

Herald's Guild Member Conduct Document





Introduction

The Herald's Guild is about learning, improving and growing as a DM. To ensure we are a reputable and respected resource for all DMs, we have established these rules of conduct we expect our members to follow. These rules ensure we meet our obligations to the Herald's Guild and to the larger gaming community. Creating a great gaming experience helps to grow our hobby.

Our first expectation is that you will read and be familiar with this document. We understand it's not the most fun part of being a Herald's Guild member, but it is a critical responsibility.

If you have questions or comments concerning this document, you can contact us at: questions@heraldsguild.com

Credits

While creating this document we have researched and taken inspiration from many sources. We would like to specifically call out the following sources and documents:

1. **13th Age:** *13th Age Anti-Harassment Policy*
(<http://pelgranepress.com/site/?p=12112>)
2. **D&D Adventurers League:** *Adventurers League Players Guide*
(<http://dnd.wizards.com/articles/events/adventurers-league-resources>)
3. **DCI judge rules:** *Magic Judge Code*
(<http://blogs.magicjudges.org/conduct/files/2014/12/MagicJudgeCode1.pdf>)





The Basics

The expectations for conduct (detailed on the following pages) are designed to uphold our values, ensure our DMs provide safe and welcoming experiences, and to safeguard the reputation of the Herald's Guild and its members. Because these goals are so important, the Herald's Guild will investigate and fairly address alleged misconduct on the part of any member.

We have high expectations of our DMs and a responsibility to our gaming community. Because the conduct of our DMs really matters, the Herald's Guild can choose to suspend a DM, change a DM's rating level, or even revoke a DM's membership based on their conduct. Additional immediate consequences may apply during an event and/or convention, at the discretion of the organizers.

Membership in the Herald's Guild is voluntary. A DM can withdraw from the Herald's Guild at any time.

These rules use the term "DM" but also apply to Marshals and other Herald's Guild staff.





Herald's Guild DM Conduct Expectations:

Create a welcoming environment

DMs should avoid actions which could reasonably be expected to cause someone else to feel harassed, threatened, bullied, or stalked. They should act to create a table environment where these behaviors are not accepted and all people can feel welcome. DMs should not allow others to create a bad environment by inaction. DMs should not express views that would make other people feel unsafe or unwilling to play at an event where that DM is running.

Safe Space

A good example of safe space rules can be found in the 13th Age anti-harassment policy. They use the following 5 principles:

“

1. Everyone has the right to be listened to.
2. Everyone has the right not to have their feelings belittled.
3. Everyone has the right to set boundaries on themselves and their property.
4. Everyone has the right to a space that is safe from any type of harassment: physical, verbal, emotional, or sexual.
5. Everyone has the right to a space that is free from language, actions, or behavior that are racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, or which denigrate participants' religious beliefs and affiliations (including the lack thereof), or ethnic or national origin.

“

The entire document can be found at <http://pelgranepress.com/site/?p=12112>

Provide a quality experience

Having a game run by a Herald's Guild DM should be a fun experience. While not all of that may be under the DMs control, a lot of it is. A DM should not complain about the adventure, the campaign or the event. A DM should give their players an experience that lasts the full expected duration advertised for the event. A DM should attempt to adjust to their players preferences (within reason and rules) and a DM should create room for their players to express opinions on how to make things more fun for them. All of this can be done while still ensuring that the DM also has a great time.

Use their status or authority fairly

A DM should at all times run impartially and within the guidelines of the appropriate program and game system. A DM should treat everyone at an event with fairness and respect regardless of their actual or perceived race, sex, gender, gender expression/identity, color, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation. A person's reputation, fame, skill, or any other similar factor should not affect how a DM treats that person. A DM may examine the actions of a person with a history of suspicious behavior more





closely, but should not make a biased decision about whether someone is cheating or not based on that reputation alone.

Take responsibility for their conduct and for the use of their status and authority.

DMs should not attempt to prevent other people from reporting their behavior. The goal of every DM should be to welcome feedback and to seek to continually improve. Retaliation of any kind for reporting suspected misconduct is not tolerated. DMs should never attempt to disguise or hide the reporting process from any person who wishes to use it. DMs should admit and accept their mistakes, and be honest and direct in their communication.

Keep out of the player feedback procedure

DMs should never attempt to influence the feedback players provide to the event organizers and the Herald's Guild through the dedicated forms. DMs should not handle their own forms. This feedback is not just used in ranking, but to identify possible problems and to find the awesome. We all need this procedure to be transparent and above reproach.

Respect the Campaign Rules

As Herald's Guild DMs we will often be running tables for one of the organized play campaigns. A DM should at all times follow the rules and policies of that organized play campaign.

Campaign Rules

A good example of campaign rules can be found in the Adventurers League Players Guide which can be found at <https://dnd.wizards.com/articles/events/adventurers-league-resources>

Follow event requirements

When running games at an event there may be additional requirements and expectations specific to that event. You are responsible for checking with the organizers to see if there are specific requirements and for following those requirements.

Example

As an example of event requirements we provide the following excerpt from the Baldman Games Judge Primer:

“Check-in: All Judges are required to check-in with HQ upon their arrival at the convention. HQ will be open a few hours before the Judge meeting - and will stay open for about an hour after.

Upon check-in, you will receive your badge (if you've earned enough credit for one), a printed copy of your schedule, and any pre-show promised materials.

If you don't check-in when you arrive at the show, we will assume you aren't coming and any benefits you've earned (like your badge to the show, or hotel room) are subject to revocation. If you're going to be arriving late, please let us know as soon as possible. The point of contact for late judges can be found in the information sent out for that show.”





Misconduct

The Herald's Guild keeps a close eye on DMs, because we seek both to help them improve and to in turn learn from their experiences. We check the response forms, speak with Marshals and other staff, and solicit feedback directly from players. We do our utmost to safeguard the quality of our members. We do this not just to ensure the players have a good experience, but also to keep the community as problem-free as possible.

For us to be able to do this we also have in place formal means of dealing with misconduct.

Reporting misconduct

Misconduct should first and foremost be reported to the Organizer of the event where the misconduct took place, so that the issue can be resolved on site in a timely manner. The Organizer can generally be found at an event HQ. If this is not possible, misconduct can also be reported to any Herald's Guild DM of level 4 or higher, either on-site or after the event, who will then bring the issue to a Herald's Guild Conduct representative (Committee members and judges level 6+).

Anonymous reports of suspected misconduct may also be reported to a designated member of the Conduct group of the Herald's Guild. That person will handle the concern but will not reveal the reporting person's identity to any judge without the reporting person's consent.

The processes described in this document are not substitutes for law enforcement. Serious misconduct involving alleged or potentially criminal acts should first be reported to the appropriate authorities. The Herald's Guild may then take additional action beyond that taken by law enforcement.

Resolving misconduct

Our goal when resolving misconduct is to move quickly to gather information and issue a fair ruling that addresses the misconduct and improves the ability of all our DMs to provide a great experience in the future.

When misconduct is reported to the event organizer they, if they are not one themselves, will contact a Herald's Guild conduct representative (any member of the committee and any judge rank 6+). This Herald's Guild representative will try to get information on the incident from all participants and witnesses possible.

The Herald's Guild representative will determine whether the issue may be addressed through discussion or mediation with both parties. For example, a player may feel that a judge was not fair in the distribution of adventure rewards. Such an issue can often be resolved with the representative acting as a neutral party. The representative will issue a ruling based on the mediation and will provide a report to the Herald's Guild leadership. The issue would then be closed.

If the outcome of mediation is not acceptable to either party, or if the issue is more serious (such as harassment), the issue can be escalated to a Committee.





The Committee

The DM's Conduct Committee ("the Committee") exists to decide when a DM's conduct is a serious problem and how that misconduct should be resolved from the Herald's Guild's perspective. It is comprised of Level 5 or higher members, selected by the Level 6 and higher members in a periodic application and selection process.

Committee members gather information about the case, including a statement from the DM in question, the representative that first attempted resolution, and, if possible, the person that lodged the complaint.

The DM involved in the alleged misconduct may identify a Level 4 or higher DM who may agree to act as their advocate with the Committee. If the advocate DM selected is a member of the Committee, the advocate will not participate in resolving the case.

After the needed information is gathered and considered, the Committee members then make a recommendation on how they believe the case should be resolved.

The Committee is responsible for ensuring anyone reporting a concern and any judge who is the subject of a concern are kept informed of what the next step in the investigation is and when it is expected to be completed.





Consequences

We do not believe that there should be a complicated list of consequences for misconduct, so we only have 4. And those are:

1. **Guidance:** No misconduct took place. Nonetheless, guidance is provided to the DM to ensure they understand how to conduct themselves in the future.
2. **Warning:** Misconduct was established, but it was not of a nature serious enough to warrant a temporary ban or a dismissal. Warnings will be tracked for 1 year. In addition, guidance is provided to the DM to help them learn from the event and to know how to conduct themselves in the future. The Herald's Guild may additionally choose to freeze the DMs advancement in rank for a period of time. If a DM is unwilling to learn from the misconduct, they will receive a Temporary Ban.
3. **Temporary Ban:** Misconduct took place and was severe. A Temporary Ban becomes part of a DM's permanent record. The DM is banned from DMing for the Herald's Guild for a period of up to 1 year. Guidance is provided to help the DM take the necessary corrective action needed to rejoin the Herald's Guild. The DM loses one rank and may not gain a rank for a period of 6 months after being reinstated.
4. **Dismissal:** The misconduct was so severe that the DM is ruled to be unfit to ever be associated with the Herald's Guild in the future. The DM is provided with guidance in the hope that they may learn from the experience.

Additional consequences

An event or facility may have additional rules, such that misconduct could lead to additional consequences. This could include expulsion from the event, banning and the like.

Example

As an example of additional consequences following excerpt from the Baldman Games Judge Primer:

“Just as we like to reward those stars that shine the brightest, so too do we keep a careful eye on those that risk turning into black holes. If you are consistently late, argumentative with your players, or otherwise cause enough headaches for us, we will address the issue with you.

Depending on the infractions, this can be anything from pulling you aside and talking with you, to simply putting a “black mark” on your record and not allowing you to judge for us at any future events.

In the case of a truly severe infraction, we also reserve the right to remove you from our judge pool immediately during the show (revoking any rewards - including your badge or hotel room - in the process). Hopefully, it goes without saying that this would be reserved for the most egregious of offenses - the kind that typically require police involvement. You do not want to set the record of being the first person to invoke this option.”

