

Australian Bridge Federation

Working with
Children and Young Persons

Policy, Protection and Health and Safety guidelines

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ABF Child Protection Policy

Policy Statement

Australian Bridge Federation (ABF) is committed to providing a positive, creative educational learning and playing, and competitive bridge experience for children and young people throughout Australia. We recognise the responsibility we hold to promote safe practice, and to protect children from harm and exploitation. As such, the ABF is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children in their care when they are taking part in ABF organised activities. For the purposes of this policy and associated procedures, a child or young person is recognised as someone under the age of 18 years.

Policy Principles

In implementing this policy the ABF commit to the following principles:

- The ABF will promote the welfare, health, safety and development of children in partnership with children, young people, parents/carers, employees, contractors and volunteers within the wider bridge community, recognising that child protection is everyone's responsibility.
- The ABF will support staff and volunteers to provide a safe environment in which to provide teaching and playing experiences

Policy Objectives

The aim of this policy is to:

- promote the health and welfare of children while participating in activities organised by the ABF
- support staff, members and volunteers to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect themselves and children and young people from harm,
- offer guidance to ABF members and clubs on safe working practices
- require children, staff, members and volunteers who are working directly with children and young people to deliver on behalf of the ABF, to adopt and abide by this Child Protection Policy and these procedures
- respond to any allegations of misconduct or harm to children in line with this Policy and these procedures,
- regularly monitor the implementation and delivery of this Policy and these procedures

Scope of Policy

- All those who work for the ABF and who have significant dealings with Children or Young people will be required to adhere to this policy and deliver services in accordance with Code of Conduct detailed in this document.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every 12 months with the next review date to be determined. The policy may be reviewed more frequently if required, or where specific concerns have been raised about the existing policy that so warrant an immediate review.

Child Protection Officer

The ABF will appoint a Child Protection Officer who will be responsible for implementing this policy and overseeing any issues that may arise as a result.

WORKING WITH CHILDREN

Employment Guidelines

All employees, contractors, volunteers working for or with the ABF to deliver services with children and young people will be:

- Given a job description which identifies roles and responsibilities
- Required to complete a written Application Form, and provide two referees
- Required to read and sign an agreement that they will operate under the Code of Conduct outlined in this document
- Required to secure a Working with Children Check from your home state

<https://www.australiannationalcharactercheck.com.au/working-with-children-checks.html>

Guidance for Clubs

State bodies and local clubs are legal entities in their own right, and their Governing Committees should ensure that the Club has a policy around Health and Safety and has developed a Child Protection Policy. At a minimum it is recommended:

- The Governing Committee should ensure that those in their club who work with Children and Young People work under the ABF Code of Conduct for staff and volunteers.

Working with schools – additional guidance

- Clubs should make themselves aware of any specific school Child Protection requirements
- Clubs should familiarise themselves with the reporting procedures of the school for reporting concerns

Running events in the Club – additional guidance

- Governing Committee should ensure that those working with children and young people supply a working with children check.

Guidance for those working for the ABF – as individuals or volunteers

To ensure that both you and young people are safeguarded we suggest that, as a minimum you:

- Make yourself aware of the ABF's child protection policy
- Adhere to the ABF's Code of Conduct and employ safe practices
- When working in schools familiarise yourself with and adhere to their Child Protection policies and reporting procedures
- When working in Clubs work closely with the Committee
- Familiarise yourself with support services available

CODE OF CONDUCT – OVERVIEW

- Be professional and maintain a high standard of personal behaviour at all times.
- Recognise the trust placed in adults by children and young people and recognise the power held over children by adults. Treat this trust of power with the highest responsibility.
- Always try to work in an open and accountable manner . Working in view of others whenever possible. Be wary of working alone and unobserved. Be willing to accept questions or criticism regarding good practice. Expect others to work in an open and accountable way, question and criticise the practice of others if necessary.
- Maintain a professional relationship with children. Any form of sexual relationship or activity with a child is unacceptable.
- Do not be under the influence of drink, drugs or illegal substances when working with children or young people.
- Use appropriate language at all times – do not raise your voice, do not swear, be derogatory or sarcastic and never make sexual or suggestive comments to a child. If a child makes such comments be ready to enforce these boundaries in your response.
- Do not appear to favour one child or show interest in one child more than another.
- Do not discriminate against a child because of their age, gender, disability, culture, language, racial origin or sexual identity.
- Use physical contact with children or young people only where necessary. If contact is necessary (e.g. for first aid), explain to the child what the contact is for and change your approach if he/she appears uncomfortable.
- Design and use training methods and programmes which are appropriate to the individual child
- Be aware of situations that can be misunderstood or manipulated by other adults (e.g. if an adult is alone with a child in a room or a car, he or she may be vulnerable to allegations of misconduct).
- Always be vigilant and aware of how actions can be misinterpreted by children. Actions made with good intentions can seem intrusive and intimidating to some children.
- Sometimes children become attracted to the adults working with them. Adults should be aware of the impact of their action and should sensitively address any misunderstandings
- Use information appropriately, respecting the privacy of children and young people, maintaining confidentiality where necessary, respecting the right of children and young people to be informed of matters concerning themselves, and avoiding the misuse of personal information;
- Always oppose any form of discrimination, oppression or exploitation of children and young people, and preserve their rights.

CODE OF CONDUCT – BEST PRACTICE

Practice to be encouraged:

- Value and respect each child or young person as an individual in his/her own right, in his/her role as a member of his/her family, and in his/her role as a member of the community s/he lives in;
- Involve young people in the decisions that affect them.
- Always work in an open environment, avoiding private or unobserved situations.
- When organising activities/events for children and young people, or their attendance at activities/events, ensure the relevant information/documentation is collected (consent forms, contact details for next of kin, information relating to specific needs).
- Keep a clear note of any incidents or concerns.
- When working with a mixed gender group it is preferred that there should be staff/volunteers of both genders to manage all activities.

Practice to be avoided:

- Workers/volunteers should not give lifts in their car to individual children or young people or travel alone with young people. Where not doing this would compromise the Health and Safety Policy (e.g. leaving a young person alone at a venue) you should attempt to phone the parent/guardian of the young person to confirm what you will be doing. You should also ask the young person to sit in the back seat.
- Workers/volunteers should not take young people to their home or that of another worker/volunteer.
- Workers/volunteers should avoid situations where they are alone with young people. Where a private meeting with a lone child/young person is unavoidable it should be held in an open place in view of others or in a room visible to those outside and where a colleague has agreed to visually monitor the meeting.
- If a young person participates in a review of their involvement in a programme as a result of disruptive or unacceptable behaviour, it is advisable that this review is witnessed by a second staff member/volunteer.

Bullying and harassment:

It is your responsibility to challenge any form of bullying or harassment.

- Do not allow scape-goating or ridiculing a child or young person to remain unchallenged.
- Do not allow inappropriate, foul, sexualised or discriminatory language to remain unchallenged.
- Do not allow bullying of any form, including name calling or constant criticism.
- Do not allow a child or young person to use illegal drugs or use of alcohol during an event
- Do not allow 'picking on' of a young person because of their family background, manner of dress or physical characteristic.
- Do not allow racism or sectarianism of any form.
- Do not allow favouritism and exclusion – **all** young people should be equally supported and encouraged
- Do not allow abusive language or gestures

SUPPORT SERVICES AND TRAINING

PLEASE NOTE:

All the Clubs are individual organisations, either as incorporated societies, charities etc. The ABF cannot make them follow any directives, in how they run their clubs, but we can provide them with resources should they choose to use them. However, H and S needs to be driven at Committee level, and they need to be managing H and S appropriately. The ABF cannot and should not force policy on them or their members. This document only applies directly to those people representing the ABF.

<https://www.australiannationalcharactercheck.com.au/working-with-children-checks.html>

CHILD ABUSE

The ABF is committed to providing a positive, creative, educational learning and playing experience for children and young people. As well as being committed to ensuring the wellbeing of children and young people by providing a safe environment and facilitating the prevention of abuse and maltreatment within our environment, we are also expected to respond to suspected abuse and neglect that may have occurred outside our environment.

The ABF commits to support statutory agencies and State and Federal Police to investigate abuse.

What is abuse?

Child abuse is defined as ‘ the harming, (whether physically, emotionally, sexually,) ill-treatment, abuse, neglect or deprivation of any child or young person.’

Identifying abuse

Every situation is different, and it is important to consider all information about the child and their environment before reaching a conclusion. Behavioral concerns may be the result of life events

When concerned – do not act alone. Those working with children should always consult with a colleague or the ABF Legal Counsel.

If a child/young person makes a verbal disclosure to you it is important that you take what the child/young person is saying, seriously. You should listen carefully and not interview them or ask too many questions, but just the basics, who where, when. This should then be documented, including the time, date and who was present.

Reporting Abuse

When a disclosure is made, the person in charge of the event will contact the Police. It will be the Police’s decision as to who and when parents or caregivers are advised.

Any such event will be deemed to be confidential.

RESPOND	Listen and Reassure the Child Ask open ended questions DO NOT interview the child
REPORT	Document what was said with date and time Contact the person in charge If child is in immediate danger, call Police 000 (police have a child protection team)
ADVISE	The ABF advisor to contact TBIB. DO NOT CONTACT parents or caregivers.

Child Safe Practices

We will endeavor to avoid situations where adults may be alone with children, and those working with children should be encouraged to maintain an open-door policy for all spaces (except toilets), and will follow the Code of Conduct, outlined in this document. If any form of physical contact is required, permission should be sought, and explain both to child and supervisor what is being done, and why.

Delivery of Services – Risk Assessments

Communication

In general, communication with young people under the age of 18 should be via the guardian, unless permission is granted by the guardian, rather than directly with the child. This includes email and mobile phone contact, although it is sensible to have access to these forms of communication as back-up ways of getting in touch when necessary.

Information to parents must include start time and pick up times and arrangements. No child or young person is to be left to make their own way home after an event unless permission has been obtained. After hour contact numbers for guardians is important.

Clarity around who will be picking up must also be provided.

Guardians must provide clear instructions on medical issues and requirements.

Written parental consent should be obtained for trips, overnight stay or any foreign travel. A sample form for obtaining parental consent is in the Appendix.

Car Travel

In some cases, young people will travel to and from events with their parents or with friends, in which case the parents will make their own arrangements.

The use of **private cars** by ABF employees, volunteers etc to transport children should be discouraged, and avoided if possible. Adults should not be put in a position where they are alone in a vehicle with a young person, though if this does occur the young person should travel in the back of the car, and should be focussed on transporting groups, using central collection and dropping-off points rather than individual home drops.

To avoid this, when if the ABF itself or a club, teacher or other volunteer needs to arrange transport on behalf of the bridge organisation that they represent, they need to ensure they use a reputable coach or taxi firm.

A formal assessment of the risks that might be met on a trip should have the aim of preventing the risks or reducing them. Safety must always be the prime consideration. A **risk assessment** should be based on the following considerations, which should be applied in respect of the venue, transport, staffing, accommodation and catering arrangements as well as the activities themselves:

- What are the hazards?
- Who might be affected by them?
- What kinds of behaviour might increase the risk?
- What safety measure need to be in place to reduce the risks to an acceptable level?
- Can the group leader put the safety measures in place?
- What steps will be taken in an emergency?
- The competence of the driver of the proposed vehicle the number
- Appropriate insurance cover
- A pre-trip visit may be in order to check many of the above points, or references may be obtainable from others who have been to the same venue or event.

If travelling with a group by air, where possible this should be booked well in advance and seats should be reserved to ensure the party can travel together

Supervision

- All those acting in a supervisory capacity on trips or at events should have complied with the checking procedures outlined elsewhere in these Procedures.
- Where a group is of mixed sex, there should be at least one male and one female supervisor.
- There should be a designated group leader and all supervisors should be provided with a full itinerary, including contact information and transport arrangements.
- There should always be a list of group members so that a simple head count or register can easily be taken.
- The number of supervisors required for any trip will vary according to a number of factors. Consideration should also be given to ensuring that there are enough people to deal with an emergency. As a guide, a ratio of 1:10 should be considered as a minimum requirement where the players are aged 11 or over.
The following should be taken into account when deciding on how many are needed:
 - the nature of the activities
 - the gender, age and ability of the group the duration and nature of the journey
 - the competence and likely behaviour of the young people the number of additional adults present
 - the experience of those supervisors in supervising the type of programme.
- While travelling, the group leader should be responsible for discipline. The driver of a vehicle should not normally be responsible for supervision, although this is acceptable for smaller groups of older children.
- During longer trips involving larger groups and overnight stays, each child should be allocated and made aware of the identity of a specified supervisor to whom they can turn with any questions or when they need to talk to someone about anything. Be aware that young people may be homesick, especially if this is a first trip away.

Accommodation

The accommodation for an overnight stay may vary widely and different factors need to be considered for different types. The following are some basic guidelines however:

- All accommodation should be clean with access to sufficient toilet and bathing facilities.
- Separate facilities should be available for males and females.
- It is not acceptable for young people to share a bed, or for male and female players to share a room (unless they are brother and sister and parental agreement is obtained).
- It is not acceptable a supervisor to share a room with a child (unless parents and children).
- All accommodation must be safe. In hotels, rooms should be lockable. Check that the emergency/fire alarm procedures are clear and are communicated to all.
- If staying in a residential centre or similar, sleeping arrangements may be in dormitories, so check you are not sharing with other unknown groups. In hotels, try to avoid members of the group being spread throughout the hotel. Where children are on different floors in guest houses, hotels or halls of residence, an adult supervisor should be available on each floor. If possible supervisor accommodation should be close to that of the young people.
- Check out any ground rules of the establishment. These may be in respect of safety, smoking, alcohol, consumption of food obtained off the premises, etc, or apply to responsibilities for setting

tables, clearing dishes etc in residential centres and the like. Check the accommodation policy for extras on bills, breakages, lost keys etc.

- Check what linen, toiletries, refreshment facilities etc are provided and what needs to be brought
- In hotels, if rooms are equipped with satellite television, check whether inappropriate programmes may be accessible – it may be possible to arrange for these to be disconnected. Also check the availability of mini-bars, hotel telephones and give guidance on their use as necessary.
- Ensure all catering requirements are communicated to the establishment and can be met.
- Make sure that mealtimes are appropriate for the programme. If self-catering, check the availability of the kitchen equipment Check that the accommodation is suitable for any players with disabilities. If there are problems these may be overcome by providing a carer, but this should be discussed with young people and their parents in advance.
- Supervisors should ensure that young people know which rooms they occupy and how to contact them if necessary at night.

In addition supervisors should make sure that all young people are aware of the needs of other users of the accommodation. Consideration should always be given to the needs of other guests in hotels and especially to hosts if staying with host families or similar.

Billeting

In the case of young people being billeted, the following additional guidelines apply:

- Players should be placed with families where there is a player of a similar age and where possible the same sex. If the players are of a different sex, there must be both sexes in the household
- It is preferable for visiting players to have their own bedroom, but it is acceptable for them to share a room with another person of similar age and of the same sex
- Host families should be informed of any special medical, dietary or cultural needs of their guests
- Hosts must be aware of the arrangements for collecting and transporting guest players throughout the trip
- Adult members of a host family should if possible comply with the checking procedures outlined in this document (or those of the host country if appropriate). It is appreciated that this may not always prove practicable when finding hosts for visiting players, in which case potential hosts should be asked to sign a confidential Self Declaration Form. A sample form is attached to this policy.
- A list of billets available should be provided to the parents so that they can directly contact the host to confirm arrangements.

International Travel

Anyone travelling abroad should be well-prepared. Factors to be considered in any briefing include:

- the need for passports and, where relevant, visas or vaccinations. Check the requirements in particular for any non-Australian Citizens. Copies of all travel documents should be taken and kept separately.
- If no parent is travelling with the child or young person, the government officials in other countries may require a notarised letter from the parents stating the child has permission to travel. This should be signed by all people with parental rights.

Young people should be given:

- information on the language, particularly common phrases information on the currency, a simple map of the area, with key locations
- information about food and drink, including drinking water
- telephones abroad, the code for phoning home, advice on using mobile phones
- the culture of the country – rules and regulations, body language, dress codes, local customs, attitudes to gender, etc

- exposure to drugs and alcohol, and any consequences of their use. Note that whilst the laws of other countries may be different, it should generally be assumed that parents would expect the regulations in Australian Law to apply as a minimum.

Emergencies

Throughout a trip away, the group leader should know how to contact the emergency services and have access to the minimum first-aid provision. The organiser should also be aware of any specific medical conditions including identification of any allergies. People should in general act as any reasonably prudent parent would, and should not hesitate to act in an emergency and to take life-saving action in an extreme situation.

If an emergency occurs, the factors to consider are to:

- Establish the nature of the emergency as quickly as possible
- Ensure the group as a whole is safe and well cared for and that they are following the emergency procedures
- Ensure that all group members who need to know are aware of the incident
- Establish the names of any casualties and obtain immediate medical attention for them, if necessary, ensuring that a member of staff accompanies any casualties to hospital
- Notify the police if necessary
- Write down as soon and as accurately as possible all relevant facts and witness details, and preserve any vital evidence
- Keep a written account of all events and times
- Contact parents.

An Australian based contact should be in place with details of everyone on the trip and home/next of kin contact details and in the case of an emergency the person acting as the home contact should:

- Establish that the group leader is in control of the situation and determine if any assistance is needed from home
- Contact parents and keep them as well informed as possible at all stages
- Liaise with home clubs or other officials, including if necessary the President of the ABF
- Liaise with a designated media contact if appropriate from the ABF
- Report the incident to the insurers as appropriate

Insurance

Within Australia a player should have their own contents/medical insurance. The ABF and its affiliates will decide whether cancellation insurance is necessary.

For international travel, additional insurance is required. The following should be considered.

Medical cover, including repatriation expenses, compensation for loss of baggage, passports or money
Emergency expenses to cover accommodation and transport; Legal assistance in recovery of claims either as a group or as an individual participant.

Health

Accidents and illnesses should be reported as soon as practicable. A plan for dealing with these should be drawn up, depending on the location, and the following information needs to be held by the organiser:

- Nearest A and E department
- Location of first aid kit
- Who has first aid training
- Information on each child's health issues and medication regime, and family contact details.
- Identify, and minimise or remove any hazards that may have caused the accident and add to the hazard register for future reference.

Appendix

Acknowledgement of the ABF Policy and Procedures around protection, health and safety of children and young people, and those who work with them.

In my capacity as, I acknowledge that I have read the ABF Child Health, Safety and Protection Policy and I agree that I will:

- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of all players, officials and volunteers at all times
- Treat everyone equally regardless of age, sex, ethnic origin, religion, political persuasion, sexual orientation or physical disability
- Consider the well-being and safety of players before the development of performance
- Develop an appropriate working relationship with players, based on mutual trust and respect
- Make sure all activities are appropriate to the age, ability and experience of those taking part
- Promote the positive aspects of bridge (eg, ethics and fair play)
- Display consistently high standards of behaviour and appearance
- Follow all guidelines laid down by the ABF, the State and the Club
- Never exert undue influence over players to obtain personal benefit or reward
- Encourage players to value their performances and not just results.

Signed Date

Name (Block capitals)

Position

Club/School/Organisation name

Working with Children and Young People

Employees/Contractors and International Youth Support

To be completed by the ABF staff, contractors and international youth support staff who work with young people.

Surname..... Title Sex M / F First name(s)
.....

Any previous name(s) you have been known by

Address
.....
.....Postcode

Tel No(s)
Email address

I agree to abide by the Australian Child Protection and Health and Safety Policy, which can be found on the ABF website.

Signed Date

I have attached my Working With Children Check from

Personal Disclosure Form (Confidential)

Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence or been the subject of a caution, a bound over order or a civil action (excluding motoring offences)? YES / NO
If YES, please state the nature and date(s) of the offence(s)

NOTE: You are advised that you should declare all convictions including 'spent' convictions.

Have you ever been subject to any disciplinary actions or sanctions relating to child abuse, sexual offences or violence? YES / NO
If YES, please give details

Are you a person known to any social services department as being an actual or potential risk to children or young people YES / NO
If YES, please give details

It is the ABF's Policy to undertake Police checks on all people working for or sponsored by the ABF whose role involves significant dealings with young people. If accepted for such a role with the ABF you are required to initiate such a check. This will be paid for by the ABF.

I consent to a criminal records check being made, confirm that the information provided on this form is correct, and accept that failure to disclose information or subsequent failure to conform to the ABF Code of Good Practice may result in disciplinary action.

Signed Date

Parental Consent Form

Details of bridge activity: where, when how

I agree to (child/young person's name) 's participation in the activities described. I acknowledge the need for him/her to behave responsibly during the activities

Medical information about your child

Does your child/young person experience any conditions requiring medical treatment YES / NO including medication?

If YES please give brief details:
.....

Is your child/young person on any medication that they will administer:

Bridge staff/volunteers are not qualified to administer medication. If your child/young person requires specific medication please give details below:

.....
.....

Is your child/young person allergic to any medication? YES / NO

If YES please specify:

If your child/young person has special dietary requirements, please give details below

.....
.....

Declaration

- I agree to my child/young person taking part in this activity.
- I agree to my child/young person receiving medication as instructed, and any emergency treatment as considered necessary by medical authorities present. I will inform the person in charge as soon as possible of any changes in the medical or other circumstances between now and the end of the specified activity.
- I agree that if my child/young person behaves in a manner that is disruptive or upsetting to others in the group, they will be removed from the activity, and not permitted back.
- I agree to any photos taken at the event to be used for publicising youth bridge

Signed (parent/guardian)..... Date

Full name

Emergency contact numbers:

Billeting Form

To be completed by all potential hosts for young people requiring accommodation for bridge related activities.

Full name..... Sex M / F

Address.....

.....Postcode

Tel No Email address

Please describe the accommodation offered (number and type of beds, necessity for sharing rooms, catering provided, if any, etc)

.....

.....

Please describe the family members or other people who will be residing at your home at the time of the visit:

Name..... Age Relationship
to you Sex M / F

Name..... Age
Relationship to you Sex M / F

Name..... Age
Relationship to you Sex M / F

Name..... Age
Relationship to you Sex M / F

Declaration

- I declare that I have never been subject to any disciplinary actions or sanctions relating to child abuse, sexual offences or violence.
- I declare that I am not a person known to any social services department as being an actual or potential risk to children or young people.
- I agree to abide by the ABF Child Protection and Health and Safety Policy, which can be found on the ABF website.
- I agree for my details to be passed on to parents so that they can arrange a billet for their child.

Signed Date