



Menhirs Fate

Safeguarding policy

March 2025

Introduction:

Menhirs Fate Ltd is committed to providing a safe and enjoyable environment for all participants at our weekend events. These events offer an interactive experience for live roleplayers of all ages, and it is our responsibility, alongside carers, to ensure the safety and well-being of children and vulnerable adults throughout the duration of the event.

Our safeguarding policy outlines the procedures and measures that are in place to protect our young and vulnerable participants. It includes specific roles for safeguarding personnel, volunteer support, and the establishment of lost child/young person points. All policies and guidelines are applicable to children under 18 years old and vulnerable adults of any age. Before the event, the organisers will ensure that parents or guardians (referred to as 'carers') are informed about the most recent version of the policy, which is accessible online. This serves to highlight the collaborative role carers play alongside the event organiser in implementing the child protection policy.

Some children and vulnerable adults may require specific accommodations to participate. In such cases, we request that the responsible carers contact Menhirs Fate before their arrival. Menhirs Fate is committed to addressing these needs whenever possible; however, prior notification is essential for us to arrange the necessary support or to inform carers if assistance cannot be provided on this occasion. We emphasise the importance of carer involvement and proactive communication to meet any special needs that may arise.

Carers are encouraged to familiarise themselves with this policy and collaborate with Menhirs Fate in its implementation. Together, we strive to maintain a safe environment that respects the dignity and individuality of each participant, free from discrimination and harm. The safeguarding of all attendees is paramount, and this policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it meets the highest standards of child protection and care.

The event is designed to offer a safe environment for children to enjoy live roleplaying alongside participants of all ages, within reasonable and practical limits. However, it should be noted that the event is not a childcare organisation as defined by the Protection of Children Act 1999. Carers are reminded that they hold the responsibility for the physical and emotional safety of their children, as well as their belongings, throughout the event. It is essential that carers familiarise themselves with any activities their dependents will engage in before granting them permission to participate.

When attending the event, carers are responsible for ensuring that children are properly supervised, either by themselves or by another responsible adult acting on their behalf. On occasion, our cleared crew may offer to assist in this capacity as part of their event activities. However, our standard crew is not equipped to provide supervision. Please note that camping areas and toilets are not monitored.

There are no formal restrictions regarding photographing the event or its participants. However, photographers are requested to exercise discretion to maintain the immersive atmosphere of the event. This involves applying common sense and adhering to any directions provided by the event organisers.

The event organisers will electronically store only the necessary information related to the administration and operation of the event. This is generally limited to contact information, details about the characters attendees are playing, and any declared medical conditions that will be communicated to the first aid team.

Safeguarding Personnel

- **Level 3 Safeguarding Personnel:** At least one Level 3 safeguarding-qualified individual will be present at the event. Our hired medical team includes a member with this qualification who will be available to use their skills when required.
- **Volunteer Support:** Volunteers, preferably with experience in working with young people and safeguarding training, will assist the safeguarding personnel. These volunteers will be connected via radios to ensure efficient communication and support.

Lost Child/Young Person Points

- **Establishment:** There will be two staffed lost child/young person points
- **Support Structure:** The safeguarding-qualified team member will always be supported by volunteers on radio

All individuals who assist in running the event are volunteers. They are selected based on recommendations from event managers, as they are professionals in their own right and/or supporters of the event with a good character. The event organisers maintain contact details for all personnel. However, the standard crew is not processed or cleared by the Disclosure and Barring Service (formerly known as the Criminal Records Bureau). After consultations with the DBS, it has been confirmed that we are not eligible to request DBS checks for the crew, as the checks are unnecessary for the activities we provide. The updated guidelines clarify that since there is no plan to offer activities to children or vulnerable individuals without the supervision of a parent or guardian, requesting a DBS check would infringe upon the privacy rights of our crew.

If a problem arises, any crew member can be approached. Should they be unable to resolve the issue themselves, they will reach out to someone who can assist. All problems will be handled with sympathy and discretion, and proper documentation will be made where

appropriate. Every event crew member is familiar with this policy, as well as the guidelines and definitions included. All volunteers involved in the event have access to this Safeguarding Policy, along with the accompanying Code of Good Practice and Definitions of Abuse. They are responsible for passing any concerns to one of the nominated officers (listed at the end of this document) and are expected to adhere to all agreed-upon procedures.

Code of Good Practice

Good practice involves valuing and respecting children as individuals and adults modeling appropriate behavior. Appropriate conduct excludes any form of bullying, racism, sectarianism, sexism, or other discrimination. It is important to minimise physical contact with children attending the event, except for what is essential in roleplaying activities. Any inappropriate or sexual contact should be avoided, regardless of the in-character situation.

Efforts should be made to avoid spending time alone with a child. When supervising children without their carer present, strive to work with groups of two or more children at any given time. Additionally, ensure you are working alongside at least one other cleared crew member. Ideally, there should be two or more adults present with two or more children at all times, as far as reasonably possible.

Avoid making suggestive or inappropriate remarks to or about a child, even in jest, as these could be misinterpreted. Those who abuse children can be of any age (including other children), gender, ethnic background, or class, so it is essential not to let preconceptions hinder appropriate actions.

Avoid communicating online via personal messages with any child, instead keeping communication to main boards and servers if interactions are necessary.

Every adult has the responsibility to prevent the physical, sexual, or emotional abuse of children and young people and to report any actual or suspected abuse. The potential for abuse will be minimised if the event prioritises the safety of all members, and sensible measures are taken in interactions with children. If an allegation is made or concerns arise, they should be promptly brought to the attention of one of the individuals named at the end of this document.

Definitions of Abuse

The following definitions of child abuse are based on the HM Government publication "Working Together to Safeguard Children" 2006:

- **Physical Abuse:** This may involve acts such as hitting, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating, or causing physical harm to a child. Such abuse can result from deliberate actions or a failure to act to protect the child.
- **Emotional Abuse:** Emotional abuse is the ongoing emotional mistreatment of a child that causes severe and persistent adverse effects on their emotional development. This can include making children feel worthless, unloved, or valued only to the extent that they meet someone else's needs. It may involve imposing age-inappropriate

expectations, limiting exploration and learning, or preventing normal social interaction. This form of abuse often involves causing children to feel frightened or in danger, or exploiting or corrupting them. Emotional abuse is present in all types of child maltreatment, though it can occur independently.

- **Sexual Abuse:** This involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to engage in sexual activities, regardless of whether the child is aware of what is happening. Activities may include physical contact, such as penetrative (e.g., rape, oral sex) and non-penetrative acts, as well as non-contact activities like involving children in the production of pornographic material or encouraging sexually inappropriate behavior.
- **Neglect:** Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs. It can involve not providing adequate food, shelter, clothing, protection from physical harm, or access to medical care. Neglect may also include being unresponsive to a child's basic emotional needs.

It is important to note that our event involves live roleplaying, where children might be exposed to simulated behaviors or themes that could be concerning. The event organiser places the responsibility on carers to ensure that children and vulnerable adults are promptly removed from any situations that raise concern. Should the event organiser determine that this responsibility is not being met, they reserve the right to sanction, remove, or ban the carer or child involved from current or future events.

Advice on Responding to an Allegation

This guidance is intended to assist you if you find yourself involved in a potential child protection situation:

- Always stop and listen immediately to someone who wants to disclose incidents or suspicions of abuse, and remain calm.
- Take what is said seriously; it is uncommon for children to make false allegations.
- If possible, take brief notes of what they are telling you while they are speaking—these may be crucial for recalling details later.
- Preserve your original notes, no matter how rough; the initial account may be more important than a tidied or improved version created later. If you can't write at the time, document what was said as soon as possible afterward.
- Never promise to keep what is said confidential or secret. If informed about abuse, you are obligated to report it so that action can be taken.
- Reassure the individual that only those who need to know will be informed.
- Avoid asking leading questions that could suggest your own ideas about what might have happened (e.g., "Did he do XX to you?"). Instead, ask open-ended questions like "What do you want to tell me?" or "Is there anything else you want to say?"
- Allow the child to speak at their own pace and reassure them that they have done the right thing by telling you.
- Inform the child of the next steps and with whom the information will be shared.
- Never attempt to conduct an investigation of suspected or alleged abuse by interviewing individuals yourself; you could cause further harm and jeopardise potential criminal proceedings. This is a task for a professional working with a Child Protection agency, following a referral from the event's nominated child protection officer.

Nominated Child Protection Officers

The event officers responsible for being informed about any allegations of child abuse or safeguarding breaches and for taking necessary actions are Sarah Atkey, Marianne Wilberforce and Amber Baker.

Accreditation

We extend our thanks to the following organisations for providing insight into their child protection policies: Profound Decisions, North London Festival of Music, Drama and Dance, and Wansbeck Music Festival.