

Thamesreach Code of Conduct and Harassment/Bullying Policy

General Statement for Website/Social Media, etc.:

Thamesreach strives to be an inclusive group. Therefore, all people choosing to participate in SCA-related activities in Thamesreach shall be entitled to the full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, and privileges, advantages, and accommodations of any SCA- related activity in the Shire without discrimination or segregation on the ground of: race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin; sex and sexual orientation; gender identity or expression; religion; pregnancy or potential pregnancy, or family responsibilities; marital status; family status; physical or mental disability; or age.

Code of Conduct/Harassment Policy section in the Constitution

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Harassment And bullying includes, but is not limited to: offensive or lewd verbal comments directed to an individual; the display of explicit images (drawn or photographic) depicting an individual in an inappropriate manner; photographing or recording individuals inappropriately to abuse or harass the individual; inappropriate physical contact; unwelcome sexual attention; or retaliation for reporting harassment and/or bullying. Participants violating these rules are subject to appropriate sanctions. If an individual feels subjected to or has witnessed harassment, bullying or retaliation, they should refer to the Thamesreach Code of Conduct, and Harassment and Bullying Policy And Procedure (provide link, or the means to gain a copy).

Code of Conduct, and Harassment and Bullying Policy and Procedure

Scope

This policy applies to all persons participating in SCA-related events or activities in Thamesreach including, but not limited to: feasts, tournaments, regular meetings, practices, and online activities including mailing lists and social media as well as any other online space used by and/or for SCA participants.

Inappropriate Behaviour

This section defines inappropriate behaviours, which while legal, are deemed to be unacceptable, and run counter to the cultural fabric of Thamesreach. This includes but is not limited to: behaviour that could reasonably be seen to be offensive, humiliating, intimidating, degrading, or threatening.

Bullying and Harassment

These behaviours may be covert and/or overt and include, but are not limited to:

- Verbal abuse (e.g., using racial, homophobic, transphobic, ableist epithets, etc.)
- Slander and libel
- Doxxing (publishing private or identifying information about someone on the Internet with malicious

intent.)

- Physical Intimidation
- Using threatening language
- Abusing rank, title, or office to intimidate others
- Intentional misgendering
- Spreading false rumours with malicious intent
- Repeated hurtful remarks or attacks, which includes, but is not limited, to use of social media

The test for bullying is the reasonableness of the behaviour and the impact of that behaviour on the recipient.

The SCA is an open Society; participation in SCA related activities is not and never has been restricted to those persons who purchase official membership in the Society. While membership is required for certain activities (e.g., holding offices, royalty, entry into Crown Tournaments, acting as a marshal on the tournament field), any member of the public may attend, witness, and participate in SCA-related activities. This is increasingly true with the advent and proliferation of social media and its use in promoting SCA- related activities.

Therefore, the Shire of Thamesreach declares the following:

All persons desiring to participate in SCA-related activities shall, to the extent possible with reasonable accommodation where necessitated by physical or mental limitation, be entitled to the full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, and privileges, advantages, and accommodations of any SCA- related activity without discrimination or segregation on the ground of:

- Race, color, descent, or national or ethnic origin;
- Sex and sexual orientation;
- Gender identity or expression;
- Religion;
- Pregnancy or potential pregnancy, or family responsibilities;
- Marital status;
- Family status;
- Physical or mental disability;
- Age.

None of the above listed behaviours are required to rise to the level of a criminally defined Hate Crime in order to be considered inappropriate or unacceptable behaviours in the Shire of Thamesreach. Harassment of any person based on race or gender, sexual harassment, harassment of people with disabilities, etc. will not be tolerated in the Shire of Thamesreach.

Illegal Behaviours

Any discriminatory behaviour that is counter to United Kingdom law is not legitimate and will not be tolerated in Thamesreach. Such acts should be reported to the appropriate authorities. For the purposes of this policy, the term harassment will be used inclusive of the behaviours below.

The Shire of Thamesreach defines “Harassment, intimidation, or bullying” as any intentional electronic, written, verbal, or physical act when that intentional act (a) physically harms an individual or damages the individual’s property, or; (b) has the effect of substantially interfering with the individual’s ability to meaningfully participate in

SCA related activities, or; (c) is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating or threatening environment within the scope of SCA related activities, or: (d) has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of an SCA-related activity.

Managing Allegations

Any allegation of bullying or harassment will be treated seriously and sensitively. Complainants will be provided with information about the options available to assist them to make an informed decision about how to proceed.

Participants may approach the Thamesreach seneschal for support and advice in the first instance. Where this is not appropriate or possible, first contact may be made with another Thamesreach officer, local Peer, or the Principality or Kingdom Seneschal. In such instances, complaints may be referred back to the local seneschal or an appointed representative of the Principality or Kingdom Seneschal, at their discretion.

Thamesreach will attempt, where possible, to facilitate an informal process for the resolution of allegations of bullying or harassment as described in this document. Where this option is not appropriate (or successful), a more formal investigation process will be initiated. In limited instances it may be appropriate to initiate this process as a first step at the Seneschal's discretion. Any outcomes will be in accordance with the SCA Sanctions Guide.

It is understood that there are sometimes larger community issues which may contribute to bullying/harassment allegations; however, the SCA can only investigate specific complaints against individuals as per the principles of natural justice / procedural fairness.

Organizational Responsibility

The Shire of Thamesreach retains the right to take action to ensure that participants are safe from bullying and harassment on an individual and collective basis.

Where Thamesreach becomes aware of harassment or bullying-related incidents, such incidents may be investigated (even in the absence of an allegation from an individual), depending on the seriousness of the issue and the nature of the information available.

Personal Responsibility

All participants are expected to behave respectfully and to promote an environment built on courtesy and chivalry. To this end, participants are expected to:

- Encourage a group culture which does not tolerate bullying or harassment
- Not accept inappropriate behaviour
- Support other participants to speak out against inappropriate behaviour

In Thamesreach, the Drachenwald Kingdom Laws apply as well as the laws governing the Principality of Insulae Draconis.

Bullying or Harassment Complaint Procedure

The purpose of this process is to strive to ensure that:

- All participants are aware of the initial informal process as well as the formal process for reporting and investigation of harassment or bullying allegations.
- All allegations are dealt with in a consistent, appropriate, and timely manner.

The table below describes the process to be completed when an informal or initial allegation of harassment or bullying is made. The SCA encourages individuals to raise issues by following the process below. It acknowledges that in some cases it may be appropriate to formalize the process after stage 4.

Stage	Description
1	Perceived harassment or bullying occurs
2	Complainant or witness gets in touch with their local seneschal. In extenuating circumstances, the matter may be brought to the next level of authority, either Principality or Kingdom, though please be prepared to justify this course of action in detail, using objective criteria.
3	Informal action is encouraged through facilitated discussion and informal investigation wherever possible. It may be appropriate for the local, Principality or Kingdom Seneschal to conduct a brief preliminary investigation to determine whether it is reasonable to consider the complaint genuine and/or whether it is able to be substantiated before a full and formal investigation is undertaken.
4	<p>If the complaint is found to be genuine and/or able to be substantiated, the seneschal will first determine, working and communicating with the Complainant, if any of the grievance procedures are suitable for the situation (e.g., direct contact with the Respondent should not be encouraged if the Complainant feels such action is unsafe or would put them at risk for further alleged inappropriate behaviour). While it is understood that some or all of the procedures may not be appropriate, the procedures should be considered before moving on to a formal complaint. The steps include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • talking to the Respondent to seek a resolution/ask behaviour to stop • writing to the Respondent to seek a resolution/ask behaviour to stop • involving a third party to be a mediator and/or asking that party to intervene on the Complainant's behalf to seek a resolution or request that the behaviour stop. <p>Please note: If the Respondent is asked to stop the behaviour, through whatever method chosen, the Respondent must be allowed the opportunity to actually stop that behaviour before escalation of the complaint takes place.</p>
5	Formal complaint. If the informal process was either unsuccessful or inappropriate, then a formal complaint should be considered. Should a complaint be considered vexatious by the local seneschal, an appeal may be made to the Principality or Kingdom Seneschal. If, after a Principality or Kingdom-level review, the local seneschal's view is upheld, additional material evidence will be required before that complaint may be considered again. All decisions may be appealed to the next level in the chain.

Grievance Procedure

Anyone Having a personal dispute with any other person within the Shire of Thamesreach shall settle the matter using the following procedure:

1. Speak To the person in private and face-to-face. Most Disputes can be resolved on this level. If The dispute is still unresolved, write a letter to the person. State What the problem is, what you feel will fix the problem, and

request that they respond to you within 10 To 14 days. Keep A copy of the letter. Respond To each other until you reach a resolution.

2. If The dispute remains unresolved, seek a neutral third party to act as mediator. The Mediator will attempt to find a lawful compromise to the dispute which is agreeable to both parties.
3. If The dispute continues, write directly to the officer responsible for overseeing the area in question asking them to help resolve the dispute. Ask For specific help and include copies of all correspondence about the problem. Work With that officer until a resolution is found.
4. Repeat step c), moving up the organization and including everyone previously involved on your copy list. Follow Your correspondents' advice as to whether anyone else at or below their level needs to be consulted. Eventually, You may run out of levels.
5. If The dispute continues, and you have gone through all the steps set forth above, you may appeal to the Crown. The Crown will find a resolution and Their decision may be appealed only to the SCA Board Of Directors.

The Grievance Procedure is intended to address personal disputes between individuals and not disputes on official matters. For Further guidance, please refer to the SCA Organizational Handbook.

The Complainant

To make a formal allegation, the Complainant must provide a written statement. A summary of allegations will be provided to the Respondent. If requested, the identity of the Complainant may be redacted from the allegations provided to the Respondent, though the Complainant should be prepared to justify the request for anonymity.

As the Complainant, it is important that you understand the following points and carefully consider them before you decide whether or not to make a complaint:

- Have you checked whether the described behaviours are defined as bullying or harassment?
- If the complaint involves a breach of modern law you will be encouraged to also file a complaint with the modern authorities.
- You will generally have the option of an informal or formal process, depending on the nature of the allegations. The SCA has the sole right to investigate or not to investigate any complaint.

After completing an informal complaint process:

- You can close the matter and take no further action, or
- You can file a formal complaint.

Be aware that if you make a serious allegation then the SCA has a responsibility to take action. This includes investigating the actions and responses of everyone involved.

Be prepared to share any material evidence or names of individuals who may have witnessed the alleged incident(s).

You will be expected to maintain courteous behaviour throughout the process.

The role of the investigator is to be objective; they cannot play the 'friend' role.

Formal investigations may take longer than expected.

All parties to the investigation, including yourself, the Respondent, witnesses, Seneschal, and investigator (if relevant) will know about the complaint. Parties to the investigation may also include the Kingdom Seneschal and the Society Seneschal/Board of Directors if necessary.

You will be expected to maintain both confidentiality throughout the process, and discretion following the process. Confidentially includes restricting the sharing of information or discussing matters directly related to the complaint

on social media. Sharing information on social media about the complaint during this process could jeopardize the outcome.

Be prepared to identify a desired resolution with the understanding that the desired outcome may not be possible or appropriate depending on the circumstances (i.e., a wide range of outcomes are possible, though none are guaranteed).

The Respondent

If a formal allegation is made, the Respondent is entitled to know the details of the allegations in writing, as well as the name of the Complainant, unless the Complainant's request for anonymity is found to be justified. These will be provided in a timely manner once the allegation is made to ensure they have a fair opportunity to respond to the allegations.

If a complaint has been laid against you, you should consider and understand the following points:

The SCA will attempt, when possible, to facilitate an informal process for the resolution of allegations of harassment or bullying.

Where this option is not appropriate or successful, a formal investigation process can be initiated. You will be advised of the process.

You have the right to know what the allegations are.

You have the right to an objective investigation without preconceived ideas or bias.

It is important that you remain courteous with all parties throughout the process.

The role of the investigator is to be objective; they cannot play the 'friend' role.

An Tir aims to have investigations completed in a timely manner, however, formal investigations may take longer than expected.

Be prepared to share any material evidence or names of individuals who may have witnessed the alleged incident(s).

All parties to the investigation, including yourself, witnesses, Seneschal, and investigator (if relevant) will know about the complaint. Parties to the investigation may also include the Kingdom Seneschal and the Society Seneschal/Board of Directors if necessary.

You will be expected to maintain confidentiality both throughout the process, and discretion following the process. Confidentiality includes restricting the sharing of information or discussing matters directly related to the complaint on social media. Sharing information on social media about the complaint during this process could jeopardize the outcome.

If you elect to not engage in the process, this will not result in a dismissal of the complaint(s)