

GEELONG BRIDGE CLUB
POLICY STATEMENT – ETIQUETTE AND CONDUCT
August 2023

In order to foster correct etiquette and conduct in all activities related to the Club, the following policy was agreed to by the Geelong Bridge Club Committee on 17 August 2023. This policy is a supplement to the Club's Constitution and to the Laws of Duplicate Bridge 2017, being consistent with Laws 74-91.

1. Geelong Bridge Club has adopted a Code of Good Conduct which provides guidelines to all members and visitors on the behaviours expected of them in all activities related to the Club. The Club publicises this Code widely and encourages all members to be familiar with it.
2. Directors may make announcements about etiquette at the start of or during play. Directors do not need specific Committee approval to make such announcements.
3. Infractions against the Code of Good Conduct may range from minor matters (e.g. players not displaying a courteous attitude, causing annoyance or embarrassment or just interfering with other players' enjoyment of the game) to serious matters (e.g. bullying, derogatory comments or cheating).
4. All members or visitors may report any infractions that are of concern to them.

Minor Complaints

5. If a player wishes to complain about a minor infraction, this should be reported to the Director either at the table or later.
6. Directors should use their best endeavours to resolve the complaint promptly, calmly and in a non-judgmental manner. They should listen to the complainant, explain any Rules and expectations that may have been misunderstood or not known, talk informally to the other party if there has been poor conduct by them and apply the Laws of Bridge if appropriate, all with the aim of restoring player harmony and enjoyment in the future.
7. A concise summary of the nature of each first complaint will be recorded by the Director in a secure register. This register is available to Directors only and is confidential to them. Its purpose is to assist in identifying any repeat complaints against the same person. It will also assist in identifying anyone making repeated complaints.
8. Directors should refer the complaint to the Club Recorder for further action if:
 - the complainant remains unsatisfied with the outcome from the Director
 - the Director considers that they are unable to deal effectively with the matter, or
 - there is a pattern of repeat complaints of a similar nature against the alleged offender.
9. If a player wishes to make a minor complaint about a director, this should be reported to the Chair of the Match Committee who will deal with it in a manner analogous to clauses 6-8 above.
10. Formal disciplinary procedures for repeat offenders on minor matters –
 - 1st complaint – if the Director (or the Club Recorder) considers the matter to be a valid complaint against an offender, the Director/Recorder will talk informally to the offender/s, explain the situation i.e. rules and expectations within the club and caution them against any repetition.
 - 2nd or later complaint – the Director refers the matter to the Club Recorder who may give the offender/s an official warning if deemed appropriate
 - a further complaint after official warning has been issued – the Club Recorder will refer the matter to the Club Committee to determine the appropriate sanction. Normally the Committee will suspend the offender/s (including playing partners)

from playing individually or as a pair for 1 to 3 months depending on the severity of the offence.

It should be noted that in any partnership some degree of responsibility for an offence is shared between the partners. Any subsequent offences by the same people after a suspension would result in an additional longer suspension. This suspension does not mean the offenders are suspended from the club.

However, suspension from the club in accordance with the Club's Constitution does remain a possibility for other very serious matters.

Serious Complaints

11. Complaints about serious infractions may be reported formally by the player to:

- the Director at the table or later
- the Club Recorder, or
- the Committee in writing.

Any of these 3 steps will normally be considered an official complaint.

All parties must be informed of any serious complaint.

12. If the complaint is on a matter covered by Laws 74-91 (which outline offences and Directors' powers), Directors can take immediate disciplinary action such as awarding adjusted scores, giving a warning to the offenders or even suspending players in extreme situations. On normal playing days the Directors' decisions are final, subject to any Appeal (see Laws 92-93).

13. For other serious complaints not covered by Laws 74-91, the matter is referred to the Committee and progressed in accordance with the provisions of the Club's Constitution: Division 2-Disciplinary action and Division 3-Grievance procedure.

Role of the Club Recorder

14. The role of the Club Recorder is to receive written and verbal information with regard to complaints by players about the conduct and behaviour of other players or directors.

The Recorder will:

- give due consideration to resolving any minor complaint referred to the Recorder
- keep records of all such complaints
- act as an educator explaining the Laws of Bridge and the Code of Good Conduct
- issue an official warning to repeat minor offenders, if deemed appropriate
- refer to the Committee any further minor complaints after an official warning has been issued
- refer to the Committee any minor complaint which the Recorder considers that they are unable to deal with effectively
- refer to the Committee any serious complaint received by the Recorder
- have no other punitive powers
- observe absolute confidence.