

Disputes Resolution Policy

1 Introduction

1.1 In order to clarify the actions and procedures available to the Club when matters of alleged bad or anti-social behaviour and unethical or unacceptable conduct arise the Club has adopted a Disputes Resolution Procedure. The procedure which is detailed below is to be read in conjunction with Rules 14 and 15 of the Constitution of the Club, entitled “Discipline and/or Suspension of Members” and “Dispute Resolution” respectively.

Members may wish to make an informal complaint to the director, one of the club’s recorders, or a member of the committee, about the behaviour of any member of the club. Such complaints do not need to be considered formally, as described below. The complainant may subsequently wish to change the complaint to a formal complaint, in which case the following procedures are to be followed.

The names of club’s directors and the club’s recorders will be displayed on the notice board.

2 Disputes Resolution Subcommittee

2.1 In accordance with Rule 10 of the Constitution, the Committee may refer complaints and disciplinary matters to a Disputes Resolution subcommittee, or to New Zealand Bridge as in 2.2 below.

2.2 The Committee has the power to refer any matter, allegation, or complaint of conduct, discipline or dispute that it considers sufficiently significant, concerning or important to the Board of Management of NZ Bridge for enquiry, investigation and/or determination by the Board’s appropriate Standing Committee, and in the event any such referral is accepted by the Board for that purpose, the Committee shall abide any consequent verdict, decision or determination as the case may be.

3 Grounds for Discipline

3.1 Violation of the proprieties codified in the Laws of Duplicate Contract Bridge.

3.2 Violation of New Zealand Bridge Incorporated regulations.

3.3 Unfounded accusations of unethical conduct at any event conducted by the Club.

3.4 Anti-social behaviour at any session or event sponsored by the Club, or at any event sanctioned by New Zealand Bridge. Examples of such anti-social behaviour may include rudeness, intimidation, threats, insinuations, negative comments concerning play and/or bidding, being disruptive, arguing with a director's ruling and gratuitous lessons and analysis at the table.

3.5 Improper conduct towards any member of the Club, guest of the club, or employee of the Club.

3.6 Behaviour unbecoming of a member of the Club or detrimental to the interests of the Club or a failure to observe any rule or by-law of the Club.

4 Dispute Resolution Procedure

4.1 Directors shall be required to report to the Committee details of any disciplinary action taken or imposed on any member during any session conducted by the club.

4.2 Reporting of any incident or complaint must be done within 7 days of its occurrence.

4.3 Complaints must be in writing in the form of a letter, email or report addressed to the Secretary. Anonymous complaints will not be accepted.

4.4 The Disputes Resolution subcommittee shall consider any complaint within seven (7) days of the complaint being received. The complainant and the respondent are entitled to be separately present at such a meeting to present their case to the Disputes Resolution subcommittee, and either are entitled to have a support person with them.

4.5 The Disputes Resolution subcommittee shall report to the full Committee at its first meeting after formal consideration of the complaint.

4.6 Single incidents of misconduct may be noted by the Dispute Resolution subcommittee without disciplinary action being taken but may be considered at a future date as evidence of a pattern of behaviour if a further complaint involving the same person is received and may be considered when determining the penalty to be imposed.

4.7 Details of the decision of the dispute resolution will be sent to both the complainant and the respondent.

4.8 Any party not satisfied by the action taken by the Disputes Resolution subcommittee may ask for the decision to be reviewed by the full Committee at their next scheduled meeting.

4.9 Where the Disputes Resolution subcommittee considers expulsion or suspension is the appropriate sanction, a recommendation will be presented to the next meeting of the full Committee for ratification. If a recommendation for expulsion or suspension of a member is approved, the member affected shall have the right of appeal.

4.10 A register is to be kept by the Secretary recording the following details about each complaint received by the Resolution Dispute subcommittee including details of any incident where a director has imposed a disciplinary penalty:

- (i) All correspondence forwarded and received;
- (ii) Any synopsis prepared;
- (iii) Statement of action(s) taken and/or sanction(s) imposed.

The Register is to be kept by the Secretary in a place where it is not available for any person to view without the prior approval of the Committee.

4.11 At all times during the procedure all parties involved must be kept fully informed of matters pertaining to such procedure.

4.12 Any member expelled by the Committee has the right to appeal, by delivering a notice in writing to the Secretary to that effect within 3 months from the date of expulsion. A special general meeting will be convened within 30 days of the date of delivery of such notice. A majority of two-thirds of those present at the special general meeting may reverse the Committee's decision or adopt an alternative censure.

5 Sanctions Available

5.1 Private Reprimand: A determination that a person has committed an offence warranting discipline. Details will not form a matter of public record.

5.2 Public Reprimand: A determination that a person has committed an offence warranting discipline. The offence becomes a matter of public record.

5.3 Probation: A determination that a person has committed an offence warranting discipline which becomes a matter of public record. If a member is disciplined for another offence warranting probation during the probationary period, then the probation becomes a suspension for the remainder of or half of the probation period whichever is the greater. The probationary period shall be determined by the complaints sub-committee but shall not exceed six (6) months.

5.4 Suspension: A determination that a person has committed an offence warranting suspension of all rights and privileges of membership for a specified period.

5.5 Expulsion: A determination that a person has committed an offence warranting permanent suspension of all rights and privileges of membership.

5.6 Exclusion from Events: A determination that a person has committed an offence warranting suspension of his/her rights to play in events conducted by the Club.

5.7 Reduction or Forfeiture of Masterpoints, Tournament Placing or Disqualification: A determination that a person has committed an offence at an event conducted by the Club warranting forfeiture of some or all of the masterpoints earned or a reduction in the placing in the event or tournament or disqualification from the event or tournament.

5.8 All sanctions (except Private Reprimand) are a matter of public record.