



Good and Bad Practice Guidelines: Adults and Young People

These guidelines apply to all English Bridge Union/ English Bridge Education and Development (EBU/EBED) staff and volunteers, and all EBU members. This group of people will be referred to as adults. 'Young people' and 'children' are used interchangeably and refer to under 18s.

It is important to establish a culture where children and adults feel able to challenge or report, in a supportive and constructive manner, even minor breaches of good practice by others. For instance, if an adult makes a mildly inappropriate or suggestive comment in jest, a sexist remark, or intentionally touches a young person's shoulder, these incidents should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) at the event, or the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) of the EBU/EBED.

Physical contact between adults and young people should be avoided.

While physical contact may be necessary in some other forms of teaching, such as adjusting a student's arm in tennis or violin lessons, no such contact is ever required in bridge—even when assisting beginners with sorting cards. It is inappropriate for a young person to receive a hug from an adult, even when in distress; in such situations, it is preferable for one of their peers to provide comfort. An adult should touch a young person only when it is necessary to prevent harm to the child or others. In any instance of accidental physical contact, an immediate apology should be offered. First aid should only be administered by individuals with appropriate training, and a child's consent should be sought before performing actions. Even gestures such as handshakes or high-fives should be approached with care and only given if initiated by the young person.

It is important to ensure bridge is fun and enjoyable.

All young people should be treated equally, with respect and dignity; by confronting and dealing with bullying; by promoting fair play, best behaviour at bridge, and giving time and attention equally to both the more and less talented. It is important to avoid favouring certain young people over others.

The developmental needs, capacity, and welfare of each young person should take precedence over winning or achieving goals, ensuring that excessive training or competition is avoided and that they are not pushed against their will. For example, consideration should always be given to young people who are in the process on taking external exams.

Balanced relationships should be formed based on mutual trust which empowers young people to share in the decision-making process. Enthusiastic and constructive feedback should be given rather than negative criticism.

Adults should be excellent role models.

In sessions specifically designed for juniors such as teaching, practice and bridge camps, there should be no smoking or consumption of alcohol by young people or adults in attendance.

In other club/county/national events, where juniors may be entrants or caddies supporting Directors, follow local smoking policies and drink alcohol only in moderation.

One-to-one situations where an adult is alone with a child should be avoided.

A young person should never be alone with an adult in their own home. In a club or teaching setting, if a child is the first to arrive for a session, the adult should ensure that all doors in the room remain open, with the child positioned closer to the door than the adult. Similarly, if one-on-one time occurs at the end of an event, such as waiting for a child to be picked up, or indeed at the end of an online session, the adult should inform other staff members about the situation.

Adults should maintain a safe and appropriate distance from young people

It is never acceptable for an adult to have an intimate relationship with a young person aged 17 or younger. Similarly, it is inappropriate for a coach to engage in an intimate relationship with members of junior squads, even if the individual is over the age of 18. An adult should never share a room with a single young person. However, it is acceptable for two members of a partnership or junior team to share a room when one is 18 or older, and the other is under 18.

Adults should not accept, or initiate, friend requests with under-18s on social media platforms.

However, it would not be unreasonable, with the consent of parents, for coaches to set up a WhatsApp group, or similar, for the young people in their squad. Any private chat (e.g. on Cuebids) or emails with young individuals must be businesslike and related solely to bridge matters. Anything else must be copied parents.

Photographers/video operatives or similar wishing to attend bridge events should be given a clear brief.

Photographers should wear identification and should be not given unsupervised access to young people. Written parental consent should be obtained before any photographs or images of children are taken. Whilst it might be practical to use a personal device to take photos or video at an event, it is preferable to use a device owned by the EBU or EBED. Material that is to be used for publicity should be transferred to the appropriate EBU or EBED folders (SmugMug). The photos or video should be deleted from personal devices once this has been done.

Parents should be asked to provide any relevant medical information in advance of a competition or bridge camp

e.g. use of EpiPen and allergens. First aid should only be given by suitably trained adults. A written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.

Written parental consent should be requested if it is necessary to transport young people by private car.

A young person should not be in a car on their own with one adult.

Inappropriate language and swearing should be avoided

Inappropriate or bad language should not be used in the presence of a young person. Young people who use inappropriate language should be challenged. Staff and members should not make sexually suggestive comments or jokes in the presence of young people.

Aggressive behaviour should be avoided

It is important that composure is always maintained and to refrain from any sort of aggressive behaviour towards young people. A child should never be brought to tears as a means of control.

Disabilities

Doing things of a personal nature for children, the disabled, or adults at risk that they can do for themselves should be avoided.

Reporting incidents

If any of the following incidents should occur, they should be reported immediately to another colleague, a written note of the event should be made, and the parents informed of the incident. The DSO at the event should be informed or the DSO of EBU/EBED

You accidentally hurt a young person.

A young person seems distressed in any manner.

A young person appears to be sexually aroused by your actions.

A young person misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

Acronyms Used in This Document

EBU – English Bridge Union

EBED – English Bridge Education & Development

DSL – Designated Safeguarding Lead

DSO – Designated Safeguarding Officer

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