



## **ACBL YOUTH PROTECTION AND ABUSE PREVENTION POLICY**

### **INTRODUCTION and POLICY** **GROUPS and MEMBERS**

---

The purpose of the Youth Protection and Abuse Prevention Policy and Code of Conduct is to clearly and definitively communicate the ACBL's commitment to ensuring the safety of its young players, volunteers and caddies and upholding the essence of the game of bridge – fair play. Thus, a comprehensive policy to protect youth from abuse is a necessary component to effectuate our goals of promoting a safe and secure environment for youth who participate and/or are involved in events, programs and activities sanction and/or sponsored by the ACBL.

The goal of each youth-oriented program is to nurture and grow a young player's enthusiasm for the game of bridge. This enthusiasm stays with the child creating a life-long relationship with the American Contract Bridge League and the game of bridge.

With more than 700 young children encouraged to participate in some 1100 annual sanctioned games – to say nothing of school bridge programs led by teachers, unit and district programs (that teach some 2500 students per year) and international teams and events, the ACBL considers it part of our commitment to these members, programs and events, to ensure youth have a safe environment in which to build and develop their skills thus ensuring that life-long commitment to bridge so many of our Members share.



## **American Contract Bridge League's Youth Protection and Abuse Prevention Policy GROUPS and MEMBERS**

---

### **General Purpose Statement**

The American Contract Bridge League (The ACBL) is committed to promoting a safe and secure environment for the youth who participate and are involved in the programs and activities sanctioned and/or sponsored by the ACBL. By implementing this policy, ACBL's goal is to protect youth from incidents of abuse, misconduct or inappropriate behavior at all programs and activities sanctioned and/or sponsored by the ACBL by creating awareness, establishing good practices and communicating reporting procedures to protect youth from incidents of abuse, misconduct or inappropriate behavior. To this end, The ACBL has a separate policy that requires all of its employees to comply with the applicable practices set forth in this policy. Additionally, The ACBL expects all of its groups and members involved in bridge tournaments or other activities sponsored or sanctioned by The ACBL to review and proactively support ACBL's Youth Protection and Abuse Prevention Policy for groups and members.

### **Definitions**

The term "**youth**" includes all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years.

The term "**groups or members**" includes, but is not limited to persons and entities (other than paid employees of the ACBL) associated with the ACBL:

- Persons having direct contact with minors at ACBL events, such as day care providers, counselors, trainers, chaperones, teachers and persons paid a stipend and/or provided materials to teach bridge in schools.
- Governmental bodies, such as Board of Directors, Board of Governors, North American NBOs and the Educational and Charity Foundations
- Districts and Units
- Clubs
- Entities with which the ACBL contracts, such as hotels and child care and;
- ACBL membership

### **Types of Abuse Covered Under this Policy Include**

- Physical abuse which is non-accidental injury intentionally inflicted upon a youth.
- Sexual abuse perpetrated by an adult in which physical or verbal contact or activity of a sexual nature occurs between a youth and an adult. This includes any activity that is meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of the adult or youth.
- Sexual abuse perpetrated by a youth upon another youth which includes any physical or verbal contact or activity of a sexual nature that occurs between youth when there is no consent, when consent is not possible, or when one youth has power over the other youth.

- Sexual activity includes any activity that is meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of the youth.
- Emotional abuse is mental or emotional injury to a youth that results in an observable and material impairment of the youth's growth, development or psychological functioning.
- Neglect is the failure to provide for a youth's basic needs or the failure to protect a youth from harm.
- Economic exploitation is the deliberate misplacement, exploitation, or wrongful temporary or permanent use of a youth's belongings or money.

### **Zero Tolerance for Abuse of Youth**

The ACBL has a zero tolerance policy regarding abuse, misconduct or inappropriate behavior directed toward youth. Additionally, the ACBL expects all groups and members to respond to youth with respect, consideration and equal treatment, regardless of sex, race, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, culture or socioeconomic status. Groups and members working with youth are expected to portray a positive role model for youth by maintaining an attitude of respect, patience and maturity. They are also to avoid any appearance of favoritism.

All groups and members involved in programs and/or activities with youth are encouraged to take all necessary actions to provide a safe and secure environment for youth and to prevent harm to youth. The following list includes, but is not limited to, prohibitions designed to accomplish the goal of preventing abuse and protecting Youth. Groups and members are prohibited from:

- Contacting a youth on a private one-on-one basis, including one-on-one time behind closed doors.
- Entering the hotel room of a youth without another adult present.
- Transporting youth or riding in vehicles with youth where there is one-on-one contact. At least three persons should be in the vehicle.
- Supervising youth in any ACBL program or activity without a minimum of two unrelated adult workers present.
- Accompanying a youth into a public or private bathroom.
- The use, possession, distribution, or being under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or the misuse of illegal drugs while participating in or assisting with programs or activities for youth.
- Dating or becoming romantically involved with a youth.
- Having sexual contact with a youth.

- Possessing any sexually suggestive materials (magazines, cards, videos, films, clothing, etc.) on any ACBL property or at events sanctioned or sponsored by the ACBL or any time the group or member is in the presence of a youth.
- Using the internet to view or download any sexually oriented materials in the presence of youth.
- Discussing their own sexual activities, including dreams and fantasies, or discussing their use of sexually oriented or explicit materials such as pornography, videos or materials on or from the Internet with youth.
- Sleeping in the same beds, sleeping bags, tents, hotel rooms or other rooms with youth unless the adult is an immediate family member of all youth in the bed, sleeping bag, tent, hotel room or other room. It would be acceptable to have multiple adults sleep with all youth participating in a program in a large open space such as a lodge.
- Dressing, undressing, bathing or showering in the presence of youth.
- Using physical punishment in any way for behavior management of youth. No form of physical discipline is acceptable. This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting or any other physical force. Physical force may only be used to stop a behavior that may cause immediate harm to the youth or others.
- Using harsh language, degrading/shaming punishment or mechanical restraint such as a rope or tape for behavior management.
- Participating in or allowing others to conduct any hazing activities relating to youth.
- Using sexually suggestive/explicit language in the presence of youth.

Parents who attend/participate in ACBL sponsored events or activities with a youth who is their child or another youth for whom they are responsible during the event or activity are exempt from this policy in so far as their actions towards their children, or other youth for whom they are responsible are not unlawful. As an example, parents and their children or youth for whom they are responsible may share hotel rooms. At no time, however, will the ACBL tolerate unlawful behavior of a parent toward youth – even those who are children of the parent.

### **Supervision and Monitoring Behavior**

Groups or members of the ACBL in supervisory positions over youth need to monitor the activities of other adults and youth so that inappropriate behaviors and interactions can be detected and stopped. Some behaviors and interactions are potentially harmful to youth in and of themselves. Examples include providing alcohol or drugs to youth or actually having sexual contact with a youth. Other behaviors and interactions are not necessarily harmful in and of themselves but are the same behaviors and interactions known to be used by those who abuse youth to “groom” them or their parents for eventual abuse or which provide the privacy child molesters need to abuse children or youth. Example of those behaviors and interactions include, but are not limited to, holding youth on their lap and transporting youth alone.

Accordingly, groups or members should refrain from engaging in the conduct listed below and should make sure other adults do not engage in such conduct.

- Inappropriate or lengthy embraces
- Kisses on the mouth
- Holding youth on the lap
- Touching bottoms, chest or genital areas
- Showing affection in isolated areas such as bedrooms, closets, staff only areas or other private rooms
- Occupying a bed with a youth
- Touching knees or legs of youth
- Wrestling with youth
- Tickling youth
- Piggyback rides
- Any type of a massage given by youth to adult or given by an adult to a youth
- Any form of unwanted affection
- Comments or compliments (spoken, written, or electronic) that relate to physique or body development. Examples would be, "You sure are developing" or "You look really hot in those jeans."
- Snapping bras or giving wedgies or similar touch of underwear whether or not it is covered by other clothing
- Giving gifts or money to individual youth
- Private meals with youth
- Transporting youth alone

### **Reporting Requirements and Investigation**

Groups or members, who observe or are otherwise made aware of suspicions, allegations, or actual abuse or violations of the guidelines set forth in this policy while at sanctioned or sponsored ACBL events, have the responsibility to report the inappropriate conduct in accordance with the guidelines set forth below.

- This duty to report applies regardless of the timing or location of the suspected abuse or the identity of the alleged abuser.
- Sanctioned tournaments and ACBL sponsored events are the most common environments where groups or members will come into contact with youth players. Accordingly, when a group or member becomes aware of suspected, alleged, or actual abuse at a tournament, it is important that the conduct be reported immediately to the Director-in-Charge (DIC) or the tournament sponsor, unless the suspected, alleged, or actual misconduct involves the DIC or tournament sponsor, in which case the report should be made to the Human Resources Director or Compliance Officer at The ACBL. Once the report is made, the DIC or the tournament sponsor should first determine if there is any immediate risk to the youth or ongoing inappropriate behavior and take steps to remedy the situation. If the circumstances involve potential illegal conduct or the youth is at risk of serious harm, the DIC or tournament sponsor should call 911 or law enforcement. Once the DIC or the tournament sponsor addresses immediate concerns, they should report the incident to the Human Resources Director or Compliance Officer at The ACBL.
- For all other situations involving suspected, alleged, or actual abuse, the DIC or tournament sponsor should make a notification report to The ACBL's Human Resources Director or Compliance Officer as appropriate. If the circumstances involve

potential illegal conduct or the youth is at risk of serious harm, the DIC or tournament sponsor should call 911 or law enforcement.

- Groups or members must report allegations of suspected abuse even if the individual or youth bringing the allegation asks for the information to be kept confidential. In addition to the groups' or member's reporting requirements under this policy, many states require their citizens who are aware of suspected abuse of youth to make a report to the state.

Once a report is made The ACBL's Human Resources Director and/or Compliance Officer will take the steps necessary to ensure that any reports required by applicable law are made. Any employee/player/member accused of perpetrating any incident of abuse should be removed from any further contact with youth at any program or activity and/or suspended until such time as any necessary investigations have been completed and it is determined that the abuse allegations are false or unsubstantiated.

The ACBL may conduct or direct a tournament sponsor to conduct an investigation into suspected, alleged, or actual abuse by groups or members, volunteers or players. The investigation by ACBL or a tournament sponsor should not begin, however, until law enforcement or child protective services have been contacted. An investigation by the ACBL or tournament sponsor should always be coordinated with the state authority when applicable. If any groups or members, volunteer or player fails to disclose pertinent information, gives false information, interferes with or obstructs the investigation by the state, the ACBL, or the tournament sponsor, the groups, member, volunteer or player will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the ACBL's Code of Disciplinary Regulations up to and including expulsion from the ACBL.

It is critical to protect individual's privacy interests. This means staff; tournament sponsors, volunteers and program participants should maintain reasonable confidentiality during investigations, consistent with any legal obligations to report suspected abuse of youth. Information about reported and alleged abuse or misconduct should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only. No groups or members of the ACBL shall make a statement to the press or in any other medium, including blogs or other social media relating to an incident or investigation except as authorized by The ACBL's Compliance Officer. All internal and external communications will be coordinated through The ACBL's Human Resources Director or Compliance Officer. The incident is not to be discussed with staff, tournament sponsors, volunteers or program participants except as required by an appropriate internal or external investigation. Information about the incident shall not be shared with friends, colleagues or family members. The appropriate confidentiality rights of all participants in the incident should be respected.

#### **Other Youth Welfare Practices and Policies**

If a youth is injured during participation in an ACBL sponsored/sanctioned event, the following steps should be followed:

- For minor injuries, scrapes and bruises, groups, or members may provide first aid such as band aids and topical ointments as appropriate and notify the youth's parent or guardian of the injury as soon as possible. For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple first aid, the parent and/or guardian will be contacted as soon as possible in addition to the individual in charge of the ACBL sponsored event/sanctioned event.
- It is the policy of the ACBL not to administer either prescription or non-prescription medications to youth unless specifically authorized in writing by the youth's parent. If

medication is being administered there should be two individuals present when the medication is administered.