

IFGS Minor Participation Policy

About This Policy

The IFGS takes the responsibility to protect itself and its members seriously. Recent events within other organizations have brought to light the necessity for the IFGS to have and to strictly enforce this Minor Participation Policy.

Definition of Terms

Junior Member - Any person under the age of 18 who holds an IFGS membership. This is mentioned for information purposes only, as the policy concerns minors, whether or not they are members of the IFGS.

Minor - Any person under the age of 18, whether holding an IFGS membership or not

Adult - All members and registered guests 18 years of age or older

Supervising Adult - All members or registered guests who are 21 years of age or older, and are not a parent or legal guardian of the minor(s) to be supervised. Persons of authority such as licensed or certified fire department personnel, police, or paramedics, regardless of age, count as supervising adults if on duty. When providing active supervision to one or more minors, two such supervising adults are required at all time who are not related to each other by blood or by relationship (boyfriend/girlfriend, spouses, family members, etc), and who do not live in the same household as each other. In addition, any parent or legal guardian of the minor(s) to be supervised qualifies as a supervising adult.

Society Safety Officer (SSO) - (From Safety Handbook, Volume I, v3.1) - The Society Safety Officer (SSO) is responsible to the Society Board of Directors and the membership for the establishment and promulgation of safety rules and guidelines that engender a safe gaming environment, and for transmitting those policies to the Chapter level for implementation.

Chapter Safety Officer (CSO) - (From Safety Handbook, Volume I, v3.1) - The Chapter Safety Officer (CSO) is responsible for all safety matters within their chapter. The CSO must answer to his/her own Chapter Board, and to the Society Safety Officer (SSO); mostly, however, they must answer to their fellow members who rely on them to keep them physically safe during IFGS events.

Game Safety Officer (GSO) - (From Registry Handbook v3.17) The Game Safety Officer (GSO) for a game is the individual who is responsible for seeing that the game is executed in a safe manner. The GSO checks all weapons and encounter sites before a game starts to make sure they are safe. SOs additionally serve as first aid support if any should be needed during the game. When it comes to safety, their word is law. The GSO has the authority to stop a game or an encounter at any time for reasons of safety. They can issue warnings to individuals and eject a person from a game for reasons

of safety, as defined in the Society Safety Officer's Policy. A GSO must qualify as a supervising adult.

Event Coordinators (EC) - any member hosting a non-game event, such as a work party, weapon making workshop, prop locker clean up, etc. If there is no GSO for a given event, the EC takes the place of a GSO for the purpose of minor participation policy provided they qualify as a supervising adult; and if they do not, a separate GSO must be assigned.

Game Master (GM) - (From Registry Handbook v3.17) Game Masters (GMs) are an essential part of every team. GMs are the judges who accompany each party of adventurers, and they provide information to the PCs and to the NPCs when required. The GM must know the rules as well as the design of the specific game, because the GM will have to answer all questions during the game. GMs must be able to make snap decisions and stand by them. They must also be able to improvise when something new happens. The GM will give the benefit of the doubt to PCs and the GMs word is final on the course. GMs should not be argued with on the course. The GM makes the game run smoothly for the team, and makes the game run as intended by the GP. The GM does not have the authority to change the game in any way without the approval of the WD.

Scorekeeper (SK) - (From Registry Handbook v3.17) Scorekeepers (SKs) assist the GM with all of the GM's responsibilities. They are responsible for keeping track of each PC's spell/ability points during the game. They also serve as extra eyes and ears for the GM.

Probation - A period of time during which the chapter is under increased scrutiny to ensure compliance with this policy.

Compliance Officer - The Supervising Adult responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy during an event. The Compliance Officer may NOT be the SSO, CSO, a member of the Society board, nor a member of the chapter board. A Compliance Officer must be appointed for all games and events run while a chapter is on Probation.

Report of Suspicious Behavior - If any member of the game staff is informed of possible inappropriate behavior of any participant with a minor, it constitutes an official report of suspicious behavior.

Violation of Policy vs. Report of Suspicious Behavior

Non-compliance with this Minor Participation Policy in any IFGS event is a violation of IFGS Society policy.

There is a distinction between a violation of policy and a report of suspicious behavior. The former must be investigated in light of this policy. The latter may require police intervention and investigation. A violation of policy, while considered a window of opportunity, is not as severe as a report of suspicious behavior. A violation of policy is still a serious offense that can open a chapter, its board of directors, and Society to legal and financial liability.

Any report of suspicious behavior must be investigated by the GSO and/or CSO. If the report is substantiated, it constitutes a violation of policy, even if the chapter claims to be following policy. If

the Safety Officer cannot investigate due to conflict of interest, and the report is received during the event, the Game Producer will designate another member of the game staff to investigate. If the report is received after the event, the Chapter Board will appoint someone to follow up on the report.

For the purpose of this document, when referring to a “violation of policy,” this includes reports of suspicious behavior unless a clear distinction is made otherwise.

Compliance Officer, SSO, CSO, and GSO

The game Compliance Officer is responsible for reporting adherence to this policy while a chapter is on probation as part of the official game safety report for the CSO. He or she shall coordinate this reporting with the GSO. All violations of the Minor Participation Policy, whether corrected or not, are included. Report of any violation of this policy must then be reported to the SSO in writing.

SSOs who receive chapter reports of minor participation policy violations, must give official warning to the chapter in writing due to the potential legal liability. SSOs must report all violations to the Society Board in writing as part of their monthly report.

Any chapter with one or more violations may be reviewed by the Society Board for severity and action taken accordingly. (See Chapter Probation and Status.)

Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse

Any reasonable good faith belief that a minor has been a victim of sexual abuse, physical abuse, gross neglect, or child pornography must be reported to local authorities and a report must be given to the GSO or EC in writing.

Minors Found Alone at an Event or Game

It is strictly prohibited for any participating minor or group of minors to be alone and unsupervised.

If a minor or group of minors is found alone, it shall be immediately reported to the GSO by the person who discovered the unsupervised minor(s), even if it's another minor.

If a parent is present at the game or event, the parent will be found and given a verbal warning by the GSO or the Encounter Coordinator. A second violation will result in barring both the minor and the parent(s) from the game or event.

If the minor's parent is not present, the GSO will escort the minor to where the minor belongs for the game or event, adhering at all times to the two-deep and one-on-one contact rules defined below. Further, the GSO will ensure that these rules are followed at the minor's designated location.

One-on-one Contact Rule

No minor shall be alone with an adult who is not their parent or guardian. This is referred to as one-

on-one contact and is strictly prohibited. (example: a minor and an adult walking together in the woods, using the restroom together, being the only two people in an encounter, etc.) Adults who violate this rule, will be given one verbal warning. A second offense will result in the adult being removed from the game or event.

Any event, including an emergency situation, where this rule is violated must be reported to the GSO.

The Two Deep Rule

For every minor or group of minors together, either the parent or parents of all of the minors in the group, or two supervising adults, or a parent and a supervising adult, must be present with the group at all times during the entire game or event. However, in the case where a supervising adult is the parent or legal guardian of ALL of the minors in the group, that single parent or legal guardian shall be sufficient to satisfy the Two Deep Rule.

If an adult must leave the minors, even temporarily, another qualifying adult must be sent to relieve the adult before he or she may leave.

Any event, including an emergency situation, where this rule is violated must be reported to the GSO.

Strategies for Compliance with This Policy

While these seem like simple rules to follow, the reality of how an IFGS game runs presents unique challenges. The situations below address some of these issues. This list is not comprehensive. When in doubt, refer to the rules above.

Minor Teams

Every team of minors must have two adults as per the Two Deep Rule. The two adults can fill the role of GM and SK as both roles remain with the team for the duration of the game. No one-on-one contact still applies. When minors are on a team of PCs, a minimum of two supervising adults are always required.

Mixed Teams

A mixed team includes both adults and minors. Attention must be paid to the Two Deep Rule. Any two qualifying adults among the team members, GM and SK can satisfy the rule.

Any adult team with a minor(s) must also remember the no One-on-One Contact Rule. GMs and GPs need to think about this before game day. If the game script calls for a player to be taken from the team, and it happens to be a minor, the two deep rule still applies. Two qualifying adults will need to take the minor to the specified encounter as per game script and may not be left alone or only in the company of only one adult unless that adult is the parent or legal guardian.

Minor Privacy

Adults must fully respect the privacy of minors, such as costume changes, bathroom breaks, and

showers on the game site. The only time an adult may enter is for health or safety reasons and that must be reported to the safety officer.

In turn, adults must also be prudent with their own privacy and not open themselves to a situation where a minor is accidentally privy to a private adult situation, like changing clothes, showering, etc.

Daycare and Daycare Encounters

Daycare encounters are a way of allowing young children to participate in games under the supervision of adults while still providing a service to the parents who need someone to care for their children while they participate elsewhere in the game. These encounters are often linked to visiting a town; or finding a group of lost orphans as part of the story, thus giving the children some fun participation in the game in addition to daycare.

Daycare and daycare encounters must comply with all minor policies and, like minor teams, must have a minimum of two supervising adults at all times. If one of the two attending adult must leave temporarily, another qualifying adult must be sent to the daycare or daycare encounter before the attending adult may be relieved. (This applies even if the restroom is only 10 feet away.)

Having three or more qualifying adults at daycare or at a daycare encounter makes compliance with the above rules easier.

Minors in NPC Encounters

Many IFGS encounters take place in isolation from other people on the game course. If such an encounter includes minors, the Two Deep Rule must be followed.

Appropriate Touching in Encounters

From the Safety handbook: "The NO PHYSICAL CONTACT rule refers to violent contact and not casual physical interaction. I.E., you cannot hit, tackle, trip, throw, or violently grab a person. You can still touch someone in a non offensive manner in the course of role-playing." However, contact of a sexual nature, whether implicit or explicit, is to be avoided at all time with minors.

Minor Participants at Overnight Games

The organization cannot dictate, nor is responsible for, participant behavior outside of game time. However, it is strongly recommended that minor participants who wish to camp at a game site only do so with the minor's parent or guardian. Minors are advised not to share a tent, camper or other sleeping facility with any adult other than the parent or guardian of that minor.

Consequences of Policy Violation

Adherence to this policy cannot be emphasized enough. Minor participants must be protected at all

times. As such, there are strong and immediate consequences for policy violations.

Probation

If violations of these rules are found a chapter may be placed on probation as defined below.

Probation **requires** a chapter to appoint a Compliance Officer for all sanctioned games and events.

Compliance Officer

When required, a Compliance Officer must be on course from the arrival of the first minor participant until the last minor participant leaves the game course or event. Minors must check in and check out with the Compliance Officer. The Compliance Officer must know the whereabouts of minor participants at all times, and must periodically, throughout the game or event, ensure that the Two Deep and One-on-One Contact rules are adhered to. As such, the Compliance Officer must be able to access and reach all parts of a game course or event location where minor participants are to be present.

The Compliance Officer has the authority and responsibility to shut down any game or event where the Two Deep or One-on-One Contact rules are being violated. It is at the Compliance Officer's discretion whether the game or event may resume after the violations have been addressed and measures taken to ensure no further violation occurs.

The Compliance Officer may have NO OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES on game day than those defined in the previous paragraph. At the end of each event for which a Compliance Officer was required, the Compliance Officer will send a written report to both the Chapter Board and to the SSO listing any and all violations of the Minor Policy that occurred in the game and note which violations were corrected; if no violation occurred at the event, that shall be reported, as well.

Schedule of Consequences for Policy Violation

When a policy violation is reported and verified, additional consequences may be imposed on the offending Chapter based on the chapter's track record as follows:

If the chapter has no active written warnings or censures (defined below), the chapter will receive a written warning from the Society Safety Officer or Society Board. This warning remains in effect for three calendar months or until the end of the next game or event, whichever is longer.

If the chapter already has a written warning in effect, the chapter receives written censure for repeated policy violation from the Society Safety Officer or Society Board. This censure remains in effect for six calendar months or until the end of the next game or event, whichever is longer. While the censure is in effect, the chapter is on probation.

If any violations are reported and verified while a chapter is on probation, the chapter must immediately suspend running games until the chapter board is replaced with new members. Once

the new board is seated, probation resumes until the six month probationary period expires.

If any violation is reported and verified while the chapter is on probation after the new board is seated, the chapter immediately loses its charter and may not run games under the auspices of the IFGS.

Game Sanctioning and Minor Participation Rules

In light of the seriousness of the policy above and the potential consequences for non-compliance, the sanctioning committee may in its review of a game designate that a game is inappropriate for minor participants. This can be further subdivided into games that are appropriate for minor participants as Player Characters (PCs), or Non-Player Character (NPC) roles that cannot make use of minors.

To allow for flexibility, individual encounters may also be rated as “No Minors” in the game script. As such, no minors will be allowed to view or participate in any encounter so designated.