

English Chess Federation



Safe Play Guidelines

Provides ECF Guidelines on Safe Play and Conduct at ECF Events and Chess Activities

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References

- [1] ECF Safeguarding Children Policy (including extensions for Safeguarding Adults)
- [2] ECF Regulation 7 - Complaints Procedure

1. Policy

The English Chess Federation is opposed to all forms of misconduct at chess events and chess related activities including sexual misconduct, bullying, harassment, discrimination, emotional abuse, or physical violence. We are committed to ensuring that English chess 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.

2. Scope of Guidelines

The guidelines apply to players, spectators, tournament organisers, arbiters, coaches and support staff at all ECF Events and ECF chess related activities. We encourage affiliated clubs, leagues and congresses to adopt similar guidelines for their events.

3. Prohibited Conduct

The following types of conduct are specifically prohibited at ECF events or chess related activities:

- 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 race, gender, disability, age, or sexual orientation
- E. Emotional Misconduct - controlling behaviour designed to embarrass, shame or otherwise manipulate.

4. Preventative Measures

The ECF will require appropriate screening and safeguarding training for Tournament Organisers, Arbiters and event staff for ECF events where these individuals are likely to come into contact with minors on a regular basis.

The ECF will also promote broader training in identifying and handling cases of misconduct for those involved in running ECF events and activities.

5. Reporting & Responding

The ECF 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.

A. Reporting

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

a) **Email:** Emails covering forms of conduct addressed in the Guidelines can be sent to safeguarding.officer@englishchess.org.uk

b) **Misconduct Reporting Form:** To be developed and published online by ECF through the ECF website.

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 ECF's ability to investigate and/or respond to the information provided.

Messages submitted will be received and handled by the ECF 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 ECF sanctions as well as any applicable legal recourse.

Note that alleged violations of the guidelines are not the same as other forms of player misconduct — e.g. cheating or violations of the Rules of Chess or Event Regulations - which have separate and different reporting procedures —usually to the Chief Arbiter or Organiser for the event.

B. Responding On-Site to an Incident

Where an ECF Event Organizer or member of the Event Staff witnesses or becomes aware of potential misconduct—whether reported or not—the organiser or senior officer with safeguarding responsibility will proceed as below in line with ECF safeguarding guidelines.

1. Control the Situation.

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

The organiser/ senior officer shall take reasonable measures 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, the ECF shall proceed as set out in the ECF Safeguarding Children procedures including contacting parents or guardians unless the circumstances surrounding the allegations reasonably suggest otherwise.

2. Contact Local Authorities and/or Police.

After ensuring the victim is protected and informing parents/ guardians where appropriate, the organiser/ senior officers 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 organiser/ senior officer 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 [Reference 2 above].

3. Record details and report the Incident to the ECF Office.

Once the situation is under control and local authorities and police notified if relevant, the organiser or senior officer shall record details of the case on an ECF incident reporting form (as per the Safeguarding procedures) and notify the ECF Safeguarding Officer.

C. 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 ECF safeguarding procedures and while further investigation is being carried out.
2. The ECF Safeguarding team will gather further information as appropriate to support an investigation of the case.
3. As with reports raised during an event the ECF 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.

D. ECF Record Keeping

The ECF shall keep appropriate records of reported cases in line with ECF Safeguarding 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.

E. ECF Action and Sanctions

1. The ECF 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 ECF shall contact parents or guardians unless the circumstances surrounding the allegations reasonably suggest otherwise.
3. The ECF shall address allegations based on these guidelines along with any additional ECF 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. The ECF reserves the right at its sole discretion to suspend an individual from participation in any ECF tournament, event, or activities pending further investigation.
5. Following the initial reporting and support process the complainant / victim will have the option of initiating a formal ECF complaint under Regulation Number 7 [2]
6. As well as reporting to Local Authorities or Police where appropriate, the ECF reserves the right to apply sanctions based on the ECF Complaints procedure including:
 - suspension of an individual from participation in any ECF tournament, event, or activities pending further investigation as above

- exclusion from participation for a specified period or indefinitely where a case has been investigated and complaint upheld
 - exclusion from membership
7. Where deemed appropriate the ECF may report the individual to the FIDE Ethics Committee, Qualifications commission, Arbiters commission or other appropriate bodies within FIDE.