

Heart of Kent Gaming

Policies, Procedures, Code of Conduct and Risk Assessments



Contents

1.0	Introduction	2
1.1	About Heart of Kent Gaming.....	2
1.2	Purpose of this document.....	2
1.3	Our Values, Visions, and Beliefs	3
1.4	Definitions	4
2.0	Equal Opportunities	7
2.1	Reasonable Adjustments	9
3.0	Safeguarding Policy	10
4.0	Code of Conduct.....	12
5.0	Risk Assessment.....	11

1.0 Introduction

1.1 About Heart of Kent Gaming

“Heart of Kent Gaming” is a not-for-profit community board games club currently operating out of the Downswood Community Association, in Downswood, Maidstone. Meet ups for gaming take place weekly on Fridays from 7pm to 10pm. The purpose of the group is to create a space where members of the community can join together to play board games, cards games and role-playing games with fellow enthusiasts.

1.2 Purpose of this document

This document serves to provide the following:

- Guidance on safe operational practices in hosting the board games café.
- The values, visions, and beliefs of the founders of the group.
- Roles, rules, and responsibilities expected to be carried out by hosts and members as outlined within specific policies of purpose. These include but not limited to:

- Code of conduct
- Young Person Safeguarding
- Equal Opportunities
- Privacy and Data protection
- Safety Policy
- Anti-Bullying
- Emergency Procedures

1.3 Our Values, Visions, and Beliefs

The Heart of Kent Gaming is guided by these values:

Fun - Gaming should be fun to partake in.

Open - Anyone can enjoy playing a board game/card game/roleplaying game

Respectful – We conduct ourselves with respect and treat others likewise

Inclusive – Everyone should be able to join in and there are games available to all to play.

The Heart of Kent Gaming founders believe that board gaming is an activity that anyone can partake in and that there are multiple benefits to participants including: promoting better mental health, creating new friendships, and strengthening existing relationships. Playing board games also helps to develop social skills, stimulates mental agility, encourages problem-solving abilities, and broadens participants' creativity and imagination.

The Vision for the All Aboard Game Club comprises of three goals:

- 1) To do something good for our community, with a particular focus on widening access to those who may experience isolation and struggle to interact and socialise with others.
- 2) To create a safe space for people to meet and make friends with others with similar interests.
- 3) To be a place where young people can develop their confidence, independence, and resilience.

1.4 Definitions

These definitions explain terms that are used in this document.

'Must'	means that adherence to the rule is mandatory.
'Should'	means that the rule is strongly recommended, with an expectation of adherence. However, circumstances might justify an alternative approach. This minimum good practice guidance should be followed unless there is a good reason not to.
'May'	means that the rule is optional. It indicates less formal advice and recommendations which may be found helpful in the management or governance of the cafe.
Adult	A person aged 18 or over. This term can apply to a "host" or "member"
Bullying	<p>Bullying is characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, abuse or misuse of power through means that a recipient is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• undermined• humiliated• embarrassed• injured
Committee	Also known as the Heart of Kent Gaming Committee, the committee is made up of key members, including hosts, to oversee the development and progression of the club. The committee will also ensure that the club is compliant with statutory guidance and the law. The committee will also oversee important decision making such as the allocation of funds and introduction of additional hosts/organisers.

Conflict of interest	A conflict of interest is when someone's judgement or actions are, or could be, affected by personal involvement or other interest relating to the matter at hand. This includes any circumstances that affect, or could be seen to affect, someone's independence or impartiality.
Criminal records check aka DBS-disclosure and barring service.	A criminal records check (or DBS) will show any spent and unspent convictions, cautions, reprimands and final warnings together with any information held by local police that's considered relevant to the role.
Founding Member	See 'Member'
Gross misconduct	<p>Gross misconduct has no strict legal definition. In Heart of Kent Gaming it is interpreted as observed practices that are a very clear breach of the values of the group such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • theft • physical violence • gross negligence • serious insubordination • behaviour that destroys relationships with other volunteers or staff such as bullying and harassment
Group	A collective of individuals, there is no cap to the number to comprises a group
Harassment	<p>Harassment is 'unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating people's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment' (Equality Act 2010).</p> <p>Harassment can take many forms including (but not limited to), verbal and/or written abuse, ignoring or subjugating colleagues to unwanted attention, ridicule, mocking, mimicking or belittling a person.</p>

Host	A founding member of the board gaming club or trusted volunteer person, acting as lead/deputy person of responsibility for conducting the meeting and receiving members.
LADO- Local Authority Designated Officer.	LADO can be contacted if ever there are concerns for the safety and wellbeing of any young people in attendance at our clubs as a result of harmful or concerning behaviour by professionals or volunteers who work with children or such as the Host and committee members.
Meeting	A prearranged gathering of members with specific time, date and location for the purpose of playing boardgames. Understood by all in attendance such gathering takes place under the “Heart of Kent Gaming” brand, with a host in attendance.
Member and Founding Member.	Member- A person in attendance to the board game club Founding Member – One of the original member individuals.
Parent and Carer	The legal guardian of a young person under 18. In our club, we ask for the attendance of a parent or carer to supervise their young person, or for the parent and carer to arrange a designated person (not Hosts) to attend the club with their young person e.g., a PA for a disabled young person, mentor, family friend, neighbour etc. It is important that we are able to contact someone who can make decisions for their young person.
Regulated Activity	Refers to work that a barred person must not do. Regulated Activity is defined in the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.
Trusted Volunteer	A person other than a founding member, who has been deemed suitable to host a meeting
Volunteer	A member of Heart of Kent Gaming, undertaking a specific role or responsibility without pay.
Young Person	A member under the age of 18

2.0 Equal Opportunities

2.0.1 The Heart of Kent Gaming is a community club and therefore is open to attendance for those of all ages.

2.0.2 No person should receive less favourable treatment based on, nor suffer disadvantage harassment or discrimination by reason of:

- Class or socio-economic status
- ethnic or national origin, nationality, or statelessness or race
- gender including gender reassignment
- marital or civil partnership status
- sexual orientation
- disability
- political belief
- pregnancy and maternity
- religion, belief or faith including the absence of religion, belief or faith

2.0.3 All members of the group should seek to practise and promote equality. All young people should receive equal opportunity to partake in the board games available.

2.0.4 The Heart of Kent Gaming opposes all forms of prejudice and discrimination, including racism, sexism, homophobia, biphobia and transphobia.

2.0.5 Volunteers at Heart of Kent Gaming should make reasonable adjustments where possible to support all young people with disabilities to access the meeting and activities within.

2.0.6 Meetings of Heart of Kent Gaming should be scheduled at to take place at a venue that is accessible by young people traveling by public transport, on foot or a combination of these methods.

2.0.7 Meetings of Heart of Kent Gaming should be scheduled at time of day that will not be detrimental to the schooling of young people, in terms of attendance nor ability to function due to lack of rest.

2.0.8 Hosts reserve the right to arrange additional adult only meetings of Heart of Kent Gaming to take place at times and venues more suited to this audience. This is on condition that the availability of family friendly meetings is maintained, which young people will be able to attend.

2.0.9 Any fees applied to members for attendance to a meeting of the Heart of Kent Gaming should be kept to a minimum and within an affordable pocket money range of attendees. Any monies received will be used to pay for rental and utility use of the venue. Any excess will be determined by the Heart of Kent Gaming Committee as to how funds should be spent e.g., buying kit/games, charitable donations to other organisations etc.

2.0.10 A variety of board games must be made available at the Heart of Kent Gaming that vary in complexity and skills to meet the needs of all players, including young people.

2.1 Reasonable Adjustments

2.1.1 Reasonable adjustments mean actions taken to enable members with disabilities to access the Heart of Kent Gaming and activities within, as far as reasonably possible, to the same level as other members without disabilities. This should involve working in partnership with members and/or parents/carers, to identify needs and what reasonable adjustments can be put in place.

2.1.2 The Heart of Kent Gaming believes that disabled people can access board gaming and therefore it's the responsibility of the organisation to make changes to remove or reduce that any barriers preventing them from doing so.

2.1.3 Reasonable adjustments should respond to the needs of the individual and remove or reduce any barriers or support access, by making changes as far as possible to:

- Physical environment (such as the meeting place)
- The way things are done
- The support provided

2.1.4 Reasonable adjustment is dependent upon the effectiveness of the adjustment, its practicality, and resources available to the group at that time.

2.1.5 It is unreasonable to expect the Heart of Kent Gaming as a community group to meet the financial costs in making any adjustments, e.g., costing of an access ramp being installed or subsidising a carer for a member due to the fact that it is a not-for-profit organisation.

3.0 Safeguarding

- 3.1 The Heart of Kent Gaming and its Hosts recognises that the welfare and interests of children, young people and adults are paramount in all circumstances, and aims to provide a safe environment, that provides protection from abuse whilst participating board gaming activities. It is the policy of the Heart of Kent Gaming to safeguard the welfare of all children, young people, and vulnerable adults that attend the meet ups or access specific gaming WhatsApp groups. This means protecting them from neglect and from physical, sexual, and emotional harm and abuse. This also includes protecting anyone who makes a disclosure of harm and supporting them to report any abuse to appropriate authorities. This is underpinned in our safeguarding policy and procedures below.
- 3.2 It is the responsibility of all Hosts and Trusted Volunteers to have read, understood and adhere to the Safeguarding Policy & Procedures. The Safeguarding Policy & Procedures must be always adhered to.
- 3.3 Hosts should ensure that members have access to this safeguarding policy so that they understand the expectations when they attend meet ups organised by the Heart of Kent Gaming. This includes Trusted Volunteers.
- 3.4 Hosts should ensure that members have access to the Code of Conduct so that they understand the expectations when they attend meet ups organised by the Heart of Kent Gaming. This includes Trusted Volunteers.
- 3.5 Any breaches of the policy and procedures will be dealt with by Hosts of the Heart of Kent Gaming or raised with appropriate authority bodies if necessary. This could include referrals to LADO, Kent Social Services, or the police.
- 3.6 It is recommended that at least one Host or Trusted Volunteer has completed relevant Child Safeguarding training, when overseeing a Heart of Kent Gaming meet up. This can have been gained from professional training/qualifications or from another volunteering sector that provides appropriate training.
- 3.7 It is recommended that at least one Host or Trusted Volunteer is in possession of a clear criminal records check when overseeing a Heart of Kent gaming meet up. However, it is the discretion of the Host or Trusted Volunteer to request the attendance of parents/guardians/carers to supervise their young person/people.
- 3.8 In respect of the supervision of young people, the Heart of Kent Gaming operate a 2 to 1 policy, in that no young person and adult should be on their own, unless the adult is the parent/carer/guardian for that young person. In all other circumstances, there should be either a minimum of

2 adults to 1 young person or 2 young people to one adult. At least one of these adults must possess a clear criminal records check. No young person should be left unsupervised with adults who do not possess a clear criminal records check.

- 3.9 Participants over the age of 18 are permitted to bring alcohol for their own personal consumption at the Heart of Kent Gaming. However, Hosts and Trusted Volunteers are permitted to decline entry/bar from playing anyone that offers alcohol to a young person (someone under the age of 18). Hosts and Trusted Volunteers are permitted to decline entry/bar from playing anyone whose behaviour and conduct deteriorates and is to the detriment of the group as a result of their alcohol consumption. Alcohol may be permitted at the discretion of the Host or Trusted Volunteer in attendance or if the meeting is being held at a licensed venue.
- 3.10 The Heart of Kent Gaming will uphold a zero tolerance to drug use during meetings. Members found in possession or use of drugs will be barred from any future meetings and appropriately reported to authorities. Members found to be under the influence of illicit substances will be denied access to attend meetings.
- 3.11 The Heart of Kent Gaming recognises participants' right to privacy, and as such consent must be ascertained for any photos taken for the promotion of the Club on social media. In respect of young people, permission must be ascertained from parents/carers/guardians. Hosts and Trusted Volunteers can take photos that only show the backs of members' heads or use emoji images to cover over members' faces, for anyone who does not want their image on social media.
- 3.12 Secure toilet facilities shall be made available for all members to use. There are male and female toilets but also an accessible toilet. We encourage young people to access the accessible toilet as this is a single cubicle facility and reduces the risk of young people being in a space with an adult that has not had a DBS check completed.
- 3.13 Young people under the age of 18 years old may travel independently to and from the Heart of Kent Gaming venue. This will be on provision that this arrangement has been discussed between Host and Parent/guardian and agreed by both parties.
- 3.14 Emergency parental/guardian contact details must be given to the Host in attendance, for those under the age of 18 not accompanied by an adult in attendance at a meeting.
- 3.15 Hosts and Trusted volunteers will challenge any activities that encourage bullying behaviour including dares, hazing or forfeits.

Code of Conduct

4.1 Members, Hosts and Trusted Volunteers are to be made aware of the following behaviours which is expected of them whilst in attendance at the Heart of Kent Gaming.

4.2 We know that rules are not everyone's favourite thing to read, but they are important for keeping everyone safe and ensuring their physical and emotional wellbeing when they attend our group. Though table top gaming is not the most daring or dangerous activity, we do have to ensure that we are doing our due diligence, which basically means doing things with care.

Expected behaviour at our club:

Do

- Treat everyone with dignity and respect (think how you would like to be treated).
- Welcome new players and help them learn.
- Be patient with all players- let them take their turn, even if they are nervous or slow.
- Play fairly and honestly, even if your dice rolls are not in your favour.
- Respect people's right to privacy when it comes to talking about their personal lives.
- Ask permission before taking photos of any players and ask their permission for the photos to be on social media.
- Respect people's boundaries including topics of conversations and opinions (we wont all agree on politics but that does not mean we cannot enjoy gaming together).
- Respect people's physical boundaries, it's okay to dislike hugs and handshakes.
- Talk to Lydia, John, Simon or your Dungeon Master if you have any worries.

Remember that this group is for people from all walks of life. You do not always know what they have been through **so be kind, be caring and friendly**

Do Not

- Verbally threaten to harm your peers, even through characters in an RPG.
- Show images or graphically describe of abuse, torture, sexual violence, rape or excessive gore within the game. Think would this be in a movie rated 15?
- Bully through: name calling, hazing, forfeits, embarrassing initiations, repeatedly killing off certain characters or intentionally trigger phobias.
- Base NPCs on a real life person only to mock or bully them.
- Be mean spirited by insulting, undermining or mocking other players in their ability to make decisions.
- Encourage animal cruelty or torture, even if they are fictional.
- Use inappropriate, suggestive or threatening language whether verbal or written. This includes racially charged language, sexualised language, discriminatory comments, slurs, insults or homophobic and transphobic language.
- Overstep the boundaries with young people through engaging in friendships and sexual relationships.
- Do not add young people on social media or group chats.
- Keep worries to yourself, especially if they are regarding a young person or vulnerable adult.

4.3 Battles are expected within DnD or RPGs, and to this end, we are not anti-battles. We appreciate that characters, including NPCs, will get injured or potentially die in the game. Similarly, we recognise that there may be a narrative in which is an animal or beast is harmed or killed in a battle scenario, where you are actively being attacked.

4.4 However, we are clear that **actively torturing, abusing or exploiting characters, even NPCs, is not permitted**, as this could be triggering and traumatising to some of our players.

5. Risk Assessment

Written on the 23.05.25

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Reviewed and updated 25.01.2026

What is the risk?	What is the severity of harm?	What is the likelihood of harm?	What can be done to reduce or mitigate the harm?	Review of risk with these safety measures
FIRE RISKS				
Fire in the building as a result of cooking	High	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Club attendees to refrain from cooking during the session as they can bring snacks or order food in.- If anyone does decide to heat food or cook food, they should supervise this and not walk off from what they are making, especially if on the hob. The hob is electric.- There are fire blankets and extinguishers in the building.- Everyone will know where the muster points are and the fire exits to escape in the instance of a fire.	The severity of a fire is high, but the likelihood is low.
Fire as a result of an electrical fault	High	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Club attendees to report any concerns for damage to sockets or wiring so that the committee members can report this to Downswood Community Association.- Club attendees not to overwhelm plug sockets with electronics.- Club attendees to refrain from using damaged plug sockets.	The severity is high, but the likelihood is low.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Downswood Community Association will PAT test appliances. - Everyone will know where the muster points are and the fire exits to escape in the instance of a fire. 	
Fire as a result of smoking	High	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Smoking is not permitted inside the building. - Members/Hosts/Volunteers should smoke away from the building entrances and at the designated points. - Members/Hosts/Volunteers can use the cigarette butt box to put out their cigarettes. - 	The severity is low and likelihood is low.
INJURIES, ACCIDENTS AND ILLNESSES <i>All accidents and injuries are to be recorded in the first aid logbook of the Downswood Community Association.</i>				
Burns from the kettle/urn	High	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Members/Hosts/Volunteers are to operate the kettle with caution and should not leave the young people unsupervised to manage this. - First aid kit to have burns pack. 	The severity is high, but the likelihood is low.
Sickness or illness as a result of poor hygiene	Medium	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Members/Volunteers/Hosts to be reminded that if they are unwell, then they need to take a break from playing to prevent the spread of infection. - Downswood Community Association employs a cleaner to access the hall once Heart of Kent Gaming has finished playing for the evening to ensure the venue is clean to prevent the spread of germs and bacteria, and that toilets are topped up with soap, and clean tea towels are provided. 	Severity low, but the likelihood is low.
Allergic reaction resulting in anaphylaxis	High	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hosts providing snacks should ensure that packaging is kept with snacks, so allergen information is visible. 	The severity is high, but the likelihood is low.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hosts to refrain from bringing anything nut based. - Members may bring their own snacks if they wish to, but ideally avoiding peanuts. - There should always be a first aider in attendance at the game's night, and everyone will know who they are. 	
Choking on food or drinks	High	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hosts/Members/Volunteers will be offered first aid training opportunities to help them prepare for such an eventuality. - Christina, Helen, Darren, Lydia and Ricky are all first aid trained and can be respond to any incidences of choking. - Signal in the building enables for an ambulance to be called in an emergency. 	The severity is high, but the likelihood is low.
Injuries from slips and falls	High	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Any spills need to be mopped up immediately and warning signs to be put out. - Hosts/Volunteers/Members to cordon off areas if there are significant concerns for tripping over e.g., if there is damage to the floor that would repeatedly trip people over. This needs to be reported to the Downswood Community Association. - Anyone accessing the stage to get more chairs should use the stairs to access the stage and then gently pass chairs to those who are on the ground, so they are not attempting to carry chairs down the stairs. - Lights to be turned on when entering the building. 	The severity is high, but the likelihood is low.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Young people to be reminded not to run in the hall. - Curtains to be kept open if stage is used to access more chairs. - Due to the height of the stage, it is not recommended that anyone uses the stage for gaming. 	
Injuries from manual handling	High	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Anyone accessing the stage to get more chairs should use the stairs to access the stage and then gently pass chairs to those who are on the ground, so they are not attempting to carry chairs down the stairs. - There should be a minimum of two people to lift, manoeuvre and set up tables. - Chairs should be carried one at a time. - Those with high blood pressure or cardiac needs should refrain from any heavy lifting or overexerting themselves. 	The severity is high, but the likelihood is low.
DATA BREACHES AND CONFIDENTIALITY				
Personal data and sensitive information being leaked.	High	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hosts do not need to hold or store any personal data other than attendees first name and the initial of their last name. - DMs may invite members to their whatsapp group chats and members will be reminded to refrain from sharing sensitive information. DMs will keep chats limited to information about gaming meets. - Full names, DOBS, or locations will not be given on social media posts as this is not necessary. Consent is required for any photos taken and uploaded to social media. 	The severity is low, and the likelihood is low.

Images of participants being misappropriated online	High	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hosts will only take photos with consent of participants. - For under 18s, hosts will seek permission from the young person and their care giver. They may also cover the faces of young people with emojis on social media. - No one's full name, DOB, or any other personal details to be added to social media posts. - If anyone wishes to have photos removed after they have previously consented, hosts can do so. 	The severity is low and likelihood is low.
CONDUCT AND BEHAVIOUR				
Alcohol misuse and disorderly behaviour	Medium	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Downswood Community Association does not permit the consumption of alcohol on site unless agreed with the trustee board. - If agreed that alcohol can be consumed on the premises, hosts may permit some alcohol consumption but can turn people away who are drinking excessively. - Members to be reminded that they are responsible for their behaviour and they may be prevented from returning should they disregard the rules around the consumption of alcohol. - Police to be called if there are significant concerns for the behaviour of someone under the influence of alcohol. 	Severity is medium, likelihood is low.
Member's dogs may bite/nip/frighten players with excessive barking or aggressive behaviour.	High	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Downswood Community Association only permits dogs in the garden, not in the hall. 	Severity is medium and likelihood is low.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dogs need to remain on leads and must be supervised during the game. - Any person bringing their dog must be honest about their dog's temperament and behaviour to hosts so that this can be adequately risk assessed. - Advanced warning needs to be given if a member/volunteer/host plans to bring their dog so that it can be checked that other players are happy for the dog to be present. 	
Children and young people being vulnerable to abuse by other members/hosts/volunteers	High	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parents are asked to supervise their children or young people when they attend. - If parents are not present, there should be at least a member of the team who has a clear, enhanced DBS. - Young people to use the accessible toilet so they are not in a confined space on their own. - Young people are to game in the hall/lounge where they can be seen and heard by other gamers so that there can be multiple witness accounts. - Young people are reminded of safe people they can speak to if ever they are worried including the NSPCC and Childline. - Any incidences that of harmful or abusive behaviour may be reportable to the police or LADO. 	Severity high, likelihood low.
Young people and adults being vulnerable to bullying by other players	High	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Members/Hosts/Volunteers to be reminded on the Code of Conduct. 	Severity high, likelihood low.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Members may speak to their DM, other volunteers or host if they have any concerns. - Members alleged of bullying will be spoken to regarding their behaviour and efforts t - If behaviour continues despite conversations with the member alleged of bullying, then they will be asked to leave. - Any incidences that of harmful or abusive behaviour may be reportable to the police or LADO. 	
Conflict between players and disagreements leading to verbal and physical altercations	Medium	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All members will be reminded of the Code of Conduct and Safeguarding Policy. - If there are disputes between members, players, committee, then committee members of Heart of Kent Gaming, Lydia/John/Simon/Christina (if not involved parties of the dispute), will meet with involved parties to ascertain their concerns and their feelings, offering to mediate between those involved. - If there were to be a physical altercation between players/members, the police will be called, and players/members will not be invited back to the club. 	Severity high, likelihood low.
Breaches of code of conduct making players/members feel unsafe	High	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If there are concerns for any players or members breaching the code of conduct, a 1st warning will be given to players/members. - A 2nd warning will then be issued should the same concern be repeated and a meeting held. 	Severity high, likelihood low.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If there is a 3rd breach for the same rule, then this will result in the person(s) being asked to leave the club. - Beyond fantasy battles with NPC enemies, in the instance of threats of violence, harm or abuse towards other players (even through their RPG character persona) or the fantasizing of torture, rape/sexual violence of characters, NPCs and creatures within the game will result in immediate dismissal. 	
Car Parking				
Collision of cars in the car park	High	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Members/Hosts/Volunteers are encouraged to park in designated parking spaces and to take care when entering or leaving the car park. - Young people to be supervised when in the car park by their parent or carer. - There is lighting for nighttime to enable people to park safely. 	Severity it medium, risk is low.