



STEPBRIDGE AUSTRALIA BRIDGE CLUB Inc.

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Player Code of Conduct Policy & Procedures

This Player Code of Conduct Policy & Procedure has been developed in conjunction with the StepBridge Australia Bridge Club Inc. Constitution

Approved by the Committee on 25 August 2025

BACKGROUND

StepBridge has the goals of:

- Providing an online bridge experience for players from all over the world.
- Providing sessions, where possible, for all levels of all players (Novice, Restricted and Open) with regular session times advertised well in advance.
- Providing a cost-effective structure, so that players can afford to play multiple times each day/week.
- Zero tolerance for bad behaviour and adhere to all ABF rules, regulations and guidelines (*2017 LAWS OF DUPLICATE BRIDGE* and *MODIFICATIONS TO THE LAWS AND REGULATIONS FOR ONLINE BRIDGE*). In particular, *LAW 74 – CONDUCT AND ETIQUETTE* applies, ensuring that our players are comfortable in a pleasant club environment.

BEHAVIOURS EXPECTED

- Courtesy – in interactions and play
- In-tempo play (within 10 seconds)
- Honesty – in bidding, play and communications
- Acceptance of the Tournament Director's ruling (there are rights for appeal through the normal channels – email support@stepbridge.com.au for consideration)

WHO INVESTIGATES BREACHES OF THIS CODE

- Initially the TD, at the table
- The Head TD via tournament reporting structure
- The TD Review Board may be asked to comment and adjudicate, leading to the extreme cases being forwarded to the President and being presented to the Committee for further action.
- The TD involved will be advised of the decision by the Head TD.

SANCTIONS ARISING FROM BEHAVIOUR DEEMED UNACCEPTABLE

The committee has a range of sanctions to draw upon after investigating breaches of this code.

Examples	Procedure / Who	Sanctions	Time Frame
MINOR			
Slow play for no reason Incorrect or incomplete alerting Inconsiderate behaviour (i.e. leaving the table for an extended period of time for no good reason) Telling Partner/Opponents how they should have bid/played the hand without being asked (if this causes distress to the player)	TD speaks (via message or phone) to the 'at fault' player. TD to highly consider adding a note to the TD Report Form (just to keep a record in case this becomes a pattern of behaviour).	Warning at the time from the TD	Immediate

Examples	Procedure / Who	Sanctions	Time Frame
MODERATE			
Repeated minor offences in the same session	TD warns the player that they are to stop the behaviour immediately.	Written warning and/or Suspension for 2-4 weeks (first-time offenders will not be subject to a 4-week suspension).	Immediate from the TD
Harassment (one-off) via private or table chat that have upset another player	TD warns the player that his/her behaviour contravenes the Code of Conduct and will be reported.	For cases where this is a further incidence of previous behaviour that has already incurred a suspension, the penalty could be 4 weeks.	Head TD and or committee review the incident to determine severity or sanction
Behaviour deemed by the TD to be of a more serious nature but not yet in the Severe category	TD uses the TD Report Form to record the incident (copy/paste all relevant log interactions and identify the board(s) and opponents).		As detailed in the constitution.

Examples	Procedure / Who	Sanctions	Time Frame
SEVERE			
<p>Behaviour that could cause distress to more than one player or is reported by more than one player</p> <p>Harassment more than once</p> <p>Trying to intimidate a player as judged by the TD</p> <p>Swearing of any kind</p> <p>Derogatory comment(s)</p> <p>Insulting comments</p>	<p>TD warns the player that his/her behaviour contravenes the Code of Conduct and will be reported.</p> <p>TD further warns the player that they are to stop immediately such behaviour.</p> <p>TD uses the TD Report Form to record the incident (copy/paste the log interactions)</p> <p>TD considers removing player from the tournament thereby forfeiting their right to reimbursement.</p>	<p>Written warning and suspension for up to 3 months.</p> <p>For cases where this is a further incidence of previous behaviour that has already incurred sanction(s), the penalty will edge closer to the 3 months.</p>	<p>Immediate from the TD</p> <p>Head TD and/or committee review the incident to determine severity and/or sanction, as detailed in the constitution.</p>

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE SANCTIONED BY THE TD OR COMMITTEE

1. Apologise to the person 'harmed' at the table via a private chat or a public message.
2. Apologise to the committee in writing as soon as possible (but within 14 days).
3. Admit the action was ill-advised and caused distress.
4. Serve out the suspension without complaint.
5. When (if) allowed back, do not display repeated behaviours that earned the initial suspension.

CONCLUSION

Bridge is a game of ethics and strategy. It is played around the world in an honest and considerate manner. StepBridge Australia has zero tolerance for bad behaviour and takes this very seriously. If a player is unable to behave in an acceptable manner, there could be severe consequences so that the game can be free of harassment and enjoyable to others.

REFERENCES

StepBridge Australia Bridge Club Inc. Constitution (Revised October 2023)

2017 Laws of Duplicate Bridge

Modifications to the Laws and Regulations for online bridge (January 30, 2023)