

New South Wales Bridge Club Limited (SBC) – Conduct of Conduct By-law

Authorisations:		Review:	
Approval Authority	Board	Date Approved	2/July/2025
		Next Review	2/July/2026
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1. Purpose

The purpose of this Code is to protect the health, safety, and wellbeing of all who attend any SBC venue. It applies to all people (*Participants*) involved in Bridge or other activities at an SBC venue, including members, visitors, volunteers, employees, contractors, and officers.

SBC is committed to providing a safe environment for all Participants, that is free from harassment, bullying, abuse, and other unfair treatment and promotes respectful and positive behaviour towards everyone. This Code aims to ensure that the core values, good reputation, and positive behaviour that SBC values is always maintained. It also sets out the procedures for raising concerns and having issues and complaints resolved in a timely manner.

This Code of Conduct is to be prominently displayed at SBC venues and on SBC's website.

2. Ethical dealings

All Participants must be ethical, fair, and honest in their dealings with other people.

Participants must not use their involvement with SBC to promote their own beliefs, behaviours, or practices. SBC venues are not to be used to express political, social, religious, or other potentially divisive views.

3. Zero Tolerance of Aggressive Behaviour

In line with SBC's commitment to providing a safe and enjoyable environment, SBC has a strict zero-tolerance towards any form of aggressive behaviour. This includes, but is not limited to, abuse, threats, intimidation, physical altercations, or any actions that could create a hostile or unsafe environment for any Participant. Any individual who engages in aggressive behaviour will face immediate action, which may include any of the sanctions set out in this Code. Nothing in this Code will prevent the immediate removal of a person from SBC premises for aggressive behaviour and/or SBC contacting the police.

4. Complaints

Issues and concerns may arise for a number of reasons. These include concerns regarding Bridge play or the Laws of Duplicate Bridge (the Laws), as well as concerns about player behaviour. Concerns may arise during a Bridge tournament or event, or simply from the interactions between people while they are at an SBC venue or attending an SBC event.

SBC aims to resolve complaints in the most efficient manner possible, and in many cases, complaints can be resolved informally.

4.1 Informal Resolution

Tournament directors and the Bridge Manager are responsible for handling queries, concerns and issues in the first instance, and will use their best endeavours to resolve any concerns promptly, calmly, and in an impartial manner.

If the concern is about Bridge play or the Laws (during a tournament), the director should be asked to attend the Bridge table, where the details of the concern can be discussed. The director will decide on a way forward. The director's decision on a matter of play or the Laws must be complied with, although a query or dispute on this can be raised following the close of the session.

If the concern is about player behaviour during a Bridge session, the director should be approached, and the concerns discussed. This discussion may occur either during or after the session (or both).

If the concern is about behaviour outside a Bridge playing session or event, then the matter should be raised with the Bridge Manager.

Any concern relating to a tournament director, the Bridge Manager, any other SBC employee or person working at the club, is to be directed, in the first instance, to the Head of Operations under section 4.2 'Formal Resolution'. Head of Operations may delegate his responsibilities under this clause to any Board member.

Concerns should be raised as soon as is practicable. Generally, it is expected that concerns will be raised within 7 days of the occurrence, and that the concern will be resolved within 14 days of being raised.

All complaints will be dealt with promptly, seriously, sensitively, and confidentially.

A written record may be made of any event or issue, but must be made of events in the following categories:

- aggressive behaviour
- suspicion of cheating or deliberate passing of illegal information or
- the occurrence of psychic bids.

4.2 Formal Resolution

Anyone who remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the above informal resolution process may escalate the matter. Details regarding the concern and the resolution sought (if appropriate) should be sent to the Head of Operations.

The Head of Operations may:

- attempt to resolve the matter
- determine that the complaint is vexatious, trivial or lacks merit, or
- refer the matter for discussion at the next Board meeting.

4.3 Investigations Committee

The Board may choose to establish a committee comprised of three people, one of whom is a Board Director, to act as an Investigations Committee. The Board may appoint any person (whether SBC members or not) it believes is appropriate to sit on this Committee.

Referred complaints will be investigated by the Committee by any means the Committee deems appropriate. In investigating a complaint, the Committee will take all steps necessary to ensure the collection of appropriate information and to adhere to the principles of natural justice. If the Committee decides to interview any person, that person will have the right to be supported by a person of their choosing at any interview.

The Committee will consider complaints and recommend to the Board steps which it deems appropriate to resolve issues.

Following consideration of a dispute, the Committee will report its findings to the Board with a recommendation as to the action to be taken.

4.4 Complaints involving a Board Director

If a complaint involves a Board Director, the complaint will be managed by the entire Board, except that the Director involved will be excluded from all deliberations.

5 Sanctions

The Board will consider recommendations received from the Investigations Committee and decide, in relation to a member, whether to:

- take no action
- caution the member
- censure the member
- suspend membership for a specified time
- expel the member from membership
- refuse renewal of membership and/or
- generally to deprive a member of any of the rights and privileges of membership.

In relation to a non-member, the Board will decide whether to:

- take no action
- caution the non-member
- censure the non-member
- exclude the non-member from Club premises and/or events, for a specified time or permanently.

If the Board believes that a person should be expelled from membership, or renewal of membership should be refused, the decision will be an interim decision, subject to the member's appeal right set out below.

The Board's decision, or interim decision, will be promptly communicated in writing to the alleged offender.

6 Appeal

A member advised of an interim decision of expulsion from membership, or refusal of renewal, will be given the right to address the Board. To exercise this right the Club must receive a written notice of appeal within 7 business days of the Participant receiving notification of the Board's interim decision.

If, following consideration of any representations made by the member, the Board decides to end the member's membership, the decision will be communicated to the member in writing within 7 business days of the address to the Board.

7 Mediation

The people involved in a formal complaint – the complainant and the person being complained about – may also seek the assistance of a neutral third party or a mediator. Mediation may occur either before or after an investigation of a complaint. If a complainant wishes to try and resolve the complaint with the assistance of a mediator, the Chairman of SBC will, in consultation with the complainant, arrange for a mediator to mediate the complaint.

8 Recorder

Details regarding ‘non-routine’ complaints will be recorded in a register. The Board director responsible for Governance performs the role of Recorder for SBC. They are responsible for maintaining the register of events or issues:

- reported under this Code
- formal requests for complaint resolution
- which are seen as not being in the best interests of the Club.

Despite any other provision of this Code, a Participant may raise any issue directly with the Recorder, either in person or by email to governance@sydneybridgeclub.org.au.

The Recorder will periodically report to the Board regarding issues added to the register.