

## Northern Kingdoms E&D Policy

### Introduction

This document has been produced to give players and crew a fair expectation of the standards of behaviour expected at Northern Kingdoms games. Whilst it is impossible to create a policy that will cover every potential eventuality, it is the hope that this document will encourage continued work towards a more supportive and accessible culture in which LRP can be enjoyed without any player experiencing or fearing discrimination or harassment.

This document is based on the Snakepit Games Model Equality and Diversity, and Acceptable Behaviour Policy available through the Creative Commons Attribution Share-Alike license, under which this document is also released.

### The Short Version

#### You must not:

- Discriminate against others based on out-of-character attributes
- Use derogatory or bigoted language based on out-of-character attributes
- Sexually harass other participants
- Make references to certain unacceptable themes
- Become so drunk that you are unable to roleplay safely
- Smoke or vape in an inconsiderate manner
- Use illegal substances
- Film or photograph others without their consent
- Interfere with another participant's belongings or mobility aids
- Attempt to shrug off responsibility for your actions

#### If you break this policy, we can:

- Offer you a warning and/or discuss the situation with you
- Ban you from attending future events

Ask you to leave the event

Share certain information with other organisers, at our discretion

Take legal action, if the situation is sufficiently serious

**We will:**

Take all complaints seriously

Keep your information confidential, especially around complaints

Aim to provide any reasonable adjustment needed to improve accessibility

**Purpose**

This policy is intended to act as a generic baseline for all events run by Northern Kingdoms, unless explicitly stated otherwise. We consider inclusivity and accessibility to be fundamental to our vision for all our games, and to realise this as fully as possible, we place equality and diversity as one of our central considerations. The ultimate aim of this policy is to ensure that all players and crew participating in LRPs or attending events run by Northern Kingdoms are treated fairly, with dignity and respect, and do not suffer out-of-character discrimination or harassment. This policy applies equally to both events that we run, and to all online spaces that we curate.

Where events Northern Kingdoms runs deviate from this policy - for example, by including themes that would normally be off-limits, or by codifying in-setting or fantastical systems of discrimination or oppression for the purpose of exploring the impact of those systems in the real world - all such exceptions will be specifically and explicitly listed in advance of events.

By booking a place at any Northern Kingdoms event, or using any online space which we curate, you are agreeing to abide by the following policy for all of your interactions with players, crew, and all staff from Northern Kingdoms, in line with the organisers' interpretation and implementation of it. If you are not willing to abide by this policy of shared respect and dignity, we at Northern Kingdoms would ask that you do not book for any of our events; we welcome all comments, feedback, queries, and requests for clarification on this policy, which should be directed to the email address listed at the beginning of this

document.

Whilst we at Northern Kingdoms have attempted to create as complete a policy as possible, we unfortunately cannot plan for every eventuality, however much we might like to. However, Northern Kingdoms considers this equality and diversity policy to be a 'living document': we will continue throughout our LRP careers to update it as we consider new challenges to inclusivity and accessibility, and how we can best meet these issues to provide our players and crew with the best possible experiences at our Events. Where and when this policy is substantially updated over its lifetime, our players and crew will be informed in advance of any events.

### **Acceptable Behaviour**

It is the responsibility of all players, crew, and staff at Northern Kingdoms to adhere to this policy's guidelines, and the aims and spirit for which they stand. Following this policy at all times for every interaction is a condition of attending any event run by Northern Kingdoms, or using any online space that we curate. Individuals should always act as if this policy is in full effect; if this is not the case - for example when a specific event is examining a theme normally off-limits - all players and crew will be explicitly informed in advance of the event. It should be noted that we consider the spirit of the guidelines to be as important, if not more so, than the specific wording of any part of the policy. Any attempt to defend unacceptable behaviour by attempting to twist the wording of this policy will not be tolerated.

We expect all participants in our events to accept full personal responsibility for all of their actions. Excuses - such as actions resulting from intoxication - are not considered to be acceptable, and will be judged as harshly, if not more so, than unacceptable behaviour which occurs in the context of sobriety - see the "Anti-Weasel Policy" below.

Whilst it is impossible to give a comprehensive list of all behaviour that we would consider unacceptable, the following general categories apply:

### **Discrimination based on Out-of-Character Attributes**

It is not acceptable to discriminate against or insult another participant on the basis of any out-of-character attribute that they may possess. This includes, but is not limited to, the following characteristics:

Age

Body type and physical appearance

Dietary requirements and choices

Disability or neurodiversity

Gender or sex, including transgender, agender or nonbinary identities

Nationality or national origin

Parental status

Race, colour, or ethnic origin

Religion or belief

Sexuality and relationship status - this includes “slut-shaming” or otherwise denigrating someone on the basis of their sexual desires or behaviours (or absence thereof), including former or current participation in sex work

Social or economic class, or employment status

### **Language**

It is not acceptable to use any derogatory or bigoted language which refers to any of the categories listed above, or otherwise seeks to tease, humiliate, or insult an individual based on an out-of-character attribute they possess; for example, any racist, sexist, or ableist slurs, etc. Northern Kingdoms does not accept the excuse that any such language is used lightly, ironically, or in jest, for example ‘I always call them that’, or ‘I can call them that because we’re friends’.

Additionally, we would ask that all participants use inclusive language where relevant - for example, not using gendered terms (for example, ‘guys’, ‘gals’, ‘men’, etc.) to refer to mixed or hypothetical groups. We understand that this can be difficult due to the degree that gendered language is normalised in wider society, and accept that everybody slips up on occasion, but we would encourage all participants to make their best effort to keep their language as inclusive as possible.

### **Sexual Harassment**

Northern Kingdoms considers sexual harassment to be entirely unacceptable, and we pledge to fully support anyone who feels that they have been sexually harassed if they feel able to come forward about it. Sexual harassment can generally be considered to be any pattern of repeated and unwelcome sexual advances in- or out-of-character, including but not restricted to:

Sexual comments, teasing, jokes, or comments on appearance or behaviour

Creating an overly sexualised environment, for example by maintaining sexual conversations when individuals present have asked for the topic to be changed, or through displaying pornographic material outside of spaces in which all present have consented

Pressure for personal interaction with a sexual or romantic intent

Hugging, touching, groping, or any other unwanted physical contact

It should be noted that sexual harassment can be perpetrated by a person or persons of any gender, against persons of any gender.

Additionally, issues can arise around sexual harassment at LRP events when participants attempt to justify what would be unacceptable behavior in any other circumstance as “just being in character”. We at Northern Kingdoms do not consider this an excuse or justification for such behavior, and we will respond to any complaints of in-character sexual harassment with the same process as out-of-character sexual harassment. The use of this as a defence for actions deemed to be unacceptable will be considered to fall foul of our “Anti-Weasel Policy”, as outlined below.

### **Inappropriate Themes**

Except where explicitly stated otherwise, the following themes will be considered to be off-limits at any event run by Northern Kingdoms. These themes have been highlighted by numerous participants as being particularly problematic, or likely to cause significant distress. It is therefore not permissible to make any reference to, or to roleplay around, the following themes:

Discrimination on the basis of any out-of-character attribute previously described, unless explicitly stated otherwise

Eating disorders (such as anorexia, bulimia, etc)

Infanticide (i.e. the intentional killing of an infant - aged 12 months or less)

Miscarriage and stillbirth

Non-consensual sex

Portrayals of real-world religions

Sex involving minors

In addition, the following themes should be considered to require careful handling that respects their full gravity, as they may cause players, crew, and staff at Northern Kingdoms to feel uncomfortable or unsafe. If participants want to include or reference them during roleplay or discussion, they should give careful thought to the way in which they are portraying these topics, as they might cause distress to other players.

Abortion

Consensual sexual contact

Consensual Incest

Domestic abuse

Genital mutilation or castration

Mental illness

Self-harm and suicide

This list of distressing themes is not considered to be exhaustive, and is inevitably biased towards the experiences of the team at Northern Kingdoms. If there are themes you would find distressing or triggering to encounter, please talk to the team at Northern Kingdoms and we will attempt to mitigate this.

### **Alcohol, Smoking, and Drugs**

We understand that LRP is a social activity, and that some participants enjoy drinking alcohol, smoking, or using other intoxicating substances in such situations. Without wishing to take any moral position on this issue, we would like to make the following clear:

It is unacceptable for a participant to become so drunk that they are incapable of continuing to roleplay in a safe, responsible, and respectful fashion. Participants who are found to be in such a state will be asked to remove themselves from the in-character area.

If a participant has consumed alcohol, it is their responsibility to ensure that they do not get into a situation in which they are likely to cause harm to another person, such as by engaging in combat when they are incapable of fighting safely. If in doubt, a participant should err on the side of caution - as a rule of thumb, if you wouldn't drive, you shouldn't fight.

It is unacceptable to use any illegal intoxicating substances at Northern Kingdoms events. This has

serious legal repercussions for both the site and event management team, and can put individuals in difficult situations in regard to their professional obligations to report illegal activity. We reserve the right to ask any participant who is using illegal substances to immediately leave the venue, and to ban any individual breaking this rule from future Northern Kingdoms events.

The use of other intoxicants which are technically legal, such as poppers (amyl nitrate), is likewise considered unacceptable.

Northern Kingdoms ask smokers and the users of e-cigarettes and vapes to obey all site-specific regulations around designated smoking areas, and to also be mindful of not smoking where it will inconvenience others. This includes not smoking in areas that people have no choice other than to pass through - such as near entrances or on major thoroughfares - asking permission from those around them before smoking, and moving away or extinguishing cigarettes on request. It is unacceptable to smoke indoors at any of our events, or in any tent provided by Northern Kingdoms.

### **Other kinds of Inappropriate Behaviour**

Additionally, Northern Kingdoms considers the following to be unacceptable at our events; again, this is not to be considered an exhaustive list:

Filming, or photographing participants without their consent. We expect all photographers at our events - whether they are acting in an official capacity or not - to be mindful that some participants may not wish to be photographed, and to take down any unwanted photographs on request. Additionally, Northern Kingdoms considers the use of any video recording equipment such as GoPro by any participant to be unacceptable unless explicit permission to use such devices has been given in advance.

Interfering with any participant's mobility or sensory aids, such as moving a wheelchair without the explicit permission of its user.

Entering an individual's out-of-character room or tent without their explicit permission, or refusing to leave an individual's out-of-character room or tent after being asked.

Interfering with any individual's out-of-character belongings unless that individual has explicitly given permission for you to do so.

"Gender policing", for example, by asking another participant to leave a bathroom area based on their perceived gender.

### **The Anti-Weasel Policy**

None of the following are ever considered a valid excuse for unacceptable behaviour. Attempting to justify such behaviour with these or similar excuses will be judged harshly should any complaint be

made against a participant:

“I was only joking”

“I was drunk”

“It was in-character”

We remind all participants that the spirit of the policy is to be considered more authoritative than the exact wording, and legalistic attempts to defend breaches of acceptable behaviour will not be treated as valid.

It is worth noting that whilst intent may provide context for any given behaviour, it is not something on which we take a particular stance. This is to say - participants are held accountable for their actions and the consequences of those actions, not their intentions.

### **Complaints Policy**

Northern Kingdoms supports a culture in which unacceptable behaviour is challenged - no matter at what level it occurs, and the team will support any player, crew member, or team member at Northern Kingdoms who feels that they have suffered discrimination or harassment from another participant. We encourage all participants to challenge any unacceptable behaviour as and when it occurs, but we understand that not everyone will feel confident or comfortable in doing so. To this end, we would encourage participants to bring complaints to our attention, and we pledge to deal with any complaints so raised in a prompt, respectful, appropriate, and confidential manner.

### **Complaint Reporting**

At any event run by Northern Kingdoms there will be one or more designated members of staff or crew who are authorised to deal with complaints; their identities shall be made clear in advance of the event, and we shall endeavour to ensure that multiple genders are represented in the Complaints team.

Any participant who wishes to raise a complaint - either for themselves, or on behalf of another participant - is welcome to bring it to the named person or persons, who will take the lead with dealing with the complaint, and escalating it further if needed. If a participant has a complaint that they do not feel comfortable raising with the designated crew-member, then we would encourage you to raise the issue with a member of Northern Kingdoms permanent staff. Additionally, we will endeavour to have a

named individual who is not directly associated with our team, to whom a participant can bring any complaints they might have about any of our permanent staff or organisers.

Northern Kingdoms will keep a log of all incidents which are raised in this manner, though all details contained within this log will be kept confidential, and be accessible only to Northern Kingdoms permanent staff.

When acting in response to a complaint, we will keep the complainant anonymous unless they specifically grant us permission to do otherwise.

### **Warnings, Bans and Legal Action**

When a complaint is raised, we pledge to investigate it in a thorough, and impartial manner. Northern Kingdoms recognises that there is a need to be fair and balanced in our treatment of any complaint; however, we reject the need for only acting when there is proof beyond reasonable doubt that the complaint is substantive. In general, we take the stance that all parties will be assumed to have been acting in good faith until proven otherwise, but we will lean towards giving the complainant the benefit of the doubt if the situation is unclear.

Breach of our policy may be grounds for an individual being banned from further attendance of all Northern Kingdoms events, or - if sufficiently serious - being asked to leave an event immediately, with no refund offered. In general, we anticipate giving any person in breach of this policy at least one warning before issuing a ban - so that an individual has a chance to attempt to adhere to this policy - however this should not be relied upon. Northern Kingdoms reserves the right to refuse bookings, or immediately eject players from our events, without any prior warning, should we consider there to be sufficient grounds to do so.

We reserve the right to ban any individual, or to refuse any booking, for any reason if we feel that it is necessary, with or without giving an explanation.

Whilst it is not our intention to implement specific “must-avoid” policies, we expect individuals to respect the wishes of others who may not want to interact with them for any reason.

Northern Kingdoms reserves the right to take legal action against any participant should the situation be sufficiently serious to warrant it, for example in cases of assault, sexual harassment, racial abuse, etc. In

such cases, we will always confer with the injured party about the degree to which they would wish to pursue such action, and be guided by their wishes. Only in exceptional circumstances - such as when the injured party is under the age of eighteen, or there is a serious and immediate risk to others due to the nature of an allegation - would we ever consider taking legal action without the consent of the injured party.

Whilst we acknowledge that the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 does not specifically require us to have a child and vulnerable adult protection policy in place, we will take any allegations relating to incidents of this kind very seriously, and will in all cases seek further advice from the relevant statutory bodies on how to proceed should incidents of this nature occur.

### **Promoting Equality**

Northern Kingdoms pledges to strive towards creating a game environment in which diversity is welcomed and accessibility is championed. To this end, we shall seek to incorporate any reasonable adjustments to our Events to promote inclusivity, including but not restricted to the following categories.

### **Accessibility**

In its present form Northern Kingdoms runs at a different site each event. As a result the accessibility adjustments that we are able to make will vary from event to event, and we commit to keeping our players informed of where we will be running. We are open to feedback regarding accessibility issues or opportunities at prospective sites around the UK.

Whilst we cannot provide an exhaustive list of potential accessibility requirements or adaptations, we pledge to make all reasonable adjustments to cater to any such requirements that our players or crew may have, including but not limited to:

Adjustments to catering to take into account dietary requirements

Free access to water and snacks outside of mealtimes

Access to refrigerator space for medications and the like

Priority allocation of sleeping facilities for those with restricted mobility or other specific needs

Access to power sources for wheelchairs, sleeping aids, and the like

Adjustment of in-game factors to avoid or alleviate out-of-character distress, such as by avoiding phobic triggers, or adjusting roleplaying effects.

The provision of an out-of-character quiet space for any that need it.

Attempts to provide multiple avenues of resolution to all plots and encounters, in order to maximize the extent to which those with specific accessibility needs can engage with them.

Discounted tickets for carers and assistants of participants with disabilities who need them in order to attend.

Providing gender-neutral bathroom facilities, where at all possible.

### **Parents and Children at Our Events**

It is the policy of Northern Kingdoms that all players, crew and staff at our events are over the age of 18. We acknowledge that having a blanket "18+" policy for attendance is potentially exclusionary. There are some unique challenges around the requirements of parents and children in the larp environment, and at this time we do not believe we could meet those challenges in a satisfactory manner while running events with the staff/crew/experience we have. As such Northern Kingdoms is not a family friendly event and it is not appropriate for players to bring children or infants with them. Exceptions have been made in the past for crew on an individual basis, with the proviso of the infant being under the direct supervision of a parent within the crew area at all times and not remaining on site overnight. Please contact the game team to discuss any such arrangements.

### **Data Protection**

Northern Kingdoms may ask for your personal details as part of our booking process. Information that we request may include such things as:

Name

Contact information

Emergency contacts

Dietary requirements, allergies and sensitivities

Specific accessibility needs

Medical information that would be relevant to first aiders.

We will use this information in the following manner:

Processing bookings.

Fire registers and other site-specific insurance and safety purposes.

Legal or safeguarding obligations, as previously outlined.

Medical information will be made available to first aiders in the event of medical emergency.

For catered events, dietary requirements and allergy information will be shared with catering staff.

We will not otherwise share your details with other organisations without your consent.

We will not retain your information for more than six months following an event, at which point it will be destroyed, unless you request otherwise. You may at any time request a copy of any and all information that we hold on you, or ask that that information be amended or deleted.

We reserve the right to retain information about any incidents in which you break out code of conduct. This information will be kept separate from any other personal information, and will be accessible only to Northern Kingdoms permanent staff. You may likewise request a copy of any information that we hold in this regard. You may request that we delete such information, however if you do so we reserve the right to cancel and current or future bookings that you may hold.