

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Bristol Bridge Club**

## **Safeguarding Policy and Good Practice Guide**

Although bridge is mainly seen as a pastime for adults, it is in fact an activity which is both beneficial to and enjoyed by many young people and Bristol Bridge Club (BBC) is therefore very keen to introduce it to a wider audience. We fully recognise our responsibilities with regard to the safety and welfare of all people learning and playing bridge. This document comprises a statement of our policy with regard to the safeguarding of all vulnerable people who need protecting together with procedures which will be followed in line with our commitment to good practice and safeguarding

The procedures consist of some advisory guidelines and some mandatory procedures.

### **1 POLICY STATEMENT**

All members whatever their culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity should be able to play bridge in a safe and fun environment. All members have the right to protection from abuse and BBC is committed to ensuring that everyone involved with vulnerable people accept their responsibilities to safeguard and to report any concerns about their welfare to the appropriate authorities.

BBC accepts it has a moral and legal responsibility to provide a duty of care for those members as outlined above involved in bridge and to protect them from harm. We will therefore:

Respect and promote the rights, wishes and feelings of those at risk or abuse

Take all reasonable steps to protect them from harm, abuse, discrimination and degrading treatment;

Ensure that all employees and volunteers who may work with those at risk are carefully selected, informed about their responsibilities and provided with guidance and/or training in good practice for safeguarding and procedures for protection

Provide monitoring and supervision to ensure compliance with the codes of conduct and good practice in relation to safeguarding & protecting

Ensure that all suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately;

Staff and volunteers in general will not be trained or expected to deal with situations of abuse nor decide if abuse has occurred, but they will be expected to accept responsibility for acting and be aware of the appropriate reporting procedures.

Confidentiality will be upheld in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Human Rights Act 1998.

## **Terminology**

A child is defined as anyone under the age of 18, in line with the Children Act 1989 and 2004.

The terms child and young person are used interchangeably in this document, and also refers to vulnerable adults.

Young people over the age of 18 may also be considered to need protection in the context of their relationships with adults in positions of authority, such as team captains.

The term parent is used as a generic term to represent parents, carers and guardians. The term bridge refers all bridge-related activities.

Vulnerable adults are defined as an adult who, due to mental or bodily disability, cannot take care of himself without help from others.

## **Good practice principles**

Good practice will help to create a positive culture and climate within our sport. The following principles should be adhered to by all those working with everyone in bridge:

Ensure bridge is fun and enjoyable by treating all everyone equally, with respect and dignity; by confronting and dealing with bullying; by promoting fair play and giving time and attention equally to both the more and less talented.

Recognise the developmental needs and capacity of each everyone and place their welfare before winning or achieving goals, avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will.

Build balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers everyone to share in the decision-making process. Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.

Be an excellent role model:

- In sessions specifically designed for students such as teaching, practice and bridge.

Do not accept, or initiate, friend requests with under-18s on Facebook unless you are also friends with their parents, and do not engage in private chat with under-18s.

Ensure that any photographers/video operatives or similar wishing to attend bridge events are given a clear brief, wear identification and are not given unsupervised access to players.

Obtain written parental consent before using any photographs or images of children. Remember to gain consent from adults prior to using their photographs..

## **ONLINE BRIDGE**

Particular care is needed when providing online bridge activities. Parents are advised to check the controls provided by any provider of online bridge services prior to allowing children to access them and it is recommended that young people playing in open games do not identify themselves as such in their profiles or nicknames.

Each platform has different arrangements. Aside from casual games that young people may play in, these platforms may be used for EBU events or training, either specifically for young people or at which young people are welcome, so this information may be helpful for parents of those will be accessing them.

*RealBridge* is an online bridge provider which offers integrated video and audio. For **junior games that they organise themselves**, the following apply:

Nobody but an under-16 year-old, or national coach/captain can join.

Nobody can enter the event without going via the coach or parent.

They do not capture any personal data and strongly discourage the players from contacting them directly.

Conditions of contest are sent to the coaches, captains and players. They are informed in those documents of the rules for these sessions.

Only RealBridge-approved TDs direct these games.

**Events organised by clubs, teachers or squad leaders** are responsible for themselves.

They are not required to let RealBridge know about their games and they don't usually unless they need help (normally technical).

RealBridge staff who need to join the games will let the organisers know they are there.

Technical matters: *RealBridge* do not store video and do not provide "share screen" Twitch and Live Stream for U16 events that they run.

*Bridge Base Online (BBO)* is the world's largest bridge platform offering a variety of games themselves as well as allowing clubs and NBOs to run their own.

BBO is rated an 18+ site because of the live chat and interaction with adults. It is not intended for under-18s to use unsupervised.

There are a number of youth initiatives and junior lessons which take place on the BBO, under adult supervision, in controlled environment. The young people are assigned class accounts, created by their teachers, and play only in set games created by the teacher. They don't go home and login unsupervised and nobody interacts with the children outside their own group.

BBO suggests anonymous tools for kids, such as the anonymous Mini-bridge, anonymous bridge master, just declare, anonymous duplicates (we have versions without ads), where children can play and practice safely. They can provide information for these things.

Parents should be aware of the length of time a young person is playing online bridge each day and be able to set limits on it.

## **RESPONDING TO SUSPICIONS OR ALLEGATIONS**

### **Introduction**

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in a paid or voluntary capacity to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns about the welfare of a young person. These concerns may arise because:

- a young person discloses that he or she is being abused
- of the observed behaviour of an adult towards a young person
- of a number of indicators observed in a child over a period of time.

BBC has designated a member of staff to act as the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO). BBC Disciplinary Panel will consider all written reported breaches of the EBU Safeguarding Policy that are referred to it. All reports of malpractice should initially be referred to the Club's Safeguarding Officer in writing.

### **Action if Bullying is suspected**

The same procedures should be followed if bullying is suspected.

### **Action following a reported concern**

Where there is a complaint against a member of staff or volunteer there may be three types of investigation:

A criminal investigation – in which case the police are immediately involved;

A safeguarding & protecting children investigation – in which case the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) must be involved at the first stage,

A disciplinary or misconduct investigation – in which case the Disciplinary Panel of the English Bridge Union may be involved.

The appropriate investigation will be determined according to the type of concern – whether poor practice or possible abuse.

### **Poor Practice**

If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice; the designated person may deal with it as a misconduct issue.

If the allegation is about poor practice by a CWO, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to the EBU DSO who will decide how to deal with the allegation. The DSO may decide either to:

issue a written warning to the accused with a copy to the CWO where relevant and possibly recommend or require further training; or

in the case of very serious poor practice, or a continuation of previously reported poor practice, report the incident to the EBU Chief Executive Officer, who will decide on any initial action to be taken and whether to refer it to the EBU Disciplinary Panel.

### **Suspected Abuse**

Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member or a volunteer should be reported to the DSO, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child / vulnerable adult in question and any one else who may be at risk.

The DSO will refer the allegation to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) who may involve the police or go directly to the police if out-of-hours.

The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

If the DSO is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the Chair of the BBC or in his/her absence a member Deputy Chair.

### **Internal Enquiries and Suspension**

On receipt of a written allegation or complaint involving the Disciplinary Panel, the person accused will be informed of the specified alleged offence in writing (by recorded delivery) and will be informed he/she has the:

opportunity to defend him/herself and be allowed a reasonable time to prepare a defence.

right to seek legal advice or another form of assistance or representation

right of hearing before a panel at a time that will allow a full opportunity to present his/her defence and be represented

right of appeal to an independent appeals panel.

As far as possible, the Disciplinary Panel will follow the procedures and policies laid down by the Laws & Ethics Committee for investigations, hearings and appeals.

The Disciplinary Panel may impose such penalties as it deems appropriate, including: temporary or indefinite suspension from the club

### **Confidentiality**

Every effort will be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information will be handled and disseminated on a *need to know basis* only.