



Scottish Bridge Union SCIO SC051361

Scottish Bridge Union

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures

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Section I: Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy

1. Introduction

The SBU promotes the safe and enjoyable playing of bridge for children, young people and adults. Safeguarding and protecting children are fundamental responsibilities of us all. This policy explains the SBU's approach to these responsibilities. As a charity, the SBU is advised by OSCR to provide clear guidance and policy for its members. OSCR provides helpful guidance for Trustees to follow and is listed in Appendix 1

This guidance relates to our responsibility with children and young people in the following circumstances-

- Classes
- Playing in a club
- Attending away events
- Mentoring

Members and Trustees need to understand how to deal with any allegations that may be made by or about members, trustees or other such persons connected with the SBU. They need to be aware of what constitutes inappropriate behaviour. They also need to know how to respond if a child or young person discloses that they are at risk.

2. Scope

For the purposes of this policy, and as defined in the seminal legislation, children and young people are defined as **being under the age of 18**.

All volunteers and staff, connected with the SBU, working with children and young people are required to abide by this policy.

3. Principles

The SBU will:

1. Ensure bridge is enjoyable by treating all children and young people equally, with respect and dignity; by confronting and dealing with bullying; and by promoting fair play
2. Promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and young people by ensuring that robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in place

3. Take all reasonable steps to ensure that members understand their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and best behaviour at bridge.
4. Ensure that players maintain a safe and appropriate distance from children and young people.
5. Ensure that it is understood that:
 - It is inappropriate for players to have an intimate relationship with a child or young person.
 - It is considered bad practice to approach a child or young person directly to offer support, or to offer to partner them at bridge.
 - No player should initiate or accept friend requests with under 18s on Facebook or other social media.
 - Players should not engage in private online chat with under 18s.
 - All approaches including requests for personal details must be made through the nominated representative (Teacher, Child Protection Officer CPO).
6. Appoint/nominate a dedicated PVG officer, who reports to the CPO.
7. Appoint/nominate a CPO who reports to the Board.
8. Ensure that employees and volunteers who may work with children and young people are carefully selected, using the ***Application form for Volunteers***, informed about their responsibilities and provided with guidance and/or training in good practice in child protection procedures.
9. Ensure appropriate and prompt action is taken in the event of incidents/concerns of abuse or bullying and support provided to the individuals that raise or disclose the concern.
10. Ensure that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all child protection concerns are maintained and stored securely.

The SBU has clearly documented procedures which all people working with children and young people are required to follow. These procedures follow Scottish Government guidance and are drafted to take account of best practice. See Appendix 2 for a link to Scottish Government and how to access each Local Authority Child Protection contact details.

All volunteers and staff working for the SBU are required to have PVG (Protecting Vulnerable Groups) membership for working with children; they will follow the SBU procedures for safeguarding children.

4 Responsibilities

4.1 Board of the SBU

It is the overall responsibility of the Board to ensure that:

- The SBU fulfils its legal responsibilities.
- The Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and Procedures are implemented and that their practice is embedded operationally.
- The Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy & Procedures are advertised, readily available, maintained and updated in line with changing legislation and best practice.
- The CPO has the resources and support necessary to fulfil their obligations as listed below.
- They ensure that all affiliated Clubs are aware of the SBU Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy & Procedures.

4.3 Child Protection Officer [CPO]

- Acts as the main contact within the SBU for the protection of children.
- Is responsible for overseeing the operational implementation of the SBU Safeguarding & Children Procedures, together, where appropriate, with the relevant Convenor, in discussion with the PVG Manager.
- Maintains the SBU Safeguarding & Child Protection Procedures in line with best practice in the voluntary sector.
- Regularly reports to Board of the SBU.

4.4 Volunteers who work with children

Volunteers whether at local, district or national level are required to have PVG scheme membership for working with children. Volunteers will be provided with a copy of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures and are required to commit to adhering to them.

Overall, they have to understand that they will be held accountable for their actions when volunteering to work with children, at all times.

Appendix 1: OSCR Guidance

<https://www.oscr.org.uk/guidance-and-forms/safeguarding-guidance-keeping-vulnerable-beneficiaries-safe/charity-trustees-duties/#steps>

“Charity Trustees should take these practical safeguarding steps:

1. Know your duties in terms of charity law: read our **Guidance and Good Practice for Charity Trustees**, and understand how, in your charity the role of a charity trustee relates to safeguarding
2. Know what specific statutory duties you have to comply with because of the nature of your charity’s activities including where necessary carrying out **Disclosure Scotland** checks
3. Make sure charity trustees are appropriately trained in safeguarding so that they’re able to make informed decisions that affect vulnerable beneficiaries
4. Be alert to the possibility of the charity being targeted as an access point to children or vulnerable adults and the ways you can manage those risks
5. Have adequate safeguarding policies and procedures appropriate for your charity’s activities that reflect both the law and best practice. For example, charities working with children should have a child protection policy in place. Review and assess safeguarding risks and policies regularly, particularly where there are changes in circumstances or activities
6. Make sure safeguarding policies and procedures are properly implemented. All staff and volunteers should receive safeguarding training and go on regular refresher courses and be clear about:
 - what abuse is
 - how to spot it
 - how to respond to concerns about and from vulnerable beneficiaries
 - who to report concerns to
7. Make sure the principal themes of safeguarding are embedded in the culture of your charity encouraging a safe environment so that anyone who has a concern feels able to report it as soon as abuse is identified or suspected
8. Have in place procedures for staff, volunteers and beneficiaries to raise concerns with clear
 - lines of accountability
 - systems of reporting
 - actions to be taken
9. Make sure all concerns reported are appropriately and sensitively investigated and promptly acted on
10. If incidents do occur, reflect and learn from them. This may include making changes to your policy if needed, seeking feedback from beneficiaries and showing your commitment to safeguarding by publishing your safeguarding policy.”

Appendix 2

The following link goes to the Scottish Government website relating to Child Protection.

Bridge Clubs in Scotland affiliated to the SBU are advised to find their local Child Protection contact details via this webpage. Every Local Authority should publish the contact details of who to contact when reporting a child protection concern

<https://www.mygov.scot/report-child-abuse>

Section II: Procedures

1. Responsibilities

1.1 The SBU Board

The SBU Board has overall responsibility to ensure that the SBU's Safeguarding Policy & Procedures are embedded throughout the organisation.

To this end, the Board will:

- Ensure that the Policy & Procedures are widely promoted and easily sourced.
- Ensure that everyone throughout the organisation and those who provide related services to the organisation understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and are provided with appropriate learning opportunities to ensure implementation.
- Help ensure that individual Convenors understand their responsibility to request of any adult to be involved with children and young people in bridge related activities within their sphere of responsibility that they apply for membership of the PVG scheme- this may include volunteers who organise events for children aged up to 18 -and enlisting other adults to assist, and ensure that it is understood that their involvement in such activity is likely to be dependent on PVG certification.
- Ensure that robust recruitment procedures are in place for applications to become a teacher /mentor/volunteer working with children and young people on behalf of the SBU.
- Make available full risk assessment procedures, using the ***Planning and Risk Assessment*** form, in all situations where work is undertaken with children. This involves identifying risks in clubs, at congresses and tournaments, when travel is involved, and where accommodation is used.

1.2 Child Protection Officer [CPO]

General

The SBU CPO has the main operational responsibility for managing safeguarding and child protection issues within the SBU.

Role and Responsibilities of the CPO–

Within the SBU, the CPO, as the main contact within the SBU for the protection of children will:

- Oversee the implementation of and promote the SBU Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures.
- Regularly report to the Board of the SBU.
- Provide information and advice on the protection of children.
- Support and raise awareness of the protection of children.
- Communicate (together with the Board) with members on issues of safeguarding and child protection.
- Hold the local contact number of the relevant Child Protection agencies.
- Ensure the full suite of forms referenced are readily available.
- Keep abreast of developments and understand the latest information on data protection, confidentiality and other legal issues that impact on the protection of children.
- Maintain confidential records of reported cases and action taken. Liaise with the statutory agencies to ensure they have access to all necessary information.
- Organise training for members.
- Together with the Board monitor and review the SBU's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and procedures every 12 months.

2 Reporting Procedures

2.1 Accidents

In the case of an accident or incident which does not fall under the heading of child protection, the ***Accident/Incident Report*** should be completed.

2.2 Disclosure of abuse, concerns and/or allegations

Concerns may arise because:

- A child may disclose that they are being abused in some way.
- A child makes an allegation against an adult.
- There is a change in the behaviour pattern of a child over a period of time.
- There is a notable failure to thrive.
- There is suspicion of physical abuse.
- The behaviour of an adult is causing concern.

Sometimes an allegation will have no substance. However, all allegations must be reported to and investigated. It is the duty of any adult to report serious

concerns immediately to the appropriate authority especially where abuse has been disclosed and where there is clear evidence that the child is at serious risk. The SBU CPO will hold the local contact number of the relevant Child Protection agencies. This person should record anything the child discloses in writing, using the **Concern/Allegation Record** form. **They must inform the child that this will be passed on.** They should not undertake any investigation as this may affect further proceedings by professionals.

The SBU CPO should be informed as soon as possible by phone followed by a written report. All communications should be treated with the strictest confidence and kept securely.

The name and contact details of the Child Protection Officer should be available along with the means of accessing the policy to all parents and guardians and adults working with children.

Only objective recording should be used and not one based on opinion or personal feelings. The information to be recorded must include the following:

1. The nature of the suspicion and/or allegation.
2. A description of any physical abuse such as visible bruises, cuts etc.
3. Note any witnesses.
4. Make a clear note of the date, time, location and any other relevant information.
5. Make sure a distinction is made by claims based on supportable factual evidence and those which are second-hand, gossip, opinion, etc.

2.3 Action after allegation involving a member of SBU working with children and young people

An allegation of sexual or physical abuse by a member of SBU should be referred to the appropriate authorities as already outlined in this section.

Allegations about inappropriate behaviour or poor practice by SBU members towards children should be reported to the CPO, in person or by phone and followed up by using the **Concern/Allegation Record** form. Where such behaviour is witnessed by another SBU member or player, this should be brought to the attention of the Director, and/or the CPO if present at the time in order to make any immediate safeguarding actions. Such behaviour may involve grooming of a young person, inappropriate language, making plans to seek contact outwith the club etc. This is often a difficult judgement call to make, but the main consideration is the immediate safety of the child or young person.

The CPO has to decide if the allegation may constitute reprehensible conduct, as defined in the European Bridge League Disciplinary Code. If they believe this may be the case then the matter should be reported to the Chair of the SBU Laws and Ethics, [L&E], Committee to be dealt with in accordance with the published SBU Disciplinary Code. If the CPO does not believe that the action constitutes reprehensible conduct then the CPO will discuss the situation with the relevant person with a view to amending their practice.

Confidentiality is of major importance and only those who need to know should be told. This may include the:

1. Child concerned.
2. Person(s) being accused.
3. Parents/carers of the child and the alleged abuser if the latter is also a child.
4. SBU CPO.
5. Local Authority Child Protection contact.
6. Police.
7. SBU L&E Committee.

3 Good Practice Guidelines

The Code of Conduct for Volunteers working with Children and Young People is the reference document. Any player volunteering to help out at events, assisting SBU teachers or attending tournaments with children, should be given the Code Of Conduct.

3.1 When travelling with children and young people

- ***Authorisation for Foreign Travel, where appropriate, and Medical Consent Forms*** at all times should be used before embarking on any excursion and these should include questions about medical and dietary information along with a request for details of emergency contacts. These forms should be destroyed two weeks after the end of any trip.
- Parents/guardians should be given the Group leader's contact details.
- A person trained in first aid must accompany the group and always carry first aid equipment with them.
- Only a suitably qualified first aider may administer medication. In a few rare cases, the child him/herself may be carrying special medication such as anti-histamines, insulin, anti-epileptics, etc. but this does not remove the responsibility from the adult to be satisfied that the child is self-administering the medication appropriately, or to summon medical assistance where necessary.

- Should a child be taking medication then an extra set should be given to the person responsible for first aid. This is in the event of the child themselves losing their own set of medication (e.g. an asthma inhaler.)
- If it is necessary to transport children by private car, then written permission will be required for all aged 18 years or under at the time of playing.
- If a hired mini-bus or equivalent is used, the driver and company must be fully insured and the vehicle should have safety-belts.
- Trips should have adequate travel insurance in place when organised by the Scottish Bridge Union members. Parents and guardians should be advised of the amount of cover as they may wish to make further arrangements.

3.2 When staying in accommodation

- Adults should be located near the accommodation of the children to ensure that they are easily and quickly contacted in the event of an emergency.
- The **Host Family Declaration** form should be used when accommodation is provided by a local family.
- If an adult is required to enter a room or area where children are present, they should always be accompanied by another adult.
- The conduct of adults during trips with children should be professional. They should not swear and should carefully consider any alcohol consumption.
- Checks should ensure that children's dietary requirements are met.
- Some children may feel homesick or have phobias or may feel vulnerable. Care should be taken to support them with sensitivity so as not to cause them embarrassment.
- Physical handling of children, even if well-intentioned, should in general be avoided, other than in exceptional circumstances, such as if the child has been injured or taken ill or if it is necessary to move the child for his or her own safety or well-being.
- Parents/carers will be given, in advance, an emergency contact number, preferably several, should the need arise.
- In the case of taking part in a national event all children must have a properly completed signed **Code of Conduct for Children and Young People on Bridge Trips** which must be countersigned where appropriate
- Adults must ensure that the children clearly understand that they must adhere to the agreed Code of Conduct.
- At any venue, children must be instructed with the procedure to be carried out in the event of a fire and told where they should muster outside the building and to whom they should report. It is critical that supervising adults know where the children are so that an accurate check can be made of numbers for the Fire Marshal should an area be evacuated.

- Children must know whom they can contact in the event of an emergency and by what means.

3.3 Using social media, communicating and photographing children

- The child's parents/carers should be the first point of contact between SBU and the child.
- Written permission should be sought to communicate with a youngster under the age of 18 and any communication should have a copy sent to the parent or carer. ***Code of Conduct for Online Behaviour and Social Media*** is the relevant reference document.
- Written permission should be sought from parents/carers for the use of photographs for publicity.
- Data of the child should be protected. There is an SBU Data Protection Officer.
- Photographs used for publication should not divulge the name of the child.

3.4 Online Platforms for Schools Minibridge and Junior Bridge and for after school tuition by clubs

- SBU teachers will be using two platforms to teach online bridge in schools. One to teach and one to play. Both platforms should be an approved forum by education officials of each local authority.
- Teachers should set up the teaching platform and bridge tutors should set up the bridge platform and send the link to the class teacher, not the pupils.
- Tutors should have no means of outside contact with pupils.
- The playing platform may be Real Bridge or a similar platform. Youngsters should log in through their devices with a first name only.
- It is advisable for classroom teachers and assistants to be part of the playing process. Bridge teachers should access the tables with a separate Tournament Director code. They can visit each table to help the youngsters when called.
- Bridge teachers should be supportive of youngsters and talk to them positively with careful use of language and gesture. It is important to use praise rather than to criticise.
- National competitions may take place online. Procedures for any out of school online activity should have parental permission using the ***Parental On-line Consent*** form. Use of online platforms outside of school such as after school's tuition and competitions should be supervised (regulated) by a parent or approved carer.

3.5 Implications for club committees and tournament directors (TDs)

- There may be occasions when young people under the age of 18 come to play in a club or at a congress. Club Officials/Convenors should request that anyone intending to play with a young person at the club or congress, notifies their local Convener/ TD in advance of their intention. If not a family member, they should be asked to confirm they have read the Club/SBU Safeguarding Policy and Procedures. The local Convener will then have time to consult, if need be, with relevant committee members about whether a risk assessment needs to be carried out before the young person comes along to play at the club. Venues and circumstances will differ.
- It is often the case that youngsters begin to play with adult mentors, or they may come along as partners with another junior. It is important that care should be taken that youngsters should not be left on a one-to-one basis with an adult.

4. Monitoring and Appraisal

All persons involved with events in which children participate must be able to receive training from outside expert agencies should the need arise. Following all events held under the auspices of the Scottish Bridge Union all the adults involved should be asked, if feasible, to provide feedback. All participants (both adults and children) should be invited to provide feedback. This may highlight any unanticipated problems or it might indicate that the provisions set in place worked well. Any feedback from the children themselves must be treated confidentially and dealt with appropriately.

5. Review

This Policy and these Procedures will be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis:

- In accordance with changes in legislation and guidance on the protection of children or any changes within the SBU.
- Following any issues or concerns raised about the protection of children within the SBU.

6. Contact Information

Contact details of the CPO, Chair of Law and Ethics, and the Data Protection Officer are on the SBU Web.