

# Essex Chess Association

## Safe Play & Conduct Guidelines

These guidelines follow the recommended guidelines of the English Chess Federation for chess activities and should be read in conjunction with the Association's Safeguarding Policy.

### Policy

Essex Chess Association ("the Association", "we", "its") is opposed to all forms of misconduct at its events and chess-related activities including sexual misconduct, bullying, harassment, discrimination, emotional abuse, or physical violence. We are committed to ensuring that the Association is a safe and welcoming place for everyone and will implement preventative measures together with an effective reporting and support procedure for victims, and proportionate sanctions for those found to be in breach of the guidelines.

### Scope of Guidelines

The guidelines apply to members of the Association, players, spectators, parents, guardians, carers, team captains, tournament organisers, arbiters, coaches, supervisors, volunteers and support staff at all events and chess-related activities run by the Association or in which the Association participates.

### Prohibited Conduct

The following types of conduct are specifically prohibited at the Association, at its events and chess-related activities and on any premises the Association may use or visit:

- A. Sexual Misconduct including inappropriate contact, harassment, assault and abuse, particularly but not limited to, misconduct involving minors.
- B. Bullying
  - Physical
  - Verbal
  - Social, including cyber-bullying
  - Sexual
  - Any form of physical threat or violence.
- C. Harassment – repeated insulting or abusive behaviour.
- D. Discrimination – unjust or prejudicial treatment of people on grounds of ethnicity, gender, disability, age, or sexual orientation.
- E. Emotional Misconduct - controlling behaviour designed to embarrass, shame or otherwise manipulate.

### Preventative Measures

The Association has produced various documents designed to assist and inform its organisers and volunteers. The Association's Safeguarding policy contains procedures designed to assist its organisers, officials and volunteers in the running of its activities, including recognising and handling safeguarding concerns. Part of the role of the Association's Safeguarding Officer is to advise and support them.

The Association has appropriate screening and safeguarding training for its safeguarding team, including those individuals who are likely to come into contact with minors on a regular basis in regulated activity. Members of the Association and those who play in its events are required to follow the Association's Safeguarding Policy and these guidelines, which apply to all attendees.

## **Reporting & Responding**

The Association encourages any person who has credible information about alleged misconduct that conflicts with the guidelines to report the alleged misconduct as described in this section. Credible information includes first-hand knowledge or reliable information from a knowledgeable third party.

### **Reporting**

Persons who have been offended against or those who have witnessed forms of prohibited conduct may report it to the Association by any of the methods described below.

- a) **In person:** to the Association's Safeguarding Officer if present or otherwise to the event organiser;
- b) **By email:** Emails covering forms of conduct addressed in the Guidelines can be sent to [safeguard@essexchess.org.uk](mailto:safeguard@essexchess.org.uk)

Reporting may be done at the time of, or shortly following, the event.

Reports can be made with the person reporting providing their name in confidence, or anonymously. Anonymous reporting will be accepted but will of course limit the Association's ability to investigate and/or respond to the information provided.

Messages submitted will be received and handled by the Association's safeguarding team and will be treated in confidence respecting the privacy of all parties involved.

**False and/or Malicious Reports.** Knowingly false, malicious or vindictive reports of misconduct are prohibited and may violate applicable laws or civil defamation laws. A person who knowingly submits a false report may be subject to sanctions as well as any applicable legal recourse.

### **Responding On-Site to an Incident**

Where an Association organiser or official witnesses or becomes aware of potential misconduct—whether reported or not—the organiser or an officer with safeguarding responsibility will proceed as below in line with the Association's safeguarding policy.

#### **1. Control the Situation.**

**Protect and support the victim.** When an incident occurs, the first responsibility is to take all reasonable measures to ensure the person or persons targeted is/are safe and protected from further possible abuse.

Reasonable measures shall be taken to ensure no further contact occurs between the victim(s) and the alleged perpetrator(s) at the event including physical, visual (eye), or verbal contact, or through a surrogate, or by electronic means (e.g., text messaging, email, etc.).

Where the victim or accused individual is a minor or adult in need, the Association shall proceed as set out in its safeguarding policy and procedures including contacting where applicable parents or guardians or carers unless the circumstances surrounding the allegations reasonably suggest otherwise.

Contact the Police where necessary or appropriate. Such a decision will depend on the severity of the case and applicable law.

Obtain contact information for first-hand witnesses, victim(s), and the victim's coach, parents, or guardian or carer.

## **2. Record details and report the Incident to the Safeguarding Officer**

Once the situation is under control and the police notified if relevant, the incident should be reported using the safeguarding reporting form for organisers and officials available on the Association's website (as per the Safeguarding procedures) and notify the Association's Safeguarding Lead.

## **3. Contact Local Authorities and/or Police.**

The Safeguarding Lead (or Officer) shall determine whether there is an obligation to report the incident to local authorities (e.g. the Local Authority Designated Officer for safeguarding issues) or the Police. A decision to report to Local Authorities or Police will depend on the severity of the case and applicable law.

If Local Authorities or Police intervene or otherwise act on the case the Association's organisers and officers shall cooperate with any enquiries and follow any specific instructions provided.

The organiser or senior officer shall obtain contact information for first-hand witnesses, victim(s), and the victim's coach, parents, or guardian.

The organiser or senior officer should then provide the victim (or parents or guardian where relevant) with details of how to file a complaint under ECF regulation 7 where appropriate.

### **Responding to reports raised retrospectively.**

1. Retrospective reports will be directed to the safeguarding team who will protect and support the person reporting the incident in line with the Association's safeguarding procedures and while further investigation is being carried out.
2. The Safeguarding Officer will gather further information as appropriate to support an investigation of the case.
3. As with reports raised during an event the Association will determine whether there is an obligation to report incidents raised during or after an event to local authorities (e.g. the LADO for safeguarding issues) or the Police and cooperate with any resulting enquiries.

### **Association Record Keeping**

The Association shall keep appropriate records of reported cases in line with its Safeguarding policy and procedures. All information recorded is confidential respecting the privacy of those involved and retained only for the purpose of managing the case or related cases.

### **Association Action and Sanctions**

1. The Association's Committee in conjunction with the safeguarding team shall determine appropriate steps to address the conduct based on several factors, including, but not limited to, (i) the ages of the complainant or victim, and the accused, and (ii) the nature, scope, and extent of the allegations, (iii) evidence provided by the parties involved.
2. Where the victim or accused individual is a minor, the Association shall contact parents or guardians unless the circumstances surrounding the allegations reasonably suggest otherwise.

3. The Association shall address allegations based on these guidelines along with any additional Association policies. Allegations will be addressed with due consideration for the safety, wellbeing and privacy of all parties. Action shall be proportionate to the severity of the infraction.
4. As well as reporting to Local Authorities or Police where appropriate, the Association reserves the right to apply sanctions, conditions and restrictions which may include:
  - suspension of an individual from participation in any Association tournament, event, or activities pending further investigation.
  - exclusion from participation for a specified period or indefinitely where a case has been investigated and complaint upheld
  - exclusion from membership
5. Where deemed appropriate the Association may report the individual to the English Chess Federation and/or the FIDE Ethics Committee, Qualifications commission, Arbiters commission or other appropriate bodies within FIDE.

Adopted by the Executive at its meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2025.