

Last updated January 8, 2021

PREAMBLE

This is the Fighting Game Community Code of Conduct. Its goal is simple: to create a safer FGC in which more people can enjoy the fun, exciting, grassroots spirit of our community.

It was put together by community volunteers, reviewed by other community volunteers, and agreed to by community leaders. It applies to all the players, tournament organizers, staff, streamers, commentators, posters, chatters, and so on who attend, run, or use the tournaments, Discord servers, and other community gathering places that have signed on to enforce it.

In the wake of so many recent examples of abuse, bigotry, and other bad actions in our scene, we must recognize that we have not done enough to keep our community members safe. Previously, we've only relied on individual tournament organizers and professional tours to conduct their own disciplinary actions. Unfortunately, that kind of piecemeal approach not only unfairly places too big a burden on those TOs, it also necessarily ends up in decisions that can come across as dogpiling, that can feel inconsistent, or that are made by people you may not even know. We hope that this code of conduct, created by the community to be enforced quickly and uniformly by a diverse committee of community members, will solve these problems.

Please read the rest of this document, which we've tried to write in a way that doesn't take a law degree to get through. Remember, these rules will apply to everyone in the FGC, so make sure that you understand them. If you have any questions, please feel free to strike up a conversation at fgcoc.communications@gmail.com.

1. AUTHORITY.

- 1.1. **CODE OF CONDUCT.** This is the Fighting Game Community Code of Conduct, a set of rules to promote better behavior in the fighting game community as agreed upon by the FGC event organizers, tournament organizers, online chat server coordinators, web platform providers, broadcasters, game rights holders, and other community leaders named below, which we're calling the Signatories. This Code of Conduct will be governed by a so-called Governing Body tasked with creating, enforcing, and updating both this Code of Conduct and its own rules.

- 1.2. **APPLICATION.** This Code of Conduct applies to and against all the people we're calling Participants: attendees, users, players, tournament organizers, event organizers, staff, volunteers, owners, sponsors, advertisers, Signatories, and anyone else who attends, operates, or uses any in-person or online events or spaces run by any Signatories, which we're calling Signatory Spaces. The Signatories will enforce this Code of Conduct in Signatory Spaces and will abide by any other disciplinary actions taken by the Governing Body.
- 1.3. **RESPONSIBILITY.** All Participants will be personally responsible for familiarizing themselves with this Code of Conduct. The Signatories will be responsible for promoting it and posting it in easily noticeable places, but this Code of Conduct will apply to all Participants regardless of whether they've actually read it.
- 1.4. **MINIMUM RULES.** This Code of Conduct will be considered the minimum standard rules for any Signatory Space. The Signatories may use additional Third Party Rules and may make additional decisions for their Signatory Spaces if they want, but if any Third Party Rules conflict with this Code of Conduct, this Code of Conduct will take precedence.
- 1.5. **LAST UPDATE.** The most recent publication date for this Code of Conduct is DATE?.

2. OBJECTIVES.

- 2.1. **INCLUSIVITY.** This Code of Conduct is intended to make the FGC a safe experience characterized by Inclusivity in which everyone feels welcomed regardless of race, color, ethnicity, nationality, sex, sexual or romantic orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, neurodiversity, body size, pregnancy or maternity, citizenship, or any other personal characteristics.
- 2.2. **INTEGRITY.** This Code of Conduct is intended to maintain and build integrity in the FGC through consistent and diverse leadership, fair tournament operations, and equitable Signatory Spaces.
- 2.3. **AUTHENTICITY.** This Code of Conduct is intended to pursue the above goals of Inclusivity and Integrity while preserving Authenticity in the FGC's unique feel, exciting fun, trash-talking spirit, and dedication to competition.

3. CONDUCT.

3.1. LIST OF VIOLATIONS. Behavior that may violate this Code of Conduct includes:

- 3.1.1. Engaging in assault, battery, or physical harassment or abuse.
- 3.1.2. Engaging in physical contact with any other person without their consent.
- 3.1.3. Engaging in malicious bullying, baiting, trolling, or other verbal harassment or abuse that rises to a level beyond commonly accepted FGC trash talking.
- 3.1.4. Using or threatening to use a deadly or dangerous weapon except in reasonable defensive situations.
- 3.1.5. Pestering or stalking any other person or otherwise not respecting any other person's reasonable desire to be left alone.
- 3.1.6. Taking photographs of or recording any other person without either their consent or Signatory authorization.
- 3.1.7. Engaging in discriminatory or hateful statements or behavior, including any based on race, color, ethnicity, nationality, citizenship, sex, sexual or romantic orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, neurodiversity, body size, or any other personal characteristics.
- 3.1.8. Intentionally outing any other person's sexual orientation, gender, or other identity without their consent.
- 3.1.9. Neglecting personal hygiene to the point of creating a nuisance.
- 3.1.10. Disclosing confidential information or media, doxxing or sharing any personally identifiable information, or violating any other person's reasonable expectation of privacy.
- 3.1.11. DDOSing, swatting, spreading malware, phishing, hacking into any other person's accounts, or otherwise scamming any other person.
- 3.1.12. Maliciously abusing power over any other person.
- 3.1.13. Intentionally entering off-limit areas in Signatory Spaces.

- 3.1.14. Intentionally, recklessly, or negligently damaging, tampering with, or interfering with any Signatory Space or venue property or platform, tournament equipment, network connectivity, or any other person's equipment or possessions.
 - 3.1.15. Engaging in fraud, impersonation, intentional hiding of one's identity, or defamatory statements or behavior.
 - 3.1.16. Tampering with a tournament, fixing any match or bracket, colluding, entering multiple times in a single tournament, substituting or being substituted for any other player mid-tournament or without good faith permission from the organizer, using disallowed game code exploits, or any other unsportsmanlike conduct or violations of commonly accepted FGC tournament etiquette.
 - 3.1.17. Stealing, misappropriating, mishandling, or misrepresenting the amounts or uses of entry fees, prize pots, hotel or other lodging fees, viewer or other donations, or any other person's money
 - 3.1.18. Intentionally causing fear or distress in any other person.
 - 3.1.19. Engaging in any illegal activity or unauthorized infringement of any other person's rights.
 - 3.1.20. Engaging in any violations while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
 - 3.1.21. Failing to abide by any applicable Third Party Rules.
 - 3.1.22. Advocating for, encouraging, being an accomplice to, or threatening to engage in any potential violations.
 - 3.1.23. Evading or attempting to evade any disciplinary action taken under this Code of Conduct.
- 3.2. **UNDERAGED PARTICIPANTS.** Anyone under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult guardian when attending an in-person Signatory Space. Standards of behavior will be higher with or around anyone under the age of 18, meaning behavior that may not otherwise violate this Code of Conduct may in fact violate it if the target is under 18. Anyone under the age of 18 will be deemed unable to consent, including to sexual activity.

3.3. OTHER VIOLATIONS. This list of violations isn't exhaustive. Any other behavior that violates commonly accepted FGC standards or norms or that goes against any of the Objectives may violate this Code of Conduct as well.

4. **GOVERNANCE.**

4.1. GOVERNING BODY. The Governing Body may convert itself into a nonprofit or other legal entity if it feels the need.

4.2. MEMBERSHIP. Membership in the Governing Body will include all the Signatories as well as anyone else invited by the Governing Body to join.

4.3. COMMITTEES. The Governing Body will have eight committees: the Moderation Committee, the Investigations Committee, the Code of Conduct Committee, the Tools and Record-Keeping Committee, the Legal Committee, the Inclusion and Diversity Committee, the Public Relations Committee, and the Collegiate Committee.

4.4. MEETINGS. The Governing Body will have meetings from time to time to decide issues of governance and amendments.

4.5. UPDATES. This Code of Conduct may be updated from time to time by the Governing Body to better serve the FGC, although any changes to it must remain in line with both the Objectives and commonly accepted FGC standards and norms.. If the Governing Body ever does make changes, the Signatories will try to notify Participants of those changes, but the Participants will still be solely responsible for making sure that they stay informed about and for abiding by the terms of this Code of Conduct

5. **INVESTIGATION, ADJUDICATION, AND ENFORCEMENT.**

5.1. POTENTIAL OUTCOMES. Decisions relating to this Code of Conduct may include but are not limited to warnings, refusals of entry or use, disqualifications, suspensions, bans, prize forfeitures, referrals to venue security or platform administrators, referrals to law enforcement or other authorities, community boycotts, and so on. Participants who receive disciplinary action under this Code of Conduct will not be entitled to any refunds or repayments.

5.2. CRITERIA. Decisions regarding violations of this Code of Conduct will be made with the following things in mind:

- 5.2.1. OBJECTIVES. Disciplinary decisions under this Code of Conduct will be guided by the spirit of the Objectives listed above.
- 5.2.2. LOCATION. Disciplinary action under this Code of Conduct can be taken regardless of where violations take place, including not just in Signatory Spaces but also in venue areas, hotel rooms, private homes, bars and clubs, social media, public chat platforms, other websites, and so on, with the exception that the Governing Body will not accept or make decisions based solely on private communications like text messages or direct messages to avoid potential privacy law issues and other legal problems.
- 5.2.3. TIME. Because the violations prohibited by this Code of Conduct were already obviously bad, and because the goal of this Code of Conduct is to protect Participants now and in the future, Participants may be subject to disciplinary action under this Code of Conduct for violations committed before this Code of Conduct was first adopted if those violations suggest that the Participants may be likely to continue to engage in more violations in the future.
- 5.2.4. STANDARDS. This Code of Conduct doesn't replace the legal system and can't produce decisions as severe as those of the legal system, so it isn't bound by the same processes, standards of proof, or rules of evidence that would apply in a court of law. Decisions will be based on the facts of each case, including any reports, investigations, patterns of behavior, future likelihood of more violations, and any other information or processes that the decision makers find appropriate.
- 5.2.5. CONSISTENCY. Disciplinary action under this Code of Conduct is intended to be consistent and foreseeable enough that Participants who violate this Code of Conduct should expect to face consequences. That said, since no two situations are the same, the decision makers will have broad leeway and will strive to fit each of their decisions to the unique facts of each case.

- 5.2.6. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST. When any person who would normally participate in investigations or disciplinary decisions as a member of the Governing Body is confronted with issues concerning their close friends, family members, romantic or sexual partners, and business partners, they will withdraw themselves from having any decision making role in that case to avoid any conflicts of interest.
- 5.3. INVESTIGATION. The Governing Body will have the ability to take in reports about any potential or alleged violations of this Code of Conduct. The Signatories will have the ability to take in reports about potential or alleged violations of this Code of Conduct occurring at their respective Signatory Spaces.
- 5.4. ADJUDICATION. The Governing Body will have the power to take disciplinary action against any Participants who violate the Code of Conduct. The Signatories will have the power to take disciplinary action against Participants who have attended or used or might attend or use their respective Signatory Spaces.
- 5.5. ENFORCEMENT. The Governing Body and the Signatories will enforce disciplinary action in the Signatory Spaces.