



The Maleny Contract Bridge Club Inc. (MCBC)

Bridge Club Discrimination and Harassment Policy

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1. Scope

This policy applies to:

- all club members and visitors
- how MCBC provides services to its members and how it interacts with other members of the public
- club members' and visitors' treatment of other club members and visitors, of casual workers, contractors and volunteers, and of other members of the public encountered in the course of their MCBC activity.

2. Aims

MCBC is committed to providing a safe, flexible and respectful environment for club members and visitors free from all forms of discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment.

All MCBC club members and visitors are required to treat others with dignity, courtesy and respect.

By effectively implementing our *Club discrimination and harassment policy* we will attract and retain club members and create a positive environment for club members and visitors.

3. Club members' and visitors' rights and responsibilities

All club members and visitors are entitled to:

- participate in all club activities free from discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment
- the right to raise issues or to make an enquiry or complaint in a reasonable and respectful manner without being victimised

All club members and visitors must:

- follow the standards of behaviour outlined in this policy
- offer support to people who experience discrimination, bullying or sexual harassment, including providing information about how to make a complaint
- avoid gossip and respect the confidentiality of complaint resolution procedures
- treat everyone with dignity, courtesy and respect.

3.1 Additional responsibilities of Directors, the Club President and Committee Members

Directors, the Club President, and Committee Members must also:

- model appropriate standards of behaviour
- take steps to educate and make club members aware of their obligations under this policy and the law

- intervene quickly and appropriately when they become aware of inappropriate behaviour
- act fairly to resolve issues, making sure relevant parties are heard
- help club members and visitors resolve complaints informally and if needed assist them to follow the procedure in MCBC By-Law 2 on Unacceptable Behaviour
- ensure club members who raise an issue or make a complaint are not victimised

4. Unacceptable conduct

Discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment are unacceptable at MCBC and are unlawful under the following legislation:

- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth)
- *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* (Cth)
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth)
- *Age Discrimination Act 2004* (Cth)
- *Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986* (Cth).

Club members and visitors found to have engaged in such conduct might be counselled, warned or disciplined. Severe or repeated breaches can lead to formal discipline up to and including barring from participating in club sessions, and membership termination as per MCBC By-Law 2 (Clause 9/10 of the Clubs Constitution).

4.1 Discrimination

Discrimination is treating, or proposing to treat, someone unfavourably because of a personal characteristic protected by the law, such as sex, age, race or disability.

Discrimination can occur:

Directly, when a person or group is treated less favourably than another person or group in a similar situation because of a personal characteristic protected by law (see list below).

Indirectly, when an unreasonable requirement, condition or practice is imposed that has, or is likely to have, the effect of disadvantaging people with a personal characteristic protected by law (see list below).

Protected personal characteristics under Federal discrimination law include:

- a disability, disease or injury, including work-related injury
- parental status or status as a carer, for example, because they are responsible for caring for children or other family members
- race, colour, descent, national origin, or ethnic background
- age, whether young or old, or because of age in general
- sex
- industrial activity, including being a member of an industrial organisation like a trade union or taking part in industrial activity, or deciding not to join a union
- religion
- pregnancy and breastfeeding

- sexual orientation, intersex status or gender identity, including gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual, transgender, queer and heterosexual
- marital status, whether married, divorced, unmarried or in a de facto relationship or same sex relationship
- political opinion
- social origin
- medical record
- an association with someone who has, or is assumed to have, one of these characteristics, such as being the parent of a child with a disability.

It is also against the law to treat someone unfavourably because you assume they have a personal characteristic or may have it at some time in the future.

4.2 Bullying

If someone is being bullied because of a personal characteristic protected by equal opportunity law, it is a form of discrimination.

Bullying can take many forms, including jokes, teasing, nicknames, emails, pictures, text messages, social isolation or ignoring people.

Under Federal law, this behaviour does not have to be repeated to be discrimination – it may be a one-off event.

Behaviours that may constitute bullying include:

- sarcasm and other forms of demeaning language
- threats, abuse or shouting
- coercion
- isolation
- inappropriate blaming
- ganging up
- constant unconstructive criticism
- deliberately withholding information or equipment that a person needs to participate in the club

Bullying is unacceptable in MCBC and may also be against occupational health and safety law.

4.3 Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is a specific and serious form of harassment. It is unwelcome sexual behaviour, which could be expected to make a person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated. Sexual harassment can be physical, spoken or written. It can include:

- comments about a person's private life or the way they look
- sexually suggestive behaviour, such as leering or staring
- brushing up against someone, touching, fondling or hugging
- sexually suggestive comments or jokes

- displaying offensive screen savers, photos, calendars or objects
- repeated unwanted requests to go out
- requests for sex
- sexually explicit posts on social networking sites
- insults or taunts of a sexual nature
- intrusive questions or statements about a person's private life
- sending sexually explicit emails or text messages
- inappropriate advances on social networking sites
- accessing sexually explicit internet sites
- behaviour that may also be considered to be an offence under criminal law, such as physical assault, indecent exposure, sexual assault, stalking or obscene communications.

Just because someone does not object to inappropriate behaviour, it does not mean that they are consenting to the behaviour.

All club members, visitors and volunteers have the same rights and responsibilities in relation to sexual harassment.

A single incident is enough to constitute sexual harassment – it doesn't have to be repeated.

All incidents of sexual harassment – no matter how large or small or who is involved – require Directors, The Club President and/or the Committee to respond quickly and appropriately.

MCBC recognises that comments and behaviour that do not offend one person can offend another. This policy requires all club members and visitors to respect other people's limits.

4.4 Victimisation

Victimisation is subjecting or threatening to subject someone to a detriment because they have asserted their rights under equal opportunity law, made a complaint, helped someone else make a complaint, or refused to do something because it would be discrimination, sexual harassment or victimisation. Victimisation is against the law.

It is also victimisation to threaten someone (such as a witness) who may be involved in investigating an equal opportunity concern or complaint.

Victimisation is a very serious breach of this policy and is likely (depending on the severity and circumstances) to result in formal discipline against the perpetrator.

MCBC has a zero tolerance approach to victimisation.

4.5 Gossip

It is unacceptable for club members and visitors at MCBC to talk with other club members, visitors or suppliers about any complaint of discrimination or harassment.

Breaching the confidentiality of a formal complaint investigation or inappropriately disclosing personal information obtained is a serious breach of this policy and may lead to formal discipline.

5. Resolving issues at MCBC

MCBC strongly encourages any club member or visitor who believes they have been discriminated against, bullied, sexually harassed or victimised to take appropriate action by contacting the Club President.

The Club President shall follow the Disciplinary Procedure described in By- Law 2 of the Club Constitution **The Policy on Unacceptable Behaviour** if the complaint is not able to be resolved informally.

Club members or visitors who do not feel safe or confident to take such action may seek assistance from Directors and/or Committee Members for advice and support or action their behalf.

6. Other relevant MCBC policies

Club members are encouraged to read this policy in conjunction with other relevant MCBC policies, including

The Policy on Unacceptable Behaviour Club By- Law 2, dated 07 May 2018 and posted on the MCBC website.

7. More information

If you have a query about this policy or need more information, please contact the Club President and/or Committee Members.

8. Review details

This policy was adopted by MCBC on 26 July 2021

This policy was last updated on 27 July 2021