

ANOMALY LARP EQUALITY AND ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR



Introduction

Our aim at Anomaly (Anomaly LARP Inc, Anomaly LARP) is to promote a supportive and accessible culture where LARP can be enjoyed without experiencing or fearing discrimination or harassment.

This policy document was derived from the Dreambox Live Storytelling Equality, Diversity, and Acceptable Behaviour Policy. That document was released under the Creative Commons Attribution Share-Alike license, under which this document is also released.

Definitions: OOG (Out Of Game), IG (In Game), RP (Roleplay)

The Short Version

You must not:

- Discriminate against others OOG, or IG without prior consent (see 'Inappropriate Themes' section below)
- Use derogatory or bigoted language OOG, or IG without prior consent (see 'Inappropriate Themes' section below)
- Sexually harass other participants
- Make references to specified (below) unacceptable themes
- Become inebriated / drunk or high such that you are unable to attend 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 actionable information with other organisers, at our discretion
- Take legal action, if the situation is sufficiently serious

We will:

- Take all complaints seriously
- Keep reports and complaints confidential, unless consent is obtained to share agreed upon information
- Aim to provide any reasonable adjustment needed to improve the situation

Purpose

This policy is considered a required part of the rulebook for all events run by Anomaly LARP Inc, unless explicitly stated otherwise. We consider inclusivity and accessibility to be fundamental to our vision for all our games, and to realize 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 participants of events run by Anomaly LARP Inc are treated fairly, with dignity and respect, and do not suffer out-of-character discrimination or harassment. This policy applies equally to events that we run and all online spaces that we administer.

Where events Anomaly 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 require consent either prior to the event (for example within the waiver) or through the safety system of the game. If consent is not granted the RP will be adjusted to achieve consent.

By booking a place at an Anomaly event, or using any online space which we curate, you are agreeing to abide by this document for all of your interactions with any participant, in line with the organizers’

interpretation and implementation of it. If you are not willing to abide by this policy of shared respect and dignity, we at Anomaly 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 moshrok@anomalyarp.com.

Whilst we at Anomaly have attempted to create as complete a policy as possible, we unfortunately cannot plan for every eventuality for every individual, however much we might like to. However, Anomaly considers this equality and diversity policy to be a ‘living document’: we will continue throughout our LARP 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 updated over its lifetime, our players and crew will be informed in advance of any events.

Acceptable Behavior

It is the responsibility of all players, crew, and staff at Anomaly to adhere to this policy’s guidelines to the best of their abilities, 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 Anomaly or using any online space that we curate. 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 behavior 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 behavior which occurs in the context of sobriety – see the “Anti-Weasel Policy” below.

Whilst it is impossible to give a comprehensive list of all behavior 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, color, or ethnic origin
- Religion or belief
- Sexuality and relationship status – this includes denigrating someone on the basis of their sexual desires or behaviors or absence thereof
- 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. Anomaly 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 ask that all participants make the effort to use inclusive language – for example, avoid 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 normalized in wider society, and accept that everybody slips up on occasion, but we encourage all participants to make their best effort to keep their language as inclusive as possible.

Sexual Harassment

Anomaly considers sexual harassment to be entirely unacceptable at our games, 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 behavior
- Creating an overly sexualized 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 LARP events when participants attempt to justify what would be unacceptable behavior in any other circumstance as “just being in character”.

We at Anomaly LARP 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 defense for actions deemed to be unacceptable will be considered to fall foul of our “Anti-Weasel Policy”, as outlined below.

Inappropriate Themes

The following themes will be considered to be off-limits at any event run by Anomaly. These themes have been highlighted by 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.
- Discrimination towards an individual on the basis of any in-character attribute. Due to the inter-faction nature of the game, discrimination towards a GROUP based on in-character attributes is allowed with consent.
- Domestic abuse
- Eating disorders (such as anorexia, bulimia, etc)
- Strangulation
- Torture
- Infanticide
- Miscarriage and stillbirth
- Non-consensual sex
- 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 Anomaly 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, and gain consent of all participants (including anyone who may hear the content).

- Abortion
- Consensual sexual contact
- Genital mutilation or castration
- Consensual Incest
- Mental illness
- Portrayals of real-world religions
- 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 Anomaly. If there are themes you would find distressing or triggering to encounter, please talk to the team at Anomaly and we will attempt to mitigate this.

Alcohol, Smoking, and Drugs

We understand that LARP 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 to use any intoxicating substances at Anomaly 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 intoxicating substances to immediately leave the venue, and to ban any individual breaking this rule from future Anomaly events.
- Anomaly LARP asks 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 Anomaly.

Other kinds of Inappropriate Behavior

Additionally, Anomaly 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 delete / take down any unwanted photographs on request. Additionally, Anomaly 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 belongings whether OOG or IG unless that individual has specifically asked a person to retrieve something.
- "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 behavior. Attempting to justify such behavior with these or similar excuses will be judged harshly should any complaint be made against a participant:

- "I was only joking"
- "I was drunk / intoxicated"
- "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 behavior will not be treated as valid.

It is worth noting that whilst intent may provide context for any given behavior, 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

Anomaly supports a culture in which unacceptable behavior is challenged, no matter at what level it occurs, and the team will support any participant at Anomaly who feels that they have suffered discrimination or harassment from another participant. We encourage all participants to challenge any unacceptable behavior 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 with the Anomaly Staff Member they feel most comfortable, 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 Anomaly LARP there will be one or more designated members of staff or crew who are authorized to deal with complaints; their identities shall be made clear in advance of the event, and we shall endeavor 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 encourage they raise the issue with a member of Anomaly LARP permanent staff. Additionally, we will endeavor 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 organizers.

Anomaly LARP 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 Anomaly LARP permanent staff.

When acting in response to a complaint, we will keep the complainant anonymous unless specifically granted 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. Anomaly recognizes 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 Anomaly events, and 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. Anomaly 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.

We reserve the right to share details of complaints made against individuals, or warnings, bans, and other sanctions, with other larp organizers and related groups as we deem fit.

Anomaly 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 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

Anomaly 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 reasonable adjustments to our Events to promote inclusivity, including but not restricted to:

- Adjustments to food service to take into account dietary requirements
- Free access to water and snacks outside of mealtimes
- Access to refrigerator space for medications and food
- 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 as local law allows.