

QCBC Policy: Managing Complaints about Behavior and Club Operations.

This policy and procedure states the Club's commitment to a positive and safe atmosphere and describes the complaints management procedure.

POLICY:

The Board of QCBC wants to ensure that all members and visitors can enjoy the amenities of the club in a pleasant atmosphere where they feel safe and comfortable. The Club expects positive and cordial behaviour from all members and has zero tolerance for harassment, bullying and discriminatory behaviour.

Should members feel that they have been subjected to behaviour constituting significant rudeness, harassment, insinuations, profanity, threats, or violence; or if they feel that an aspect of the Club's operation is seriously detrimental to them, they may lodge a complaint which will be investigated and responded to in a timely manner. All parties will be treated with respect and with strict confidentiality.

PROCEDURE:

Generally, issues arise during play at the Club. In the first instance, the Director should be called. **Infractions of the Laws of Bridge will be dealt with by the Director** in accordance with the Laws.

- If the Director believes that the matter requires further consideration, they have the right to refer the matter to the Club Secretary/Manager.
- If the affected person believes that the matter requires further consideration, they can lodge a complaint with the Club Secretary/Manager.

Any issues arising outside session play are to be referred to the Club/Secretary Manager. If the issue relates to the Club Manager, it should be referred to the Board President or a Board member.

Complaints will be managed informally if this will achieve an appropriate resolution. More serious matters will be treated as a formal complaint. **The Secretary/Manager will seek to resolve complaints that can be addressed informally** and may seek advice, on a confidential basis, from any suitable source of advice.

If it is deemed that the matter warrants a **formal investigation**:

1. The complainant is to **submit their complaint in writing within 7 days** (writing, email or text message). The Manager/Secretary acknowledges receipt of the complaint in writing and advises the other party(s) in writing that a complaint has been lodged about them.
2. The matter is **referred to an ethics and disciplinary panel for investigation and recommendation**. The panel undertakes a fair hearing of the facts involved in the episode through discussion with the complainant, the person being complained about and any witnesses. The complainant and the person being complained about may bring a support person, noting that the support person cannot provide information or comment to the panel. The panel may seek advice as needed.
3. The panel's recommendation is referred to the **QCBC Board** which **makes the final decision** in relation to the matter.

4. The complainant is advised about the outcome of their complaint. For privacy reasons, the complainant will not be informed about the specific consequences for the other party.
5. The other party is advised in writing about the Board's decisions. The Board's decision is final.
6. The process is to be undertaken in a **timely manner**. Complaints are to be acknowledged within 7 days and the ethics and disciplinary panel will convene and investigate the matter as soon as possible and ordinarily within 3 weeks after the complaint was lodged. The Board will meet by videoconference to make a timely decision if a regular meeting is not scheduled within the next week. Both parties will be advised if there are delays in the process.
7. In the extremely rare event that the matter warrants a police investigation, it will be referred to the police as quickly as possible. The Club's investigation may be delayed if the police believe it could impede their investigation.

Potential outcomes:

The intention of all actions/outcomes is to facilitate a positive Club environment and is not punishment. The following actions can ensue:

1. A letter of caution written by the Secretary/Manager at the direction of the Board indicating the concern of the Board regarding the behaviour involved and outlining the Board's expectations regarding the behaviour of members.
2. A letter of censure indicating the concern of the Board regarding the behaviour involved and outlining the range of steps available to the Board should the behaviour persist,
3. Suspension from membership for a period ranging from a short period up to 12 months. This would generally be reserved for a 2nd or later instance of undesirable behaviour but can be invoked at first offence for serious infringements.
4. Refusal to renew membership at the beginning of the next membership year.
5. As prescribed by the Articles of Association, membership can only be ceased if it is agreed by the membership at an Extraordinary General Meeting.

Ethics and Disciplinary Panel

When a complaint is received, the Board will identify panel members (usually 3) who have expertise in complaints management, Laws of Bridge and/or other relevant skills.

Documentation

All documents and correspondence relating to the complaint will be kept in a hard copy or electronic file which is kept in a secure location. The documents are to be destroyed after 7 years.

Supporting Document

QCBC Code of Conduct