- Children having lots of new gifts not brought by family members;
- Children being picked up by different people (who the family do not know) in cars;
- Children saying they are dating someone they met online and it is apparent the person is older;
- Children being on dating sites;

Further signs and indicators can be found on the Signs and Indicators of Abuse Guidance.

*Case Study:*

A 14 year old tennis player is sent a follower request from her tennis coach, which she accepts. The coach sends her direct messages and uses phrases such as 'You're so sexy' and 'I would love to kiss you' which flatters the girl. The coach then asks if the girl would like to meet one evening and go to a bar. By sending such messages and arranging to meet a child for sexual purposes the coach is breaking the law as well as the LTA's Licenced Coaches Code of Conduct.

### 4. Cyberbullying

The use of electronic and digital media to scare, harass or intimidate another person. More information can be found in the Anti-Bullying Guidance.

## Reporting Online and Social Media Abuse

The following agencies are a source of support and able to help when referring online and social media abuse:



### Safeguarding Team & Equality and Diversity Team

A dedicated team promoting safeguarding, equality and inclusion in all areas of British Tennis.

[www.lta.org.uk/safeguarding](http://www.lta.org.uk/safeguarding)

[safeguarding@lta.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@lta.org.uk)

0208 487 7000



### Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Centre

A police agency concerned with the protection of children and young people online. They have an educational programme called 'Thinkuknow' which would be useful for tennis venues to deliver to children and young people.

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

[www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)



### Internet Watch Foundation (IWF)

The UK internet hotline for reporting illegal online content – specifically child sexual abuse images hosted worldwide and criminally obscene and incitement to racial hatred content which is hosted in the UK.

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



### Childline

Private and confidential service for children and young people upto the age of 19.

[www.childline.org](http://www.childline.org)

0800 1111 (free from mobiles)

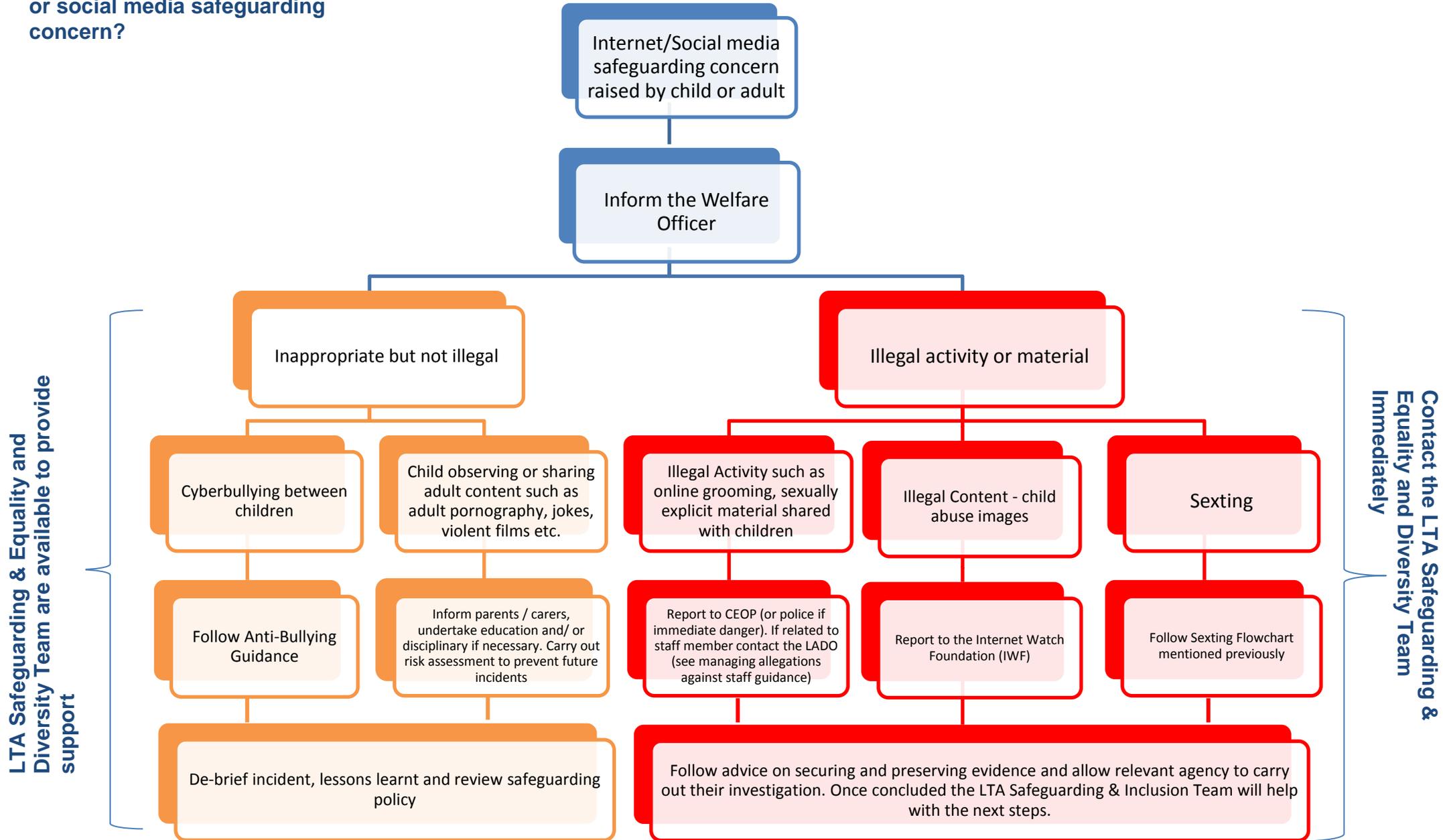


### Stop Hate UK

Service which supports those affected by Hate Crime and how to report such crimes

[www.stophateuk.org](http://www.stophateuk.org)

**What to do if you have an internet or social media safeguarding concern?**



LTA Safeguarding & Equality and Diversity Team are available to provide support

Contact the LTA Safeguarding & Equality and Diversity Team Immediately