



# **Shadowmoor**

## **Code of Conduct and Safety Policies**

### **Commitment to Safety**

Shadowmoor LLC (“Shadowmoor”) is committed to making our community as safe and inclusive as possible. Participants in our events come from a variety of backgrounds, and default expectations for acceptable behavior vary from community to community. With this in mind, this organization provides the following Code of Conduct and Safety Policies for the expected behavior of participants in all events and community forums sponsored by Shadowmoor.

The scope of these expectations is not exclusive to activities on site at an event, and where relevant also applies to interactions between community members in other electronic or social forums, within reason.

If an issue emerges that contradicts the expectations of our Code of Conduct, Shadowmoor management will evaluate the situation and apply appropriate disciplinary actions. Note that while it is our explicit goal not to mediate or monitor private communications, or become involved in personal disputes, we may occasionally find it necessary to evaluate a complete picture of a participant’s reputation and behavior in the course of supporting community safety.

# Code of Conduct

## Adherence to Event Policies and Rules

All members of the Shadowmoor community are expected to read and acknowledge their commitment to uphold the Code of Conduct, as well as all future updates and revisions.

These policies apply in addition to all official rules of the venue(s) where an event is held.

## Spirit of the Rules and Good Faith

This document references an approach of "good faith". By this we mean that all participants are expected to behave in a manner that supports the safety of the Shadowmoor community and the good of the game, not merely for personal gain.

It is not possible to write a rule to cover every situation, and it is possible to follow a rule while still clearly not be operating in good faith. Where necessary, based on the best judgement of Shadowmoor Staff, such behavior will be treated as inappropriate.

Shadowmoor's goal is to be clear in all expectations, rules, policies, and communications. Participants are expected to interpret these rules in good faith as per the above, and apply the spirit of the rules at all times. Shadowmoor will not tolerate any participant willfully abusing the clear meaning of language in an attempt to gain personal advantage, avoid consequences, or be disruptive to Shadowmoor events and the surrounding community.

We will always provide clarification if anyone feels a rule is confusing or being misinterpreted. Don't attempt to cite or twist the specific language or a rule or policy to argue the validity of Staff guidance about a behavior or ruling.

If all else fails, remember that some things shouldn't have to be said to adults and aren't explicitly defined in these policies. Don't be the person who forces us to make another rule!

## Privilege to Participate

Participation is a privilege, not a right.

Shadowmoor reserves the right to sanction, remove, or ban any participant from any event at any time for any reason. We are not legally obligated to disclose those reasons. Management and Staff will endeavor to show good judgment and fairness in applying this rule, and may choose to offer one

or more of the Disciplinary Consequences defined elsewhere in this document. However, we will not hesitate to remove or ban individuals we feel are not a good fit for our events or community.

## **Be Safe**

Don't engage in physically unsafe acts that put you at risk of injury or may injure others – with or without consent. Apply safe combat standards and be aware of your surroundings.

Especially where combat is concerned, participants are expected to respond in good faith to correct any safety issues pointed out by other participants or Staff. Sustained failure to address combat safety issues may result in the permanent removal of a participant's privileges to engage in a specific type of combat, or any combat at all.

## **No Illegal Substances or Alcohol On-Site**

Both venue and Shadowmoor rules prohibit the use or possession of illegal substances or alcohol on-site. This includes coming to site under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Participants found in possession of such substances will be immediately removed from the event, and after a Staff review may be banned from future events.

Additionally, participants are expected not to provide any access to nicotine or vaping products to minors.

## **Assume Good Intentions**

Our guiding principle is to assume good intentions on the part of participants unless presented with information that suggests otherwise. This is an expectation for both Staff and Players. If the good intentions of another participant come into question, apply the safety and communication tools in this document to move forward.

## **People are More Important than LARPs**

The Shadowmoor community is just that – a community composed of other people with their own goals, needs, beliefs, and challenges. We expect participants to be aware of and care about the experiences of their fellow Players, think about the story you are collectively creating, and apply safety tools as necessary to maintain trust and good faith. There is no way to “win” Shadowmoor other than by telling a good story that is engaging for both you and those around you.

# Safety Policies

Every participant at Shadowmoor sponsored events has the right to feel physically safe. That means they should find the setting and interactions with other participants free of:

- Physical danger, outside the bounds of defined safe standards of combat and “permission to touch” physical interaction
- Abuse, harassment, threats, or unwanted behavior between two participants not explicitly opted-into as part of the in-game conflict-driven world and interactions between Characters
- Harmful real-world events and ideologies. For example, members of certain in-game cultures harbor animosity for each other, but participants are expected to refrain from displays of racism or bigotry outside of the game context, and not to use the alibi of in-game animosities as a veiled excuse for real-world aggressions.

## Definitions of Inappropriate Behavior

Participants should regard the following guidelines as expectations of conduct in addition to legally actionable actions regarding harassment, abuse, or other forms of inappropriate activity. In other words, the legal expectations of tangible proof are not necessary for Shadowmoor Staff to take action on a complaint.

The below is not an exhaustive list, but covers the spirit of most behaviors we consider inappropriate for our community.

- Physical or verbal intimidation or any other behavior that reasonable individuals would view as abusive (outside of the boundaries of in-game roleplay conflict, with use of appropriate safety tools defined elsewhere in this document)
- Stalking
- Repeated and unwanted contact after a participant sets a clear boundary requesting distance
- Inappropriate physical contact or proximity
- Non-consensual physical or social interactions
- Non-consensual sexual acts
- Unwelcome sexual attention, whether verbal or physical
- Photography or recording without consent

Participants asked to stop any harassing behavior are expected to comply immediately. All Shadowmoor Staff and volunteers are also subject to these definitions of inappropriate behavior.

## **Consent and Immersion**

### **PvP and In-Game Conflicts**

The game system and world of Shadowmoor provides a framework for antagonistic “Player vs. Player” (“PvP”) encounters in both combat and emotional encounters, which may result in non-negotiated negative consequences for one Character such as Character death and resurrection, loss of in-game possessions or wealth, etc.

As a result, this is not a game system that fully supports consent in pre-negotiated scenes and resolutions – for example, Characters possess many skills that allow them to attack or affect other Characters by surprise, and it is uncommon for two Players to agree in advance that their Characters will or will not enter combat at a specific time or with a specific outcome.

### **Consent and Inclusiveness**

Participants at Shadowmoor events, by participating in the game, should expect to be exposed to PvP situations and unplanned negative consequences for their Characters as part of normal gameplay. By participating in an event you agree to support that these situations be resolved as much as possible with application of the game rules and in an immersive fashion.

However, immersion works best when participants feel safe and included in an environment that supports clear communication and consent. We always encourage the use of consent negotiations (as simple as an “OK check-in” or “permission to touch”) or as complex as a scene negotiation and between Players where appropriate to help guide the intensity and direction of roleplay, especially where it may become antagonistic in-game.

Immersion (sometimes known as “take it in play”) is not a rule, but it is a goal of our design. We expect participants to actively contribute to consent culture, because it keeps our community kind and inclusive, and because it supports that immersion.

### **Use of Check-In and Safety Tools**

We expect participants to use and respect use of some non-immersion-breaking safety tools, especially the “OK Check-In”, described and taught during onsite safety orientation, to modulate the intensity of roleplay and antagonistic encounters where necessary in order to promote and maintain trust and good faith with other Players.

## **Resolving In-Game Consequences**

Safety tools are meant to be used to promote personal care and maintain trust and good faith with other Players, but are not to be used to simply avoid consequences for in-game actions taken by Players representing their Characters. If use of a safety tool is necessary to modulate an encounter, participants are expected to work together to devise an acceptable approach that allows for an alternate resolution of consequences.

If you are unsure how to roleplay a situation with confidence while also applying the safety tools, please see a Staff member for guidance.

## **Prohibited and Sensitive Subject Matter**

### **Sexual Content**

Shadowmoor events and content will not explore the topics of sexual assault and rape. This includes as part of Character histories or other “off-screen” content.

### **Real-World Derogatory Language and Symbols**

Shadowmoor events and content will not explore direct analogues to real-world derogatory language and symbols.

For example you cannot play “an anti-Elf Character who believes all Elves should be put in concentration camps or exterminated”. You will be immediately removed from the event and banned with no refund.

There are far more interesting and inoffensive ways to display racial or cultural antagonism in-game – if you need ideas, see a Staff member.

### **Makeup Restrictions**

Shadowmoor does not permit “blackface”, “brownface”, or other makeup that mimics real-world skin tone in representations of any of the races in our game system.

Some races have specific color makeup requirements which are not intended to and should not be used to change one’s natural coloring to mimic real-world skin tones, but should instead be deliberately integrated into fantasy makeup and costuming in a way that highlights the supernatural, non-human appearance of a Character.

There is no limitation on making a Character's skin tone pale or gray within the requirements of various race or supernatural status makeups – however, general “lightening” of one's skin is likewise not required (or permitted) to indicate power or status for any Character.

## **Sensitive Topics of Marginalization and Playing Another's Experience**

Shadowmoor events and content may occasionally include difficult themes of cultural taboos, in-game racism, sexism, addiction, mental or physical illness, marginalization, or other themes that may touch upon analogues to real-world issues.

We expect participants to portray and interact with these concepts with empathy and sensitivity as part of a compelling story, not as “making fun” or “wearing a costume”, and to promptly raise any sincere content concerns with Staff so we can adjust if we are not living up to this goal.

Playing another's experience is extremely sensitive subject matter. Participation means understanding and acknowledging this, and committing to address such activities with care.

## **Organized Religion**

Shadowmoor events and the game world do not include the concept of any organized religion, and prohibit the in-game display of real-world religious symbols.

## **Consideration of Contemporary Context and Culture**

In our representation of Shadowmoor's game world, we endeavor to avoid the appropriation or insensitive usage of real-world cultural symbols, dress, or other cultural displays.

While many races and cultures in the game draw heavy inspiration from real-world elements, it is not our intent to wear the garb or adopt the real-world traditions of a group of people as a disrespectful costume or affectation. Participants are expected to apply good judgement and creativity when drawing from such sources as part of their costuming or roleplay.

We recognize that some religious and cultural symbols and traditions have over time entered the common visual language of our culture through genuine cultural exchange or in ways that are not obviously associated with a popular active tradition. This does not always mean it's okay to use them.

We know that not all participants come from the same background or awareness of various real-world traditions and cultures. The boundary here is not always obvious to each participant, and we encourage you to sincerely consider concepts of appropriation vs. attribution or inspiration if you are approaching this line. When in doubt about the appropriateness of such content into your

roleplay, or receiving feedback to that effect, err on the side of caution (don't use it), or ask for guidance from the community!

Participants are also expected to be responsive if another participant politely raises an issue of discomfort regarding such usage, and apply their best judgement or respond to Staff guidance regarding avoiding inappropriate usage of such content.

## Disciplinary Actions

### Game Staff Oversight

Senior game Staff with general oversight include: Game Management, members of the Steering Committee, and members of the Plot Team (with plot members reporting to the Head of Plot and Plot XO as responsible supervisors).

Game Staff with oversight of specific areas include Heads of various game functions (Medic, Formal, Monstertown, New Player Committee, etc.), with volunteers for those functions reporting to the Heads as responsible supervisors. Those Heads report directly to the Steering Committee, and then to Game Management as needed.

While you are volunteering for the game in any capacity, you are expected to follow the instructions of the Head of that area or raise relevant concerns to them.

### Communication of Concerns

Shadowmoor participants can communicate a safety issue or other concern at any time.

#### Onsite

You may approach any Staff member and they will take steps to resolve your concern, either directly or by promptly assisting with escalating the issue to the appropriate Staff area.

If there's an issue related to an area where you are volunteering, try to go to the Head of that function first. That individual will assist or escalate as necessary. If you do not feel comfortable bringing an issue to the Head of an area where you are volunteering, you may approach any Staff member.

#### Offsite

Outside of an event, if you wish to communicate information about inappropriate behavior as defined above toward yourself or someone else by someone in the community at large, please email



[safety@shadowmoor.org](mailto:safety@shadowmoor.org). (Note that you may not receive an immediate personal response if Staff are in a downtime, but your message will be acknowledged.)

This information is private and will be handled in confidence without threat of retribution. Please include as many details as possible. We will respect a choice to remove the identities of involved parties if a concern for retribution is present – please be aware that if further specific action is warranted or required, we may need to ask for additional details or communication in order to move forward.

## **Communicate First-Hand Information As Soon As Possible**

Shadowmoor Staff cannot act on second- or third-hand complaints or information. In order to respond, we need participants to directly approach Staff with the concern and information they have, as soon as reasonably possible after it occurs. We sincerely request that you avoid waiting to only send an email after the event has ended. If necessary, communicate your concerns on-site and then send an email with details as a supplementary record. The more distance between an incident and the ability to investigate and respond, the less satisfactory the results will be.

If you do not feel comfortable approaching Staff individually, or wish to speak to a specific member of Staff, we will do our best to accommodate you and give you a safe space to discuss any concerns confidentially.

## **Personal Disputes**

On occasion, Shadowmoor Players may have out of game disagreements or interpersonal conflicts that do not escalate to the point of harassment or abuse, or are not reasonably an issue that ought to be brought to game.

If it isn't an issue that belongs at the game, don't bring it. If you aren't confident you can keep it out of the game and away from any other involved participants, consider not bringing yourself to the game. Shadowmoor and its Staff will not arbitrate these sorts of feuds. If conflicts escalate to the point that they threaten Player safety or violate our Code of Conduct, Shadowmoor Staff may become involved.

## **Conflict Between Participants**

If a participant is uncomfortable or believes another participant is behaving inappropriately, we ask that the participant initially assumes good faith and gently asks the other participant to cease their behavior. If a participant is uncomfortable with this or has already attempted a personal resolution without success, we ask that you promptly bring the issue to any Staff member.

If an issue is brought to a Staff member, they will escalate it to the appropriate individuals to address it further on your behalf. Individuals are sometimes blind to the perception of their own words or actions, and Staff will endeavor to take your word on your feelings and perception of the incident.

## **Responding to Concerns as a Participant**

If a participant is approached by another individual with a concern that they are behaving in a way that makes others uncomfortable or unsafe, we also ask that they assume good faith on the part of someone who is attempting to enjoy the event just as you are. Especially in the case of a first instance of a minor issue, being approached about a concern does not necessarily mean that you are “in trouble” - in most cases it is an honest opportunity to make you aware and provide a chance to course correct. As such, the expected response is that the participant will make an immediate effort to graciously correct their behavior.

We do understand that misinterpretations can occur and even being informed of a perceived issue may seem unfair – however, others around you are limited to their perception, not your intent! Changed behavior is more meaningful and effective than any mere apology or explanation.

## **Staff Handling of Complaints**

Staff will intervene in a situation politely once and only once, provided the Staff member(s) feel in their best judgment that an issue is minor and it is warranted. If a second complaint occurs or the issue is severe, Staff will typically ask both sides for their account of the incident, along with any third parties involved. Depending on the severity of the alleged event, further disciplinary action will be taken, including the possibility that one or all of those involved may be removed from the event until the incident or behavior is resolved.

## **Confidentiality**

Identifying details of the plaintiffs and the incident(s) in question will be kept internally confidential unless the parties involved request otherwise or in the case of legal obligations, such as a police investigation. Game volunteers not on Shadowmoor Staff will not receive these details, but may be informed about generalities involving the situation where necessary. For example, we will not reveal the identity of an alleged victim and the details of a harassment incident without consent, but may communicate general information to other volunteers in order to support community safety.

## **Individual Evaluation**

Each complaint received by Shadowmoor Staff is evaluated individually based upon the evidence presented, existing information about the Players involved, and the judgment of the members of Shadowmoor Staff. Where appropriate, this information is collectively reviewed by the Shadowmoor

senior Staff (“Steering Committee”). If there is an instance where a Shadowmoor Staff member would be involved as a target of an investigation, they will not be included as participants in this review process. In such situations a substitute contributor may be involved to provide neutral input. Remember that game Staff are not the police, and any safety issue is not being handled in a court of law - Staff will act purely upon their best judgement, with full authority to do so within the confines of community rules.

## **Nebulous Complaints**

Sometimes an incident or behavior between two or more individuals is nebulous – for example if the individual raising the complaint was the only witness to actions by the other party that made them feel uncomfortable, but the other party insists nothing happened. In such a situation, Staff will likely decide to accept the word of the individual raising the complaint as a basis for further investigation. The Staff will also take into account patterns of similar behavior toward other participants.

## **Due Diligence**

Believing individuals raising a complaint is part of our due diligence to trust good intentions on the part of all participants. This does not mean that Staff automatically assume bad intent on the part of any participant who is the subject of a complaint. Staff are not looking for a reason to remove someone from events or ask them to leave the community. Nor will we support any action that we suspect to be motivated by using Staff/rules as a third-party tool to “get the better” of another participant in an interpersonal conflict.

We recognize that there is always a chance of a false or malicious complaint, but we also recognize that this is the exception and not the rule. It is our intent to carefully evaluate all incidents as they occur and with the evidence presented, and we accept that this approach is necessary to maintain a safe community.

This approach is to ensure that the community can have confidence that we take complaints seriously, and will perform due diligence in good faith to follow up on and if necessary take action to resolve the complaint so that similar incidents do not occur.

## **Disciplinary Consequences**

In response to any complaint the consequences may include the following. Note that these are not considered to be sequential steps of escalation, and Staff may choose to directly apply, or decline to apply, one or more of these at any time to address a particular disciplinary incident.

**Nothing:** Sometimes after investigation, an issue isn’t clear enough to be approached or resolved in a useful or satisfactory way. This does not mean that subsequent similar reports won’t be

taken into account as a pattern of behavior warranting further investigation, but may mean there is nothing Staff or participants have identified that can reasonably be done to change to influence the immediate situation.

**Warning:** In the case of a first minor incident, Staff may choose to issue a warning. No participant is entitled to a warning. We do not maintain a “three strikes” policy, and expect to issue no more than a single warning for the same or similar behavior. Further repeated incidents will typically require more direct action.

**Mediation:** Staff may choose to offer participants in conflict an opportunity for limited mediation, where both parties sit down together and discuss their concern and potential resolution(s). All parties are expected to approach the discussion in good faith assuming that everyone’s goal is to find a resolution that allows everyone to continue to participate in the event without further Staff supervision. Be aware that no Staff member is expected to be a professionally trained mediator, and it is the right of any Staff member to recuse themselves from supervising such an activity if requested. Ultimately it will be the responsibility of Game Management to determine further approaches if Players in conflict cannot reach a self-sustaining agreement to move forward in good faith.

**Voluntary Removal:** A participant is offered an opportunity to voluntarily remove themselves from the event and must leave the event site immediately.

**Involuntary Removal:** A participant is directed to remove themselves from the event and must leave site immediately.

**Ban:** A participant is banned permanently from all Shadowmoor events.

In the event of a removal or ban, refunds for event tickets or passes will be issued solely at the discretion Shadowmoor Management. Donations and any other prior contributions of money or material to Shadowmoor will not be refunded or returned.



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